

CLOSING STATEMENT

BY

THE RT. HON. OWEN ARTHUR  
PRIME MINISTER  
OF BARBADOS

AT

THE HIGH LEVEL CONSULTATIONS  
ON THE OECD'S  
HARMFUL TAX COMPETITION INITIATIVE

SHERBOURNE CONFERENCE CENTRE  
BARBADOS

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Colleagues, Prime Ministers, Ministers and Delegates.

We have come to the end of what has been a robust exchange of views as we seek to find common ground and a shared perspective for guiding global tax cooperation in the International Financial Services sector.

Our exchanges have led to a clearer understanding of the concerns of all interested parties.

Our governments have agreed to continue the consultations in the positive spirit in which they have begun. To this end, we have agreed to the creation of a joint Working Group whose members will be, for the non-OECD countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Cook Islands, Malaysia Malta and Vanuatu, and for the OECD countries: Australia, France, Ireland, Japan, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

The composition of the Working Group reflects the membership of Caricom, the Pacific Forum, the Commonwealth and the OECD.

Australia and Barbados have been invited to serve as Co-Chairs of the Working Group.

The Working Group will consider three broad principles, namely, transparency, non-discrimination and effective exchange of information.

Its task will be two-fold.

First to take the three principles noted above and to find a mutually acceptable political process by which these principles could be turned into commitments. This process, if successful, would replace the OECDs process in the context of its Memorandum of Understanding.

Second, to examine how to continue the dialogue begun in Barbados. The Group will examine how the recently created Global Forum on taxation can evolve into a truly inclusive Global Forum, which would promote global cooperation on tax matters. It will also identify further relevant tax issues for consideration by such a Forum.

Work will begin immediately with the convening of the first meeting of

the Working Group in London by the end of January so that the outcomes can form an input for the Tokyo meeting from 15 - 16 February 2001.

At the beginning of these Consultations you will recall that I indicated that I was eagerly looking forward to being able to report to you at the end of our proceedings that the process of constructive engagement was well underway.

I am pleased to be able to confirm that that goal has been achieved, thanks in large part to the dedicated efforts of all participants in this unique process.