

MERCOSUR

Official language: English.

Headquarters: Morne Fortune, PO Box 179, Castries, St Lucia.

Website: <http://www.oecs.org>

e-mail: oecs@oecs.org

Director-General: Dr Len Ishmael (St Lucia).

SECRETARIAT FOR CENTRAL AMERICAN ECONOMIC INTEGRATION (SIECA)

SIECA (Secretaría de Integración Económica Centroamericana) was created by the General Treaty of Central American Economic Integration in Dec. 1960. The General Treaty incorporates the Agreement on the Regime for Central American Integration Industries. In Oct. 1993 the Protocol to the General Treaty on Central Economic Integration, known as the Guatemala Protocol, was signed.

Members. Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua. *Observer:* Panama.

Official language: Spanish.

Headquarters: 4a Avenida 10–25, Zona 14, Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala.

Website: <http://www.sieca.org.gt>

Secretary-General: Haroldo Rodas Melgar (Guatemala).

SOUTH AMERICAN COMMUNITY OF NATIONS (CSN/SACN)

In Dec. 2004 representatives of 12 South American countries signed the ‘Cuzco Declaration’ thereby founding a political and economic bloc modelled on the European Union. The aim is to establish a single currency, passport and parliament. The South American Community of Nations (SACN) will be created by the merger of the two existing major South American trade blocs: the Andean Community (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela) and the Southern Common Market or MERCOSUR (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay), in addition to the market of Chile, and eventually those of Suriname and Guyana. The agreement paves the way for much-needed improvements in transport, energy and other infrastructure, thus facilitating intra-continental trade. The SACN aims to eliminate tariffs on non-sensitive products by 2014 and those on sensitive products by 2019. The bloc will create a single market of 361m. people with a combined GDP of US\$973bn. However, insufficiently defined goals and ongoing disputes between members of the already-existing blocs may hamper development, as may future bilateral trade negotiations with the USA.

SOUTHERN COMMON MARKET (MERCOSUR)

Founded in March 1991 by the Treaty of Asunción between Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, Mercosur committed the signatories to the progressive reduction of tariffs culminating in the formation of a common market on 1 Jan. 1995. This duly came into effect as a free trade zone affecting 90% of commodities.