



# National Review



## PRIME MINISTER HON. STEPHENSON KING FOCUSES ON BUILDING RESILIENCE, STABILITY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE AMIDST THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS

The global economy has experienced unprecedented turbulence in the last few months with the main industrialized countries slipping into a deepening recession. Placed in a historical context, the current downturn in the global economy has not been seen since the period of the end of World War II when the economies of the major industrialized countries contracted.

The IMF, in its latest growth forecast of the global economy, estimates that global output will increase by only 0.5 per cent in 2009 down from

the 3.4 per cent in 2008. The advanced economies are projected to contract by 2.0 per cent led by declining economic activities in the United States, the Euro area and Japan.

In the United States, the number of persons that are unemployed rose to a 25-year high of 8.1 per cent in January 2009 as 651,000 persons lost their jobs during the month. Analysts predict that the US recession is likely to continue well into the later part of 2009 and should start recovering in early 2010.

The recession in the industrialized countries has adversely impacted Saint Lucia's economy,

given that our economy depends heavily on these countries for tourism, foreign direct investment and other capital inflows and remittances. Already we have seen the adverse impact on the tourism industry, our main foreign exchange earner. Stay-over tourist arrivals declined consistently between the months of September 2008 and January 2009 relative to the previous year, as the recession deepened in the US and other major source markets. During this period the number of stay-over visitors fell by 31.0 per cent relative to the previous year. Reductions in the number of flights by American Eagle also contributed to the

fall in arrivals. The surge in job losses in the main source markets could result in further declines in visitor arrivals in the coming months.

The construction sector, which has been the main driver of economic activity in Saint Lucia, experienced a contraction in 2008 reflecting delays in commencement of new projects in the public and private sectors. In the private sector work on a number of projects were either halted or failed to commence largely as a result of difficulties in sourcing financing, as inflows from foreign direct investment fell. The decline in foreign direct investment reflected the freezing of interna-

tional liquidity as banks have become cautious in lending.

However, work on a number of public and private construction projects are expected to intensify in 2009 as the construction sector is expected to be the main driver of growth in 2009.

In response to the impact of the external shock on the domestic economy, the Government of Saint Lucia has taken a number of measures to mitigate the impact on the local population and to stimulate domestic economic activity.

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Every Friday at 6.15 p.m. on NTN, Cablevision Channel 2.

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## Editorial

### Reciprocity in Diplomatic Aid

Since 2007 the government and people of Saint Lucia and the Republic of China (Taiwan), have been bound in diplomatic harmony, re-establishing ties broken in 1997. Diplomatic aid is rooted in the concept of reciprocity and Saint Lucia has quite aptly responded to the recent disaster in Taiwan with an official token of our concern.

Many small island developing states experience natural disasters caused by cyclones (hurricanes or typhoons), earthquakes, landslides and volcanic eruptions. Although natural disasters also occur in other countries, the impact on an island economy when a disaster occurs is relatively greater in terms of damage per unit of area and costs per capita, due to the small size of the country.

The recent typhoon in Taiwan has caused major damage to property and sadly numerous lives are lost and still unaccount-

ed for. Saint Lucia, as a small vulnerable state that has been through the experience of hurricanes and adverse weather conditions, can offer its expertise to the people of Taiwan in this regard.

As a government and a people we truly extend our most profound sympathy to the government and the people of Taiwan. At this time of mourning and grief we encourage the government and people of Taiwan to be strong for as sure as distances tests a horse's strength, time reveals a people's character. We take comfort in knowing that the people of Taiwan are resilient and formidable and that they will rise from the ashes and rebuild their beloved country with pride and dignity.

The small token of US\$100,000.00 that our Prime Minister gave to Taiwanese Ambassador His Excellency, Tom Chou is but a minuscule token that cannot at all be compared or measured to our love and gratitude for the people of Taiwan. The relationship between

our countries has blossomed to provide us with tremendous diplomatic aid in many areas of development, which include agriculture, education, improvement in our drivers license programme, e-government etc.

On behalf of all Saint Lucians, Prime Minister King assures the government and people of Taiwan that in time of uncertainty and difficulty, Saint Lucia remains a true friend. "We firmly believe that friendship marks a life even more deeply than love...friendship is never anything but sharing."

Saint Lucia will always share its love and friendship with Taiwan because the bonds of amity between our countries are rooted deeply in eternal love.

As a people we stand with Taiwan through our friendship to hold them up in times of turbulence, and to let them know that they can lean on us and be comforted just by knowing that we are standing by.

### **Prime Minister Hon. Stephenson King focuses on building resilience, stability and good governance amidst the global financial crisis**

*Continued from page 1*

The government of the United Workers Party respects the mandate given to it by the people of Saint Lucia to govern in a manner that is consistent with the strategic objectives of its 2006 manifesto. The conscience of the ruling party has always been to "fight the wrong that needs resistance and to help the cause that needs assistance".

As the Honourable Prime Minister Stephenson King puts it "one must not allow oneself to be derailed by detractors and loose sight of the important task of governance which the people have elected his government to do".

Prime Minister King is of the firm belief that "leadership can be thought of as a capacity to define oneself to others in a way that clarifies and expands a vision of the future", and that "the only safe ship in a storm is leadership".

The Policy Responses are as follows:

(1) Over the last few months

***Work has started on a housing project in Vieux Fort involving the construction of about 300 units at a cost of approximately \$70m. This project is expected to provide a major boost to economic activity in the south of the island***

Government has implemented measures to reduce the retail prices of some basic food and non food items by removing import duties and consumption tax on these items.

(2) Government also recently implemented a stimulus package costing approximately \$26m directed at mainly creating short term employment in targeted communities in various projects including road rehabilitation, construction of drainage, beautification projects and refurbishment of public facilities.

(3) In response to the downturn in the tourism industry and recognizing the importance of the tourism industry to Saint Lucia's economy, Government has increased resources for tourism marketing.

While it is not possible at this time to precisely assess the im-

pact of these initiatives, there has been a positive effect been produced by the amount of short term employment created and income generated particularly within the communities benefiting from these projects.

As a result of the decline in the economy, growth in government revenue is slowing while expenditure pressures continue to rise. Consequently, the fiscal deficit is increasing, thereby adding to the public debt. If not managed in a responsible way this could result in unsustainable growth in the public debt. While Government would be pursuing counter-cyclical fiscal policy in support of the economy, we also have a responsibility for prudent fiscal management to ensure the public debt remains at a sustainable level.

Government recognizes that it does not have all the answers in

## Developing our Human Resources

The National Skills Development Centre (NSDC) is continuing to develop Saint Lucia's human resource in various sectors.

Officially launched on February 15, 2001, as a quasi non-profit statutory body that functions with a Board of Directors providing insights into various sectors of the economy and guiding policy decisions, the Centre emerged as a holistic solution to the unemployment situation and a replacement to the previous Youth Skills Training Programme. The NSDC focuses on instilling the necessary attitudes, skills and knowledge into individuals for career success in this new era of work. The organisation's services include a Learning Resource Section, Computer labs for Information Technology training, Career Counseling, Soft Skills and Technical Vocational Skills training, Job training and Placement. The target group includes displaced banana farmers, school dropouts, teenage mothers as well as youth at risk. The NSDC is mandated to impact on their lives through reeduca-

tion, socially and through their personal development, thereby transforming their lifestyles.

Through its Mission Statement, the Centre is mandated to work with the support of the private and public sectors to provide information and training services towards developing a skilled, informed and marketable workforce. The principle objectives of the Centre are:

- to work closely with private and public sector agencies towards creating a skilled and marketable labour force;
- to offer a range of services and programmes which will help unemployed disadvantaged clients become self-reliant and realize their career potential
- to provide local, regional and international labour market information to better inform clients' career decisions.

In its efforts to retrain unemployed people to provide a holistic approach to the development of market driven attitudes, skills and knowledge, the NSDC frequently engages in cooperative endeavours with other social partners and

responding to the crisis. We have therefore sought to build consensus among key stakeholders in the society in devising the most appropriate policy responses. Therefore a series of consultations on the economy have begun with key stakeholders including the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Chamber of Agriculture and the trade union movement. Consultations will continue as we build consensus on the most appropriate strategy for managing the crisis. The process of consultation will be formalized with the formation of a Tripartite Committee comprising representatives of Government, the private sector and the trade unions. The Tripartite Committee will be consulted on a regular basis as part of the process of building national consensus on economic policy making.

What are the prospects for 2009? The prospects for the economy in 2009 are largely contingent on the successful implementation of a number of construction projects. Work is scheduled to begin soon on a number of projects including the National Hospital, by April 2009, at a total cost of approximately \$140m. Major road works are slated for implementation in 2009 including the rehabilitation

of the Praslin to Canelles section of the East Coast highway, the Allan Bousquet Highway, the section of the West Coast road between Roseau and Soufrière, and a number of urban roads and agriculture feeder roads. Additionally, work is expected to begin soon on the Jeremie Street redevelopment project involving the redevelopment of a section of the waterfront on Jeremie Street.

Work has started on a housing project in Vieux Fort involving the construction of about 300 units at a cost of approximately \$70m. This project is expected to provide a major boost to economic activity in the south of the island.

The successful implementation of these projects will provide a fillip to economic activity, notwithstanding the adverse effects of the external shocks on the domestic economy.

While 2009 will be a challenging year for the economy, the Government of Saint Lucia is confident that with the appropriate macroeconomic policies and strategies for sustaining economic activity, Saint Lucia's economy will weather the storm as we seek to mitigate the impact of the global economic recession.

funding agencies. In order to ensure that its services are decentralized, the NSDC operates through six (6) satellite centres island-wide. Through annual assessments of the labour market needs in St. Lucia to better guide the development of train-

ing programmes and modules, as a strategic approach to skills training and development, the NSDC has implemented over two hundred different technical vocational areas under the training projects indicated below:

Skills Training Projects	Implementation Period	No. of People Trained
Technical Vocational Training (local TVET funds)	2001 - 2002	250
Basic Needs Trust Fund(BNTF) funded by CDB	2002 - 2003	213
Special Framework of Assistance (SFA) 1999 funded by EU	2002 - 2003	550
Special Framework of Assistance (SFA) 2000 funded by EU	2003 - 2004	512
Hospitality and Construction Skills Training (HCP) funded by Government	2006 - 2007	498
Youth Apprenticeship Programme (YAP) funded by Government	2004 - 2006	167
Construction Skills Training for Women (West Coast) – St. Lucia funded by BNTF/CDB	2007 - 2009	112
Special Framework of Assistance (SFA) 2002 funded by EU	2007 - 2009	329
Special Framework of Assistance (SFA) 2004 funded by EU	2008 - Present	70 and ongoing
POETA funded by OAS	2008 - 2009	157
OECS Skills for Inclusive Growth funded by the World Bank	Ongoing	

\*Training of Trainers for Training Providers is currently ongoing.



Women training in tiling and carpentry

Guided by its vision to become a progressively viable institution, dedicated to the advancement of knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for survival in the changing global work environment, the NSDC has refurbished and revitalized the Choiseul Arts and Craft Centre (CACC) to facilitate increased sales. Whilst the Craft component of the CACC's services has been revamped to improve product quality, variety and quantity, a refurbished restaurant will now cater to the needs of the community as well as visitors. Continuing progress in the construction of a Hospitality Training Institution in the southern zone, according to

facility standards, will become NSDC's major thrust towards commercial activities. With limited allocations from Government, these strategic goals will enable the NSDC to meet current demands for paid evening programmes. Additionally, the NSDC is recognized by CISCO and is therefore the sole Centre in St. Lucia for providing certification in IT Essentials and CCNA training, which is recognized both regionally and internationally. All these influence the organization's capability to meet its milestone of sustainability.

Impact assessments conducted have revealed that the Job Attachment Programme increased by 13% from 2006.

These also indicate that some participants of projects implemented during 1999 to 2004 are still employed under their area of training.

Currently, the NSDC is working with the TVET Accreditation Unit of the Ministry of Education to gain accreditation, which would facilitate the awarding of Caribbean Vocational Qualifications (CVQ). As a result, the organization is in the process of incorporating training standards into future training interventions. This will further improve on the Centre's service quality and its capacity for sustainability, thereby ensuring that the organisation's activities deliver the vision for the future.

## New and Improved



Aerial photo of Anse La Raye's beach front

The Government of Japan has provided grant aid for the improvement of the fishery infrastructure at the Anse La Raye Fish Landing Station located on the west coast of Saint Lucia.

The purpose of this project is to promote and improve fishing activities of the fishers in Anse La Raye and neighbouring districts such as Canaries. This is expected to be achieved by improving and developing

facilities that would ensure secure, safe and efficient activities at the Fish Landing Station. Moreover, this development is expected to increase and improve the social, economic and overall livelihood opportunities within the community.

The site is found along the Anse La Raye beach, just south of Pointe D' Orange. There are currently 119 fishers operating out of the Anse La Raye Fish Landing Station, with 24 reg-

istered fishing boats. In 2008, approximately 106,119.1 tonnes of fish were landed between the communities of Anse La Raye and Canaries.

Over the past years, the function of the fisheries facilities in Anse la Raye has severely deteriorated due to age and natural disasters. The jetty was damaged and could not accommodate fishing boats; with some of the other fishing facilities, insufficient and inadequate for current fishery development.

The improvement activities to be carried out include the refurbishment of the vendor's arcade which would involve the renewal of vending booths and plumbing, electrical facilities, etc. The jetty will also be replaced with a new concrete decked structure. The area will be fitted with new fishing gear and lockers, as well as an ice making plant. Additionally, the area will have its first ever cooperative retail shop.

The new Fisheries facility is expected to be completed by March 2010

## PHOTO FOCUS

### CONSTRUCTION WORK on the Site of the New and Improved ANSE LA RAYE FISHERIES COMPLEX





# *Eye on the Constituencies*

According to MP for Gros Islet the Honourable Lenard "Spider" Montoute he and his team are busy trying to transform the physical landscape of Gros Islet, with the hope to improving the aesthetics, public facilities and other amenities. One of the aspects that have been undertaken is the beautification of the constituency which is on going.

Other plans and initiatives include the establishment of the government-owned Gros Islet Development Company (GIDC) to address road and social infrastructure maintenance in conjunction with the Town Council. Funds will come from property taxes from the area, 60% of which will be allocated to the GIDC. It will also have the ability to generate funds and seek grants.

A considerable effort has been made to improve the infrastructural out look of the constituency in terms of drains, roads etc. other undertakings to be done include a park to be established near the community centre in Massade.

A new human resource development centre will be built for Gros Islet which will house the Post office, Town Council Office, Registrars Office and the Court House. The current building which houses the Town Council will be used as a facility for the playing field.

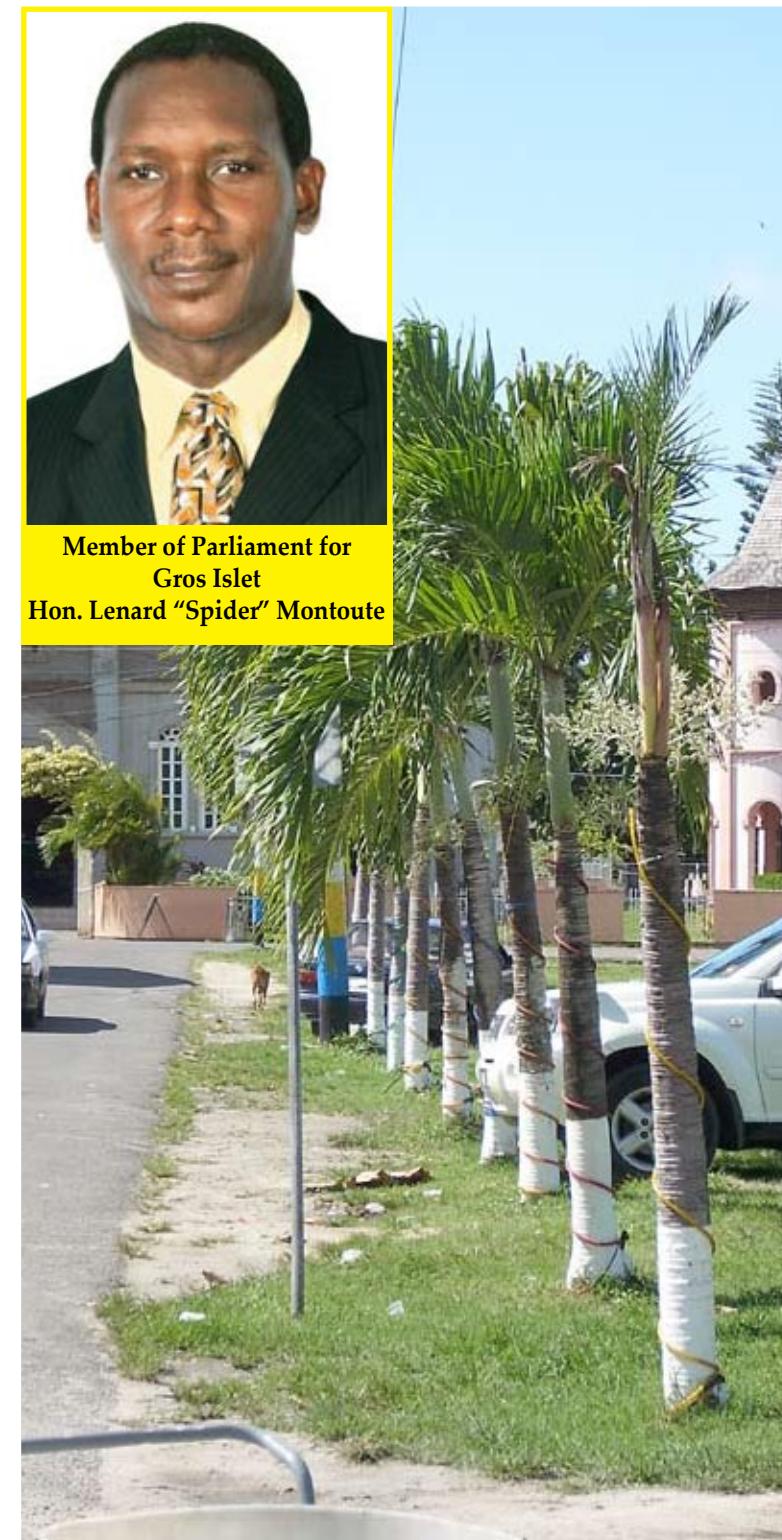
A new vending market is slated for Gros Islet town along with two public beach parks in the southern and northern ends of Pigeon Point. Additional parks will be built in Central Monchy, Gros Islet and Grand Riviere for vendors and for the general recreation of the constituents.

The improved sports infrastructure in Grand Riviere has been completed with changing rooms. However, upgrading the playing surface with additional seating will commence soon with funding by the European Union.

As the development of the Gros Islet and surround communities continue multi purpose courts will be established



Member of Parliament for  
Gros Islet  
Hon. Lenard "Spider" Montoute



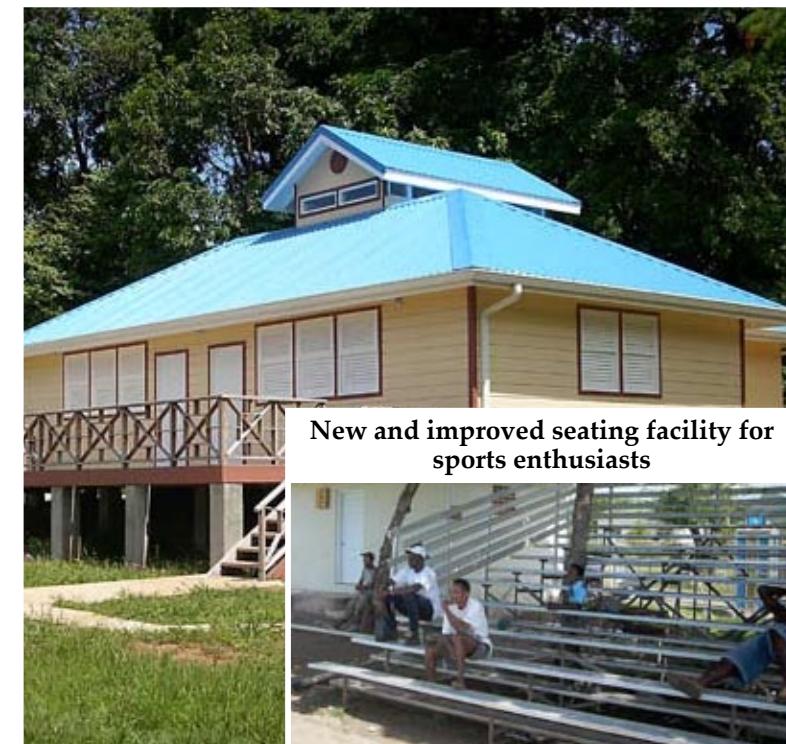
Beautification of Gros Islet



Upgraded Gros Islet Town Square



Redevelopment of the Gros Islet Jetty and look out Tower and improved beach area



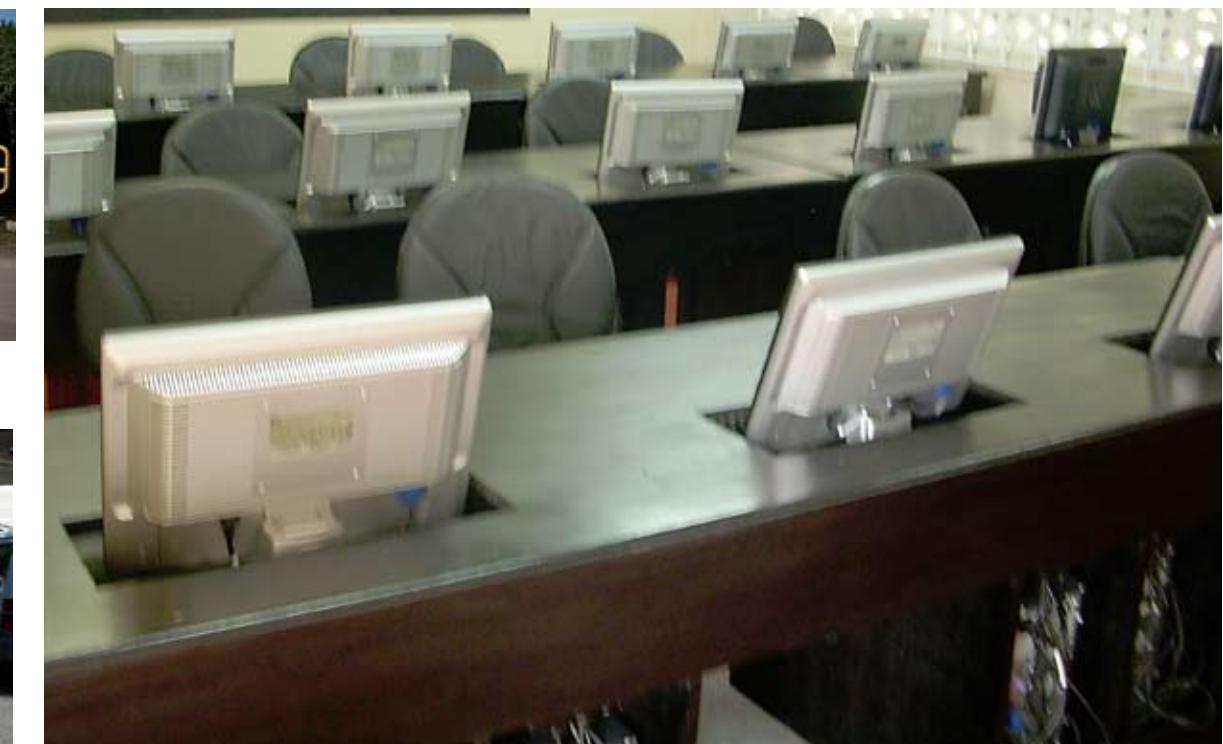
Changing room sports facility in Grand Riviere



Construction of new bridge in southern end of pigeon point



Improved road works in the constituency



IT Centre in the Gros Islet Public Library

in Grand Riviere along with improvement of Corinth playing field with new vending and other facilities.

The HOPE project will bring about numerous community and public infra structural project that will benefit the residents in most of the communities of Gros Islet.

Currently we are seeking land space to build a multi-purpose court in Corinth while at the same time we have broken

ground in August for a Human Resource Centre in Monchy which will include a Day-care Centre, changing areas for youth, sports men and women, an IT Centre and an open hall for social activities. Improvement of the Gros Islet Playing Field has been completed with toilet facilities for spectators and additional lighting to extend the time within which it can be utilized.

I have made a concerted ef-

fort to address the water problems in many areas with the constituency. There is major work towards bringing Pipe borne water has for the first time been brought to La Bourne area at the same time I am also working on addressing water problems in Vieux Sequix, Degazon and upper Monier

At the moment plans are well advanced to formulate a programme of activities for 2010 to celebrate Gros Islet's elevation to a township. "We want

to mark the occasion in a big way because we see it as a milestone."

Activities begin in January with the grand celebration in August".

Plans to mark this grand occasion include a beautification drive with assistance from the Taiwanese Agricultural Technical Mission to help transform the community, homecoming for Gros Islet residents overseas, nurturing and developing our culture and talent with

a grand pageant, sporting and cultural events.

There will be a major gala hosted by the Parliamentary Representative to honour and recognize residents who have made an outstanding contribution to the development of the town in the last 25 years. A Walk of Fame will see bricks being laid along Maria Street towards the church with the names of outstanding residents.

In addition to physical infra-

structure, the district representative has sought to implement programmes to engage the people, particularly the youth with laptops to outstanding Common entrance students, public IT labs in various quarters with the provision of internet access at the Gros Islet Library.

Similar IT centres will be set up in Riviere Mitant, Monchy and Grand Riviere, the recently completion of a summer pro-

gramme with human resource capacity we will be calling on successful and outstanding residents to give back through volunteerism and serve as mentors, coaches.

The Honourable Member of Parliament for Gros Islet concluded by pointing out that "There is much I expect to achieve in the coming year. I am certain by the end of my tenure 2011; I would have made a significant difference in the social, infrastructural, educational and health life of the people of Gros Islet, who elected me to serve them. It is with all humility, respect and joy I say thank you to them for their advice, support and encouragement".

# Inside the Ministry

**FOCUS ON THE MINISTRY OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION, YOUTH AND SPORTS**



Minister Lenard Montoute and PS Philip Dalsou meets with Public Sector Unions



The Ministry is charged with a number of responsibilities which include negotiations with Labour Unions, maintaining good industrial climate and ensuring proper working conditions for staff.

Other responsibilities include addressing human resource matters through Personnel Department and utilizing new media to make government more accessible and expanding its reach thorough the E-Government Unit. It is expected that much emphasis will be placed on this vital unit which will take government into the future with new innovations in IT for the public services. The Units current work includes (a) establishment of a national IT centre in Castries with the assistance of the government of Taiwan, (b) assisting the Ministry of Communications and works with new vehicle license and registration programme, (c) developing a new crime data and record system for the police, (d) improving data systems to assist the Ministry of Agriculture to collect data, (e) assisting the Registry in overcoming the perennial problems with the issuance of certificates and (f) organizing scholarships for citizens and in-house training for public servants through the Training Department.

In this regard The Vice President of Finance at the New England Institute of Technology (NEIT) extended an invitation to Honourable Minister Lenard Montoute in July 2009, to tour the facilities of the New England Institute of Technology and meet with various Department Chairs and managers to become more familiar with NEIT educational resources. The delegation included Mrs. Elizabeth Bailey and Ms. Anselma Calderon Training Officer. A memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Government of St. Lucia and NEIT was signed marking the beginning of a long and mutual beneficial relationship.

The objective of this visit was to explore training opportunities for St. Lucian students wishing to pursuing studies in the Technical Vocational Areas offered at the institution and to explore an offer to partial scholarships in the specified areas of training

The New England Institute of Technology (NEIT) will provide 4 – 14 awards per year in the following technical areas: Mechanical Engineer, Marine Technology, Electrical Technology, Plumbing, Construction, Construction Architecture, Information Technology, Cabinet making and TV & Radio Production.

Both the Bachelor's Degree and the Associate Degree can be completed in 18 months. The cost of the programmes are worked out in such a way that includes a contribution from the Government of Saint Lucia in the amount of US\$ 2,500 .00 with an additional injection of US\$2,500.00 by NEIT. This amounts to US\$5000.00 with the balance of cost to be met by the students.

The Ministry of the Public Service is attempting to transform the public service. Minister Montoute was frank in admitting that "the general public is not happy with the way things are done and pointed out that the Ministry is criticized heavily. To this end there is an urgent need to review approaches and methods to become more efficient, ensure internal systems employed for staff recognition and reward including ensuring that the performance appraisal assessment is measurable in an effective way, reviewing the staff classification system and instituted a re-training programme for staff in the areas of communication, report writing, management etc.

## Establishment and Legal Division

The main responsibilities of the Department of Establishment include establishment of government offices, making

recommendations to Cabinet relating to structures of ministries and departments, processing all lease as to rental agreements on behalf of government and designing of government offices. The Legal Division of the Ministry exists to advise ministries and departments on government policies, regulations and staff orders as well as to process all matters relating to discipline of public servants to the Public Service Commission.

## Department of Social Transformation Youth And Sports

The Ministry has been hard hit by the financial belt tightening which has restricted its budget and the amount of work that can be done. The Ministry is seeking volunteers to assist with their programmes, which focus heavily on youth. In the area of poverty alleviation, the Community Service Unit is working with the Saint Lucia Social Development Fund (SSDF) to ameliorate the problems of poor or indigent citizens. These Programmes include housing assistance programmes, educational assistance programmes, employment opportunity, the HOPE Programme has been launched to extend greater opportunities for training, employment, and health assistance and the Youth Entrepreneurship programme design to encourage development of self-employment and entrepreneurial activities.

In the area of sports the Ministry is concentrating on maintaining and upgrading of the sporting infrastructure. A total of approximately EC\$7M was spent to overhaul the George Odlum Stadium, which made it possible to host the international track events, the first of which was the massively successful CARIFTA Games.

We are currently preparing to host the 20/20 World Cricket Championship and as a consequence the 7-year-old Beausejour Cricket Stadium will be rehabilitated. There is clearly the need to ensure that our sporting facilities are properly maintained and this we will do with EU funding. In order to achieve efficiency in sports development certain vital core programmes must be established. Programmes such as the Elite Athlete Programme that identifies outstanding sportspeople and provides enhanced support and the expansion of Sports for all programme already established in Choiseul, Dennery, Gros Islet and Castries, must spread throughout the entire island. It is only when we achieve this that every son and daughter of Saint Lucia will truly be afforded an opportunity to develop this sporting prowess, passion and enthusiasm.

# Stakeholders Prepared for New Regime of Standards and Certification for Agricultural Products

The Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards (SLBS) is coordinating the staging of a sensitization seminar for stakeholders in the agricultural sector on a new regime of standards and certification for agricultural products.

Under the European Union's Framework of Assistance for 2002 (SFA 2002), a project entitled "Development and Implementation of Standards and a Certification System for Selected Agricultural Products and Training" is being implemented in Saint Lucia.

Under this project, existing national standards for selected crops, livestock, poultry and fish products will be revised, draft new standards developed, a certification system established and training imparted to producers/suppliers, inspectors, regulatory personnel and other stakeholders.

The project is also expected

to play an important role in, improving the quality, safety and competitiveness of locally produced crops, poultry, livestock and fish products.

A perennial problem of agricultural production here is the issue of sale of agricultural products once they are available. The project will address that issue with the expected result of achieving greater market penetration of locally produced crops, poultry, livestock and fish products.

A half day sensitization seminar was held on Wednesday 24th June 2008 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the NIC Conference Room, 5th Floor NIC building, Castries Waterfront.

The purpose of the seminar was to inform all stakeholders of the relevant details of the project and how it could impact on their businesses or activities; obtaining valuable stakeholder



**Agriculture still a pivotal sector for the Caribbean**

input into the implementation plans of the project; and general public sensitization.

The project is being implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Land, Fisheries

and Forestry and coordinated by the Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards.

## Stakeholders to be consulted on Draft Guidelines for Recreational Water Quality Standards

The Government of Saint Lucia through the Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards is inviting comments from key sectors of the public on a Draft Guidelines for Recreational Water Quality Standards for Saint Lucia. The document drafted by the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute CEHI was presented to government as part of a project funded by the European Union.

The SLBS has invited a number of agencies and sectors whose activities impact water quality to the first of two consultations, the first to be held on Wednesday, August 26th, at the National Insurance Corporation Conference Centre. A similar consultation will be held in the South of the island in September.

Saint Lucia's waters, both riverine and coastal, and associated habitats, have always been important to communities as a source of food and for recreation. However, these waters are under increasing threat

from a number of land-based pollutants in the form of sew

The document reflects an intense consultative process with



**Planet Earth**

age, sediments, nutrients, pesticides, litter and marine debris.

The draft guidelines respond to these increasing threats to the island's recreational waters, with a view to regulating the quality of the water entering recreational waters.

a number of stakeholders, including relevant government agencies. The Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards, which is the national agency responsible for the establishment and adoption of standards, is finalizing the draft standard which will again

go through a process of consultations with stakeholders, such as hoteliers, manufacturers, marinas and garages, for their review and comment.

The development of a Recreational Water Quality Standard for Saint Lucia is a first step in the implementation of the Land Based Sources of Marine Pollution Protocol ratified by the Government of Saint Lucia in January, 2008. More importantly, the Standard once approved, can be used as an important tool to facilitate the maintenance of a high recreational water quality in Saint Lucia, so that the health of its people and visitors are not compromised.

As we all know, Liquid Water is Essential for Life. Water Sources are renewable...but finite! 70% of earth's surface is water. Only 2.5% to 3% is fresh water. Less than 1% is accessible. Pollution and other factors further, reduce access by 2/3, billion people (1/6th of the world's population) have no access to quality drinking water.

Liquid water is responsible for life as we know it! Viewed from space the earth appears to be mostly water, but only 2.5% of that water is fresh, and most of that lies frozen and inacces-

sible. As a result, less than 1% of fresh water is accessible in lakes, river channels and under ground. Geography, environment and pollution from human activities reduce this amount by a further two thirds, and what remains is unequally distributed around the world. It should be noted that access to safe water, provision of sufficient supplies of water, and access to sanitation are three factors that together can contribute to the health and safety of the world's population. A lack of adequate supplies of good-quality water, together with poor sanitation, exacts a high health toll, particularly in rural areas, hindering both social and economic development. This makes the promotion of hygienic behaviour a high priority.

The draft Recreational Water Quality Standard is also available on the Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards website, [www.slbs.org.lc](http://www.slbs.org.lc) or the GIS website at [www.stlucia.gov.lc](http://www.stlucia.gov.lc)

For further information please contact Mr. Julius James at the Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards at telephone 456 0102 or Ms. LaVerne Walker at the Sustainable Development and Environment Section at 468 5808.

# Friendship in Times of Turbulence



**His Excellency Taiwanese Ambassador Tom Chou accepts the donation from Prime Minister Hon. Stephenson King**

Prime Minister Stephenson King made it very clear that the numerous contributions Taiwan has made to Saint Lucia in the areas of infrastructural development, agriculture, education and social development generally, cements a bond that will forever echo in the hearts and minds of all Saint Lucian's. The leader of our nation went further to state that we have expressed our gratitude through our parliamentarians (especially in parliament) and through the people of Saint Lucia for the support that we continue to re-

ceive from the Government and People of Taiwan.

On occasions when our countries are devastated, we call upon friends to provide moral and financial support where possible, to help rebuild and gain strength in national development. Following the impact of hurricane Dean Saint Lucia received early support from the government and people of Taiwan.

Recently, typhoon Maricot caused major damage to Taiwan's infrastructure which resulted in loss of life on a large

scale. Consequently, the government and people of Saint Lucia have responded with gestures of sympathy to the people of Taiwan especially those who lost their lives and suffered lost of property.

Prime Minister King pointed out that the gesture of US\$100,000.00 seems small but must be seen as a profound symbolic demonstration of amity aimed at giving moral support to Taiwan to show how much we value their friendship. The intent of the contribution is to go to the indigenous people who have suffered the most.



**Prime Minister Stephenson King and H.E. Ambassador Tom Chou in deep discussion on the Typhoon that hit Taiwan**

## OPSR Targets Training as a Critical Component of Programme Development

The Government of Saint Lucia is in the process of implementing a comprehensive Private Sector Development Programme (PSDP) with support from its international development partners.

The overall objective of the PSDP is to accelerate the pace of economic diversification and growth by improving the business environment, enhancing the quality of technical and managerial skills of the labour market, providing support to entrepreneurs and industry associations in product and or services development, marketing and modernization of Information Communications Technology (ICT).

Under the Special Framework of Assistance (SFA) 2002, the EU is providing financial assistance for the establishment of a Rural Credit Facility, which among other interventions is expected to stimulate the inflow of credit

to and increase investment by rural businesses, particularly Small and Micro Enterprises.

The Cooperative Movement which has traditionally been in the forefront of rural development has been selected to spearhead the drive towards improved efficiency, productivity and competitiveness.

To this end, a series of training programmes organized by the Cooperative League and sponsored by the Office of Private Sector Relations, under the RESTORE Programme have been planned for September.

The Training targets Board and Committee Members as well as Credit Union Branch Managers and other senior officials.

Training will be conducted in Castries, Mon Repos and Vieux Fort, beginning September 5, until September 26, 2009

# Ministry of Education prepares for the reopening of School

National Review met with the Chief Education Officer in preparation for the reopening of school.

As the Ministry of education prepare for the re-opening of school, Chief Education Office Mrs. Augusta Ifill emphasizes that the health and safety of the students are of Paramount importance. "We are looking first at keeping our children safe. This includes preventative measures to reduce the spread of the H1N1 pandemic, known as the Swine Flu. Since the closing of school there have been several confirmed cases".

School opening will see the assembly of people in large numbers, many will be students coming back from traveling or who are close to someone who traveled so preventative measures must be put in place as this can spread rapidly.

The Ministry of Education is taking precaution by sanitizing schools and making public service announcements. Surveillance has also been stepped up and a letter was issued prior to the closing of school to alert parents.

Mass training of all primary school and lower secondary school teachers during the July/August holidays. The focus was on literacy, recognizing the effect of the deficiencies in literacy among students. The Ministry has been active during the

school break preparing for the reopening of the 105 schools under its wing:

There has been a heavy focus on strengthening monitoring and supervision systems by training all principals and secondary school vice-principals. Additionally there has been a process of phasing in the Caribbean Vocational Qualification certified by CXC to provide additional areas of assessment for graduants.

The ministry has also undertaken greater monitoring of newly instituted forms of certification through the Elevation of Standard Skills for Inclusive Growth run by NSDC.

Further we have examined the curriculum to incorporate areas such as theatre arts, music and visual arts. This has been included on the priority list to provide training for teachers in those areas.

"This school year the challenge is improving on the quality."

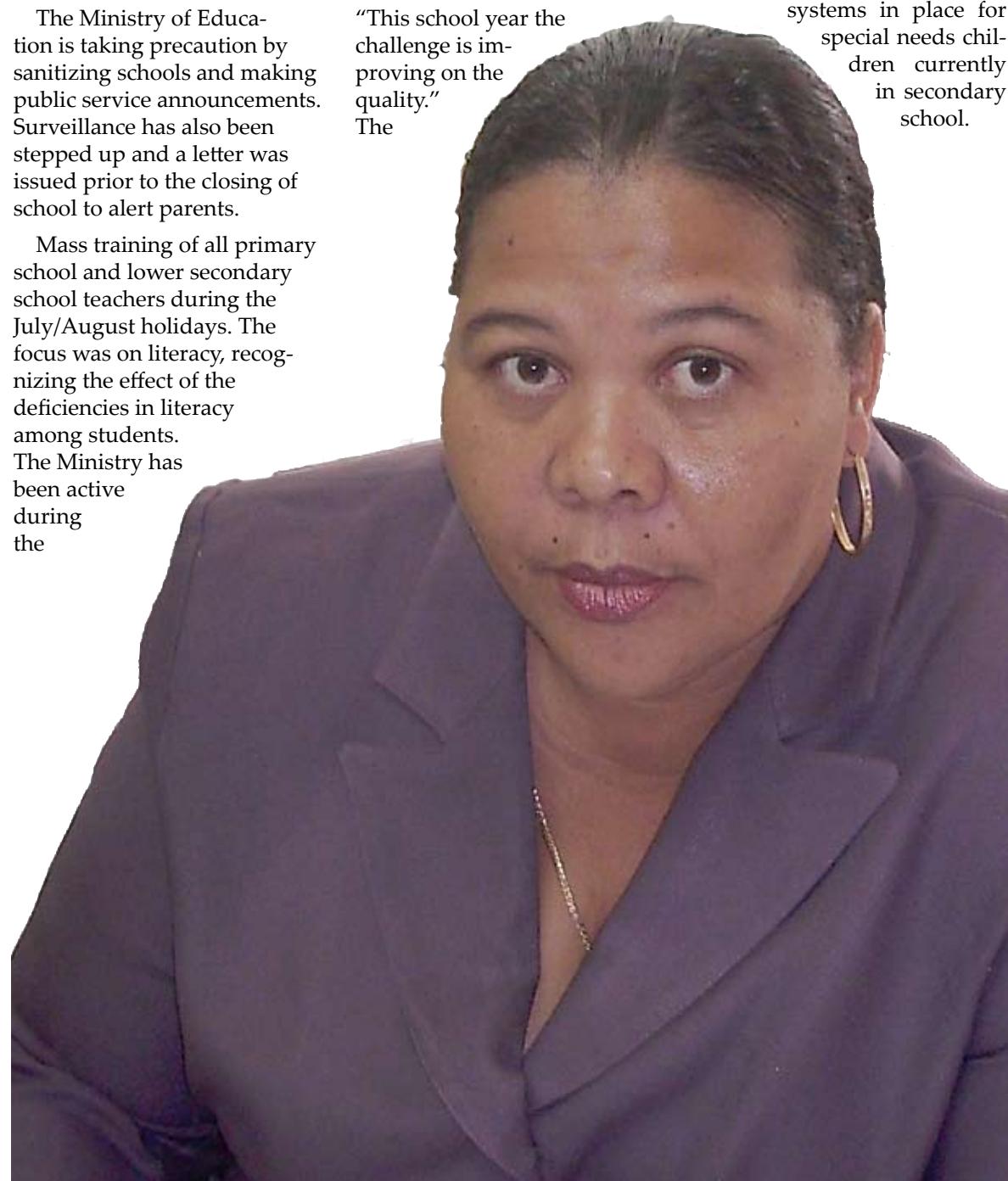
The

Physical Education (PE) programme has been enhanced, with a new PE curriculum generated at the CARICOM level to begin in September 2009. This included training of PE teachers to deliver new structured PE curriculum from Kindergarten to CXC level.

The Ministry is currently assessing the newly released O Level and A Level CXC examination results. There has been an increase in the overall percentage passes and an improvement in the quality of passes is also anticipated.

We continue to deal with the expected challenges of Universal Secondary Education. The focus has now shifted from ensuring a secondary school place for every child, to ensuring that every child deserves a place. This includes strengthening the primary school system to deliver the necessary results and putting

systems in place for special needs children currently in secondary school.



## How to get it done!



### **Checklist and Fees for the Submission of Planning Applications**

1. The developer or his agent presents application to the front desk counter for submission.
2. The application is checked by the front desk clerks or building officers to ensure that the developer/agent has submitted all the requirements for the particular type of application being submitted.
3. Assuming all the requirements have been submitted, a payment slip is written up and given to the developer or his agent for payment of fees.
4. An application is not registered until fees have been paid for the application. Upon payment of the fees, the developer submits the application with the receipts showing proof that the fees have been paid.
5. The application is then registered by the front desk clerks or building officers by registering all the information applicable to the application being submitted in the register of applications. The application is given a reference number, which will be the next consecutive number available in the register.

The information (applicable to the application) written in the register of applications is as follows:

- (a) Reference Number
- (b) Date of submission
- (c) Number of plans submitted
- (d) Applicant's name
- (e) Block and Parcel Number
- (f) Location of development
- (g) District
- (h) Approval type (full approval or approval in principle)
- (i) Application type e.g. commercial, residential, subdivision, etc.
- (j) Other types of applications not specified under application type, e.g tent, fence.
- (k) Area of development (building area or area of lots for subdivisions)
- (l) Number of bedrooms
- (m) Number of lots
- (n) Fees
- (o) Department Circulation dispatched and returned, i.e. receipt numbers
- (p) Decision
- (q) Recipient (person who receives application on presentation of registration slip)
- (r) Subdivision Number
- (s) Designer
- (t) Remarks (signature of officer registering application)

6. Once all the information relevant to the application (as indicated above) is entered in the registration book, a registration slip is prepared and given to the developer/agent. This slip must be presented when collecting the application. The registration slip also provides information relevant to the application, such as:

- (a) Applicant's name
- (b) Address
- (c) Application Reference Number
- (d) Development type
- (e) Date submitted

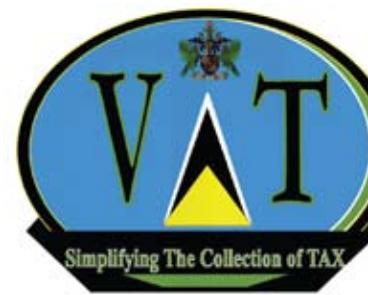
The officer registering the application must sign this slip on behalf of the Executive Secretary, Development Control Authority. The slip is also stamped with the Authority's date stamp indicating the date the application was submitted.

The officer registering the application then writes the reference number and stamps the date stamp on the top right hand corner of all the documents and drawings (individual sheets) of the application. The application is then referred to the Development Control Officer or to the Executive Secretary who assigns it to an officer for processing.

For further information contact the Development Control Authority, Physical Planning Section a tel. no. 468-4457 or 468-4455.

## Let's Talk About Tax...

# Value Added Tax!



The acronym "VAT" stands for "Value Added Tax". It is simplest to think of VAT as a broad-based sales tax that may apply to each stage of production, processing, and distribution. In other words, VAT is a multi-stage general sales tax.

VAT differs from a Sales Tax because it utilizes a credit mechanism for businesses. Each VAT-registered business pays tax on the purchase of inputs and charges VAT on the sales of outputs. The business remits the amount of VAT collected from customers less the amount paid on purchase of inputs. This mechanism effectively provides relief for VAT paid on the purchase of inputs.

The Government of Saint Lucia has announced its policy intention to embark on the implementation of a modern and broad based Value Added Tax. Empirical studies have revealed weaknesses in the current indirect tax regime and have proposed a tax reform initiative aimed at a more efficient, appropriate, simplified and modernized indirect tax system.

Many developed and developing countries have introduced a Value Added Tax system, which has continued to spread throughout the world since its introduction in France more than 50 years ago. To date over 130 countries worldwide are operating a VAT, including Caribbean countries such as Haiti, Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana. In the last three years, Dominica, Belize, Antigua and Barbuda, and St. Vincent have also introduced VAT. Grenada is on schedule to re-introduce VAT, whilst St. Kitts and Nevis are considering its introduction. In some of these countries, the VAT is a major source of their tax revenue.

The Government of Saint Lucia has decided to introduce a VAT but not before April 2010. VAT should not be seen as an additional tax, but rather a replacement tax for some of the indirect taxes, currently being administered by the Inland Revenue Department and the Customs and Excise Department. This recommendation was made in 2003 by OECS Tax Reform Commission, established by the Monetary Council of the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union (ECCU).

Currently, the tax system comprises of direct and indirect taxes. Direct taxes include Income, Corporate and Withholding tax. Some of the indirect taxes presently being levied include Consumption tax, Hotel and Accommodation Tax, Environment Service Charge, Mobile Cellular Tax, Customs Service Charge, and Motor Vehicle Rental fee.

Only indirect taxes are considered for reform under a VAT, not direct taxes. The final list of taxes to be replaced or reduced by the VAT has not been determined. These taxes will cease upon the introduction of VAT, and will not be levied together with the VAT for any period, whatsoever.

Major decisions to determine the rate, threshold for registration, treatment of goods and services, taxes to be replaced and transitional issues are being considered by the policy makers.

It is paramount that the necessary preparatory work be done prior to the implementation of a VAT. These activities include but are not limited to: stakeholder consultations, public education, taxpayer training, and development of a VAT Legislation, registration of taxpayers, development of an IT System, and establishment of the organizational structure to administer the VAT.

The VAT Implementation Project Team was established by Cabinet in October 2008, with the Project Office located on No. 4 Bridge Street, Castries. The team is mandated to prepare Saint Lucia for the implementation of VAT by April 1st 2010

To date, the Implementation project team has had initial consultations or have made presentations to some organizations such as the SLHTA, SLISBA, Chamber of Agriculture and the Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce. We are also in the process of scheduling consultations with the other

groups and other business organizations on the island.

The Implementation Project Team is cognizant of the need for an effective Public Education drive and a comprehensive campaign will be undertaken in every Saint Lucian community, geared towards educating persons on the broad concepts of a VAT and to highlight the rights and responsibilities of final consumers under the system.

A VAT will impact the lives of all Saint Lucians and residents. As a result, presentations and consultations must incorporate everyone. It must be conducted in a planned and organized manner, in order to ensure that every stakeholder is involved, regardless of his/her opinion on the VAT. The publicity aspect must be timely and provide accurate information relevant to the needs of the respective stakeholder group.

The project team will endeavour to reach all Saint Lucians to share the VAT message in both English and Creole before the implementation of the Value Added Tax system.

### THIS WEEK ON NTN

Sat. 29th to Sun. 30th August 2007  
NTN – PROVIDING INFORMATION YOU NEED

Station ID National Anthem, Pledge Programme Guide - 6.00 - 6:05 Take Two - The Week in Review - 6:05 - 6:15 Your Right To Know - 6: 15 - 6:30 Our Nation - Integrate Or Perish #1 1963 - 1973 - Years of Hope: The Dream Begins. - 7:00 - 7:30 Government and People - Sod Turning Ceremony – Monchy Human Resource Development Centre - 7:30 - 8.00

Issues and Answers - Ryan O'Brian speaks with the Parliamentary Commissioner

On the integral role of his office to the government and people

Regional Awareness Eastern C'Bean Supreme Court Part 1

A solid series of the court's history and evolution over the past 4 years

For the complete programme guide, log on to our website at [www.stlucia.gov.lc](http://www.stlucia.gov.lc) and then click on the NTN icon.



The Holistic Opportunities for Personal Empowerment (HOPE) programme has been formulated to address the immediate needs of the vulnerable population of St. Lucia, while simultaneously equipping them with the resources needed to assist in securing a more sustainable livelihood. This programme is administered by the Saint Lucia Social Development Fund (SSDF) in collaboration with various agencies. It is expected that approximately two thousand (2000) persons will benefit from this programme on an annual basis.

HOPE is designed around four pillars: (1) Employment, (2) Training, (3) Personal Development and (4) Health.

#### Objectives of Hope Programme

- Employment creation / Reduce unemployment
- Generate economic activity
- Improve size and quality of labour force

- Increase and improve community/public assets and infrastructure

#### Target Group

Unemployed Persons: Unskilled, Semi-Skilled and Skilled. Must be 16 years and older Must be a St Lucian

Persons will be selected by the SSDF from an unemployment database which will be web-based for easy access to all users.

#### Hope Employment Initiatives

- Community/Public Infrastructural Projects
- Community/Public Beautification Projects
- Public Sector Efficiency Assignments
- Private Sector Job Placement Partnerships
- Youth and Sports Services
- Self Employment Services

All persons employed under HOPE initiatives must participate in the following components of HOPE.

The Training Component (which includes but not limited to):

- On-the-job, and classroom training
- Efficiency training
- Retooling training
- Project & business management training

Certificates will be issued to participants where possible.