



NEWSLETTER

The Antigua and Barbuda High Commission

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Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer (left) conferring with the Minister responsible for Barbuda Affairs, Trevor Walker MP

On 5th July, Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer presented his government's case to the Heads of CARICOM for the retention of work permits for non-nationals after the implementation of the CSME in December 2005.

Antigua and Barbuda was granted derogation by the Heads in July of 2002 from the requirement to fully implement the free movement of skills regime; and was allowed to continue to control the numbers of CARICOM nationals through work-permit requirements.

Prime Minister Spencer said that Antigua and Barbuda has always been a leader in facilitating regional integration with 34% of the workforce coming from other Caribbean countries. He remarked, "We agree with the core principles of the CSME and will comply with its obligations. Antigua and Barbuda is on-target to implement the free movement of skills legislation by December 2005 and will allow free movement of persons within the special categories."

In 1991, there were 7,796 CARICOM nationals living in Antigua and Barbuda. That number grew to 13, 695 by 2001, representing a 75% increase. Sections of the CARICOM Secretariat have stated that the derogation which allows Antigua and Barbuda to issue work permits will expire in December of 2005 at the beginning of the full implementation of the CSME.

Prime Minister Spencer said that such action would defeat the very purpose for which it was originally granted keeping in mind that Antigua and Barbuda has already integrated the labour market of the region with 34% of the country's work force comprising CARICOM nationals.

"It must be underscored that this derogation will not be used to wantonly deny entry of CARICOM nationals," Prime Minister Spencer pointed out.

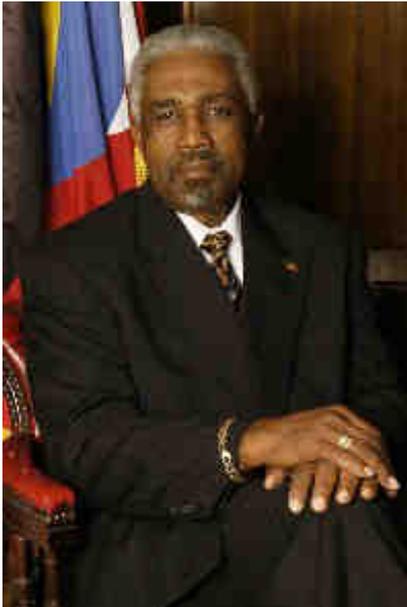
He outlined that due to the economic situation being experience by the country, Antigua and Barbuda reserves the right, on a temporary basis, to control the entry of these categories of persons to lessen the adverse effects on the economy. The Prime Minister therefore proposed that the derogation be reviewed by a technical team after the CSME has been in full implementation for three years. This review he said should include an analysis of the labour-market in Antigua and Barbuda.

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HIGH COMMISSIONER'S MESSAGE



Dear Readers,

The theme of this month's newsletter is one of celebration. It is a reminder of the emancipation of our forefathers from slavery which we celebrate on 1st August each year and it is also a celebration of 500 days of renewed Good Governance by the new UPP.

I therefore feel it is paramount that we read the historic address delivered by Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer to fittingly mark the end of our summer festival and the milestone of the government in office.

These are indeed challenging times, however, as you read of the activities undertaken by your government, we cannot but feel a sense of pride in the united efforts of our fellow countrymen as we chart a new course for the development of our homeland. Happy reading!!

Dr Carl Roberts
High Commissioner

Greetings, Antigua and Barbuda.

Antigua and Barbuda is still shining with the afterglow of Carnival. You, too, must sense this. For all who experienced it, Carnival 2005 succeeded spectacularly in keeping the Wadadli Spirit alive.

By all estimates, participants in and spectators for the number one summer festival hit record levels this year. By all estimates, costuming, compositions and performances attained new heights in Carnival 2005.

By all estimates, BET, the American Television network, will take Antigua Carnival to record numbers of viewers around the globe. This will be via a half-hour show that BET shot live on location, here in Antigua and Barbuda in the run-up to, and during Carnival. Now in post-production, the BET show will premiere this fall. It will be seen by untold millions in the United States and around the world, in repeat broadcasts, into Spring of 2006. Credit for BET's in-depth involvement in and coverage of Carnival 2005 goes to the Carnival Development Committee and to the Ministry of Tourism.

I congratulate these organisations on the arrangement for BET to provide this potent marketing opportunity for Antigua and Barbuda.

I thank and commend all the volunteers and all the organisations that made Carnival 2005 come alive as the super success it turned out to be.



By all reports, Carnival 2005 was a peaceful and joyous love fest.

Only two persons were reported as victims of injuries at the hands of others in Carnival-related incidents. Those injuries were considered minor. Great credit for the safety and good order of this year's Carnival celebrations goes to the Royal Antigua and Barbuda Police Force. The Police Force is now under the command of the first female

Commissioner of Police in this part of the world, Ms. Delano Christopher. For their sterling performance in ensuring a clean, safe and thoroughly enjoyable Carnival 2005, I salute our top cop and our recently restructured police high command, together with our police officers of all ranks.

I acknowledge the valuable role of our Defence Force in all of this. Throughout the Carnival season, our soldiers remained at the ready, as ever present allies to our Police Force.

Last year, in response to a surge in incidents of persons committing crimes involving violence, or demonstrating a propensity to violence, the government introduced a number of legislative measures to aid law enforcement. Those measures have proven to be of immense value to the society and to the safety of our citizens and residents.

They were manifestly a factor in the orderly conduct that we witnessed during the Carnival Season.

Not surprisingly, the leadership of the Opposition party stridently opposed those measures. The Opposition leadership will continue their calculated and dangerous tactic of attempting to legitimise criminal conduct as a justifiable response to the economic crunch that has resulted directly from the corruption, ineptitude and atrocious fiscal policies that the ALP inflicted on Antigua and Barbuda for decades.

The voices of gloom and doom and personal invectives continue to spew forth from Opposition quarters. The day after Carnival, the voices of race hate and class confrontation were trumpeting their vile and venom. They even went on the attack against Nigeria and that country's President, who visited Antigua on Tuesday. It was most unfortunate that the lead voice in belittling the country from whence many of our ancestors came, and insulting the President of Nigeria was that of former diplomat who once represented Antigua and Barbuda at the highest international level.

Any goodwill expressed by the Voices of Hate and False Witnessing seems to be reserved for the lawless in our society.

While our opponents would coddle criminals, the Sunshine Government recognises an obligation to respond to challenges to public peace and safety with serious measures.

In any event, the selection of Antigua as the venue for the Inter American Human Rights forum this week is fresh acknowledgement of the regard in which the international community has held this country since March 23, last year. Over the past sixteen months, Antigua and Barbuda has distinguished itself for good governance and for our landmark enhancement of individual entitlement for all citizens. Acknowledgement for this also comes from the UNDP. The regional office of the UNDP is voluntarily providing funding for a programme to advance institutional mechanisms for good governance in Antigua and Barbuda. These mechanisms support the implementation of our Freedom of Information Act; our Integrity in Public Life Act; and our Prevention of Corruption Act.

The United Progressive Party introduced this landmark trilogy of integrity and citizen entitlement legislation in our seventh month in Government. These measures will ultimately contribute to improving the standard of living and enhancing the quality of life the Antiguan and Barbudan people will enjoy.

Under previous administrations, large amounts of money that should have gone to providing public services to the population were diverted to the pockets of high government officials and their accomplices.

The new integrity laws and the new standards of governance that the UPP administration has brought into force are meant to make sure that the diversion of funds from the state to private pockets are a thing of the past. I have already declared my position on such matters quite categorically. There can be no compromise with integrity in my administration. Corruption is a cancer that can rapidly spread from occasional to endemic. Corruption in public life should therefore be cauterized at the very first symptom. This country, more than any other, must permit no compromise on the strongest possible measures to prevent corruption.

That dismal legacy of the deposed dynasty must never again be permitted to surface in Antigua and Barbuda. With all of this, it is perhaps appropriate for me to now acknowledge a particular debt of gratitude to Opposition commentators.

Every day, on their Hate Radio station, they publicly lament the lengthening period since their loss of power, on Judgment Day, March 23, 2004.

On this score, it is generally believed that the Opposition leadership's wailing and the gnashing of their teeth is destined to be an unrelieved condition for a very long time. At any rate, that condition is expected to extend well beyond the five-year time line of the first term of the Sunshine Government.

Back, however, to my declaration of gratitude to the Sunshine Government's Loyal Opposition.

On Friday 5th, Opposition front-liners reminded the world - and they reminded yours truly - that Antigua and Barbuda had completed the first 500 days of Government in the Sunshine.

The Opposition's daily count of the tenure of the Sunshine Government reveals the burning obsession of the leadership of that group over their loss of the power that the Antiguan and Barbuda people wrested from them 502 days ago.

They focus on the passing days of the calendar in the way that a convicted felon serving a long sentence marks off the days on the wall of his cell.

The Opposition leadership is fixated on the projected date of the next General Election. Their return to power by the next election is the principal concern of the collaborators in the dynasty that appears convinced that governing Antigua and Barbuda is the exclusive birthright of a single family. As I say this, I can imagine Antiguan and Barbudans all over the world, and friends of our country, reacting to that proposition with one sentiment:

“Perish the thought, they must all face justice!”

Though the UPP administration shares this sentiment, we insist on being meticulous and deliberate in ensuring due process as justice takes its course. That course is inexorable. Justice for those guilty of crimes against the state and against the people is as sure as the sun will rise.

This reference to Sir MacLean Emmanuel’s prophetic verse, brings this grand master of the art of calypso’s counsel this Carnival to mind. With profound wisdom and with all-embracing effect, Short Shirt brought clarity to those clamouring for instant solution to every problem with a chorus of three words, eleven letters. “It takes time.”

Another titan in the Calypso art form continued to dominate the competitive arena in Carnival 2005. With no such tolerance, with little charity, and with unforgettable impact, Queen Ivena conquered all comers, male and female, on her way to her fifth Queen of Calypso victory and her third consecutive Calypso Monarch triumph.

Ivena’s achievement is without precedent and without parallel. She has gone where no calypsonian, no performer, has gone before.

Ivena is richly deserving of national recognition appropriate for a woman who, in tandem with composer, consistently delivers socio-political commentaries that rank with anything any other Antiguan woman, Jamaica Kincaid included, has produced.

With all of this, the Sunshine Government is proceeding with other dominant priorities.

It is perhaps fitting that we reflect, today, on the decisive difference the Sunshine Government has made in our first 500 day semester.

Our overriding concern continues to be that we so govern Antigua and Barbuda as to ensure the greatest good for the greatest number of our citizens. We have been doing this on very limited resources in an economy decimated by our predecessors.

To intensify the financial crisis created by the disastrous policies of the previous administration, a significant portion of the country’s revenue streams were long ago committed to servicing portions of the close to \$3 Billion debt left by the ALP.

In the circumstances, we had no option but to proceed with the re-introduction of personal income tax. However, it’s so structured to exempt a targeted 75% of all income earners from paying any personal income tax. Together with this, we slashed the rate of consumption tax on dozens of staple food items and other high volume consumer products.

We have significantly increased the base rate of old age pensions.

We are providing all school children with free uniforms. The Opposition derided this initiative. Parents welcome it. In a programme that will ultimately serve the bulk of the schools population, every day, starting next month, the Sunshine Government will begin to supply thousands of nutritionally balanced meals to children in a number of government schools.

We kept our promise in delivering Christmas Gift Barrels at a \$1.00 a barrel to thousands of families.

In the face of major increases in the price of oil over the past year, the Government has provided subsidies amounting to millions of dollars to hold down the price of gasoline and diesel fuel at the pumps. This, however, can no longer be sustained and we can expect some adjustment in prices almost immediately.

We have commenced road improvements across the nation and this will intensify over the coming months.

Work on the completion of the construction of the Mount St. John Hospital will commence shortly, with a soft loan from the Exim Bank of the People’s Republic of China.

In a related matter, let me publicly recognize the significant voluntary work being done by the group of patriotic Antiguan and Barbudans in the refurbishing of the Holberton Hospital.



The government owes them a debt of gratitude and promises to work closely with them in accomplishing the task of significantly upgrading Holberton.

In a matter of weeks, my government in partnership with the government of the People's Republic of China will break ground for the construction of the Sir Vivian Richards Cricket Stadium in time for World Cup Cricket 2007. The Sir Vivian Richards Cricket Stadium is another gift to the government and people of Antigua and Barbuda from our friend the People's Republic of China.

My government cherishes the excellent relationship with China and will continue to develop strong ties.

Barbuda is now better equipped with essential facilities than ever before in our country's history.

For the first time, the MP for Barbuda is a Minister in the Sunshine Government.

In another first, he was a member of the Antigua and Barbuda delegation at the recent CARICOM Summit.

We have just completed a new facility for vendors in downtown St. John's.

We have brought the Deep Water Harbour up to full compliance with new international standards for port and ships security. We have retained international consultants for the VC Bird Airport development project, which is now underway.

To protect jobs and air services, we continue to contribute to keeping LIAT aloft.

In 2004, in a very challenging globalised trade environment, the Antigua and Barbuda economy achieved a 4% level of growth that was second only to oil-rich Trinidad and Tobago.

To protect revenue streams, we have suspended discretionary Duty Free Concessions.

A measure of the impact of such concessions on the economy is that in the month preceding last year's elections duty free warrants for the importation of some 1,000 vehicles were issued by the last administration.

We have begun to pay the country's debt to governments and institutions across the globe, and Antigua and Barbuda is steadily winning acceptance and respect in regional and international affairs.

More and more, our counsel and involvement is sought on regional and global issues.

On top of all the Sunshine Government has achieved in our first 500 days, the 2005 Carnival Spectacular was icing on the cake for Antigua and Barbuda.

We look forward, now, to an equally successful Independence Homecoming Festival in a couple of months.

I look forward to welcoming back many times the numbers that came home for Independence last year.

All can look forward to continuing progress in the next 500 days, and the next 5,000 days, of Government in the Sunshine.

I am Baldwin Spencer, your Chief Servant.

Thank you for joining me today for this edition of Action Agenda

Until next time, may God be with you and your loved ones.

May God continue to bless our beloved Antigua and Barbuda.





Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer signs the Treaty while CARICOM Secretariat's General Counsel, Dr Winston Anderson looks on

PM Spencer signs Caribbean Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance

On the 6th July, Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer signed the Caribbean Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Serious Criminal Matters while attending the CARICOM Heads of Government meeting in St. Lucia .

Prime Minister Spencer who is the current Chairman of the Regional Security System said that the purpose of the Treaty is to increase cooperation in mutual legal assistance among Caribbean countries in respect of serious criminal matters and to combat criminal activity.

He noted that states signatory to the Treaty will afford each other the widest measures of mutual legal assistance under their laws at any stage of investigations, prosecutions and

judicial proceedings in relation to serious crimes.

Under the Treaty countries will be allowed to provide assistance in identifying and locating persons and objects; taking evidence or statements from persons; obtaining the production of judicial or other documents and examining objects, sites and premises.

In addition, the mutual legal assistance includes affecting a temporary transfer of persons in custody to appear as witnesses; executing searches and seizures; tracing, seizing, freezing and confiscating the proceeds or instrumentalities of crime and facilitating the personal appearances of witnesses.

Requests from state parties for assistance will be made through a designated central authority that will have the responsibility and power to execute requests for legal assistance or to transmit them to the competent authorities for execution. The costs for legal assistance will be borne by the requesting state.

Antigua and Barbuda to participate in study of effects of oil prices on the economy

Antigua and Barbuda will participate in a regional comprehensive study of the implications of rising oil prices on the economy.

This was one of the decisions of the 52nd Meeting of the Monetary Council of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank in St. Lucia, which was attended by Finance and Economy Minister, Dr. Errol Cort MP as member of the Council.

Minister Cort noted that ECCB Council members agreed that the fiscal shocks resulting from the escalating price of oil would result in the need for some governments to allow the price of gas to increase.

The UPP Administration, since taking office in March 2004 has been subsidizing the price of fuel at the pumps, losing on average \$400, 000 monthly in revenue. In June, the government subsidized the price of gasoline at a cost of \$1.2 million dollars, the highest for the year, preventing increases for consumers at the pumps. The Minister anticipates that the Government will not be in a position to continue doing so at the present levels.

Dr. Cort also outlined that the Monetary Council Meeting also agreed to maintain the regulated minimum rate of interest on savings deposits at 3.0 percent; but agreed that this too will be reviewed at the Council's meeting on 20 and 21 October along with a review of interest rates on loans.



*Minister of Finance and the Economy,
Dr Errol Cort*

Ministry of Finance and Economy discusses Sales Tax with NESC

On Wednesday 20th July, the Ministry of Finance and the Economy convened a discussion forum with members of the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) to consider issues relating to the introduction of an Antigua and Barbuda Sales Tax (ABST).

The Minister of Finance and the Economy, Dr. Errol Cort MP, indicated that the ABST, which is a VAT-type tax on consumption, is one element in a wider process of tax reform which is aimed at revamping the tax system in order to promote greater efficiency in tax administration. The Minister re-emphasized that while the tax reform process is a critical factor in facilitating the correction of the existing fiscal imbalance; the Government recognizes the critical need to address expenditure and is fully committed to the implementation of a comprehensive public sector transformation programme.

This discussion forum with the NESC served to initiate the process of dialogue with the private sector and civil society with a view to eliciting their ideas on the administrative and functional considerations for the ABST. Speaking

on behalf of the NESC representatives, Dr. Vincent Richards welcomed the opportunity to commence dialogue on the proposed ABST and stressed the importance of a consultative process in ensuring the successful introduction of such a measure.

In their presentation to the NESC representatives, the Ministry of Finance and Economy consultants provided a brief overview of the ABST, focusing on the rationale for the introduction of such a tax, how the ABST would work, who would be affected, and the administrative machinery that would execute the tax. During the discussions, the participants stressed the importance of ensuring that this ABST did not create a greater burden for taxpayers. The need to ensure that all the relevant businesses were captured within the tax net was also emphasized. The Minister stressed that the ABST is not intended as an addition to the already existing taxes on consumption. In particular, it was indicated that the ABST would in fact replace the Consumption Tax along with a number of other taxes that are currently levied on goods and services.

The meeting was also advised that the Ministry's technical team, led by Mr. Everton Gonsalves, in conjunction with a number of regionally and internationally funded consultants was finalizing a White Paper which would present in detail the specific issues relating to the ABST. This White Paper is expected to be published within the next few weeks and is intended to stimulate public discussion. Following the publication of the White Paper, the Ministry will undertake a series of public consultations and will also launch a number of public information programmes on the ABST.

Dr. Richards, in his closing remarks, thanked the Minister and his team for affording the NESC the opportunity to contribute to the process of formulating the foundations for the ABST. He further indicated that once the White Paper was published the NESC would "undertake an

in-depth review of the document and would present its comments and positions in respect of the issues contained therein to the Ministry." Dr Richards also emphasized the need for stimulating public discourse on the ABST and affirmed the willingness of the NESC to contribute to the process of consultation and promoting public awareness.



Photo above shows Dr Quinn-Leandro addressing a conference on women at the United Nations earlier this year

Minister Quinn-Leandro attends Labour Ministers' Meeting in Mexico City

Minister of Labour, and Public Administration & Empowerment, Dr. Jacqui Quinn Leandro MP, joined her Caribbean and Latin American counterparts in Mexico City, Mexico where they participated in the "Hemispheric Workshop on Decent Work and Fair Globalization."

The meeting brought together governments, employers and workers to analyze the need of promoting Decent Work as a key element in development policies, in the context of globalization, by all countries in the American hemisphere. It also sought to agree on the draft text of the Declaration

and Plan of Action of the XIV Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labour (IACML).

Minister Quinn-Leandro presented a paper on "Work and Social Development" on the first day of the meeting. She was part of 5-member panel, which included Ministers of Labour from Brazil, Uruguay, Grenada and Colombia.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Organization of American States (OAS) sponsored the July 11-14 meetings.

Prime Minister and R. Allen Stanford sign agreement formalizing EC\$25 Million donation for Secondary School of Excellence

On 8th July, Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer and R. Allen Stanford, Chairman of the Stanford Financial Group, signed an agreement finalizing the Stanford Companies' donation of EC\$25 million to finance a Secondary School of Excellence that will provide first-rate education for Antigua and Barbuda's brightest youths.

Upon completion by December 2006, the school will offer a wide range of educational and career opportunities to a maximum of 2500 fourth and fifth form students, and represent a vital step in fulfilling the Government's programme of Education and Empowerment.

During the 2005 Budget Presentation, Finance Minister Dr. Errol Cort announced that as part of the Government/Stanford Alliance, the investor will construct the facility as part of his contribution to the fundamental of development through education and empowerment. Mr. Stanford will also fund an ongoing endowment to provide



Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer and R. Allen Stanford signing the Agreement

full scholarships to young Antiguan and Barbudans.

Under the agreement, the Ministry of Education will design the school curriculum and overall project goals, provide the land, engineering and architectural design and oversee construction and operation of the school. In addition to the funding, Stanford Development Company Ltd. will provide in-kind architectural, design and other support for the project.

Veteran civil and structural engineer Dr. Lucien Hanley will serve as the Government's Project Manager, overseeing the construction and establishment of the school. Former Chief Education Officer Dr. Austin Josiah has been appointed Project Director on behalf of the Stanford Companies to direct their efforts and involvement in the project.

In signing the agreement, Prime Minister Spencer said, "A great nation must have great students – and the graduates of this school will be at the heart of Antigua and Barbuda's future greatness. Through the Secondary School of Excellence, the brilliance and capabilities of our young,

sharp Antiguan and Barbudan minds will shine in unprecedented ways and provide the leadership and skills we need to take our place as one of the Caribbean's leading centres of tourism, finance and commerce."

"The Stanford Companies have always believed in the enormous potential of Antigua and Barbuda – and there is no greater way to fulfill that potential than to develop the minds of its youth to the greatest extent possible," Mr. Stanford said.

He continued, "We are proud to help establish the Secondary School as a long-term investment and a cornerstone of Antigua and Barbuda's future. This school is designed to provide the critical expertise and skills this nation needs to enter a dynamic era of economic growth and prosperity."



Evaluation stage of Sewerage Treatment Facility completed

A team of engineers from BiWater USA Inc. has completed the first phase of a feasibility study of St John's for the establishment of a sewerage treatment facility.

During the technical evaluation, the BiWater team held meetings with the Environmental Division, APUA, the Town and Country Planner, the Central Board of Health and technicians in the Ministry of Public Works.

The study was carried out with the aim of reversing the sanitation problem facing the commercial downtown area of St. John's from Independence Avenue to the waterfront in time for a September 2007 deadline. It will also be designed to provide another revenue stream to bolster the nation's economy and tourism product.

The proposed sewerage facility will include a collector system and pumping network around St. John's and a treatment plant with the capacity for expansion and integration to bring other phases on line designed to accommodate raw sewage if required.

The facility is expected to incorporate infrastructure that is tailored to St. John's by utilizing the septic tanks and treatment plants already in use and provides instant solutions for the commercial sector with maximum benefit for the tourist industry.

Minister of Public Works and the Environment, Deputy Prime Minister, Wilmoth Daniel MP under whose Ministry the project falls, outlined that it is part of the government's manifesto promise to transform the city of St. John and create a healthy environment for residents and visitors.

CABINET STATEMENT

Cabinet suspends discretionary duty free concessions

The economic ruin left by the previous administration, including the grossly inflated public sector payroll, continues to impose severe constraints on the government's capacity to meet current financial obligations.

Within this framework, the Ministry of Finance and Economy has formulated a number of measures to contain government spending and to optimize revenue.

In this context, the Cabinet of Antigua and Barbuda today during its weekly sitting agreed to a six-month suspension of discretionary duty free concessions.

Cabinet also agreed that concessions that are involved in the investment sectors of tourism, manufacturing and agriculture would be granted. This is designed to continue attracting local and foreign investment. These concessions will be granted after full negotiations with the relevant entities.

Cabinet further noted that waivers that apply to statutory obligations and persons employed by the government will continue to be examined on a case by case basis by a cabinet standing committee.

The decision of the Cabinet will come up for review on the expiration of the six-month suspension.



Darren Derrick of Cingular Wireless making the presentation to Deputy Commissioner of Police, Albert Smith

Police receives mobile phones donation to aid in fighting crime

On the 25th July the police received 35 mobile phones on loan from Cingular Wireless to aid in their crime fighting efforts during the Carnival season.

CEO of Cingular Wireless Darren Derrick made the presentation of the phones to Deputy Commissioner of Police Albert Smith and Inspector Lenny Quashie.

Prime Minister Spencer, who is responsible for national security said that the donation of the phones is very timely as communication is vital in combating crime. He commended Minister responsible for Communications Dr. Edmond Mansoor for facilitating the donation.

"The Minister, through his efforts has brought together the private sector and government in collaborating on a very important aspect of crime and security in our nation. I must also express the government's appreciation to Cingular Wireless for readily accepting to assist in this area," Prime Minister Spencer stated.



The Minister responsible for Information, Broadcasting and Telecommunications, Dr. Edmond Mansoor said that the government is committed to ensuring that the Royal Antigua and Barbuda Police Force is equipped with the necessary communication tools.

"This gesture on the part of Cingular Wireless is extremely useful and is indicative of the type of synergy that is required between Government and the Private Sector for nation building," he said.

In addition, Dr. Mansoor said that plans are progressing smoothly for the full computerization of all police and fire stations.

In addition, "The Government of Antigua and Barbuda has begun the preliminary stages of the planning for a major overhaul of the communications system for the security forces. This new project will provide specialised communication equipment to police and fire stations and to police cars and fire tenders," Minister Mansoor outlined.

Policemen on patrol will also be equipped with hand-held mobile units. It is anticipated that this new system will also fully incorporate the modern communication requirements of the Emergency Medical Service and the National office of Disaster Services.

Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda to benefit from Chilean Scholarships

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda recently hosted a high level delegation from the Chilean Police Force. The delegation headed by General Jorge Contreras Mella was in Antigua from July 21st to 24th.



The visiting Chilean delegation with Prime Minister Spencer and members of the Security Team

The express objective of the visit was to introduce the International Cooperation Programme for Foreign Uniformed Police Agencies. This programme, which was launched in 1990, offers scholarship opportunities to both commissioned and non-commissioned officers.

In addition to finance and administrative courses, other programmes offered include courses in drugs and narcotics, traffic accident investigations, police instructor and protection of personalities (VIPs). Courses range in duration from three weeks to three years. The deadline for the submission of applications is December 30th, 2005, and all courses commence in March 2006.

While in Antigua the Chilean delegation met Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer, Ambassador Joan H. Underwood, members of the police high command including Acting Police Commissioner Delano Christopher, Deputy Commissioner Whyte, Commander of the Antigua and Barbuda Defence Force Colonel Trevor Thomas and Mr. Alec Vanderpoole, National Security Advisor and Director of the Office of National Drug and Money Laundering Control Policy (ONDCP).

This initiative was the latest development in the move to strengthen ties between Antigua and Barbuda and Latin America. Sergeant Atlee Rodney is currently in Mexico pursuing a bachelor's degree in communications. In addition to improving the technical capacity of the police force, these Latin American scholarships will also serve to produce a cadre of bilingual police officers who are strategically positioned to serve the growing Hispanic population in Antigua and Barbuda.

In expressing Antigua and Barbuda's appreciation to the Chileans for the generous offer, Prime Minister Spencer pointed out that these scholarship will assist the government greatly in implementing a comprehensive succession plan designed to ensure an optimal level of efficiency as the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda gears up to meet the challenges associated with increased mobility of natural persons including criminals and advances in technology.





PM Spencer with Dr Sucec, Ambassadors Portela, Murdoch and Goodwin and Dr Martinez

New Cuban Initiative for Specialist Eye-care in Antigua and Barbuda

Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer recently received a Cuban Special Envoy sent by Cuban President Fidel Castro to discuss the deepening of cooperation in the field of health between Antigua and Barbuda and Cuba.

Dr. Pura Sucec, a Special Advisor to President Castro on health matters, met Prime Minister Spencer for several hours and discussed new initiatives in health care for Antigua and Barbuda.

Present at the meeting were Cuban Ambassador Jose Portela; Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Colin Murdoch; Ambassador to Cuba, Bruce Goodwin; and local coordinator of the resident Cuban Medical Team Dr. Geovando Martinez.

Prime Minister Spencer announced that he was delighted with the Cuban proposals and that his

government would move swiftly to implement the initiative.

Under the initiative, Cuba would establish a diagnostic centre in Antigua and Barbuda fully staffed by Cuban medical personnel in order to provide referral specialist eye-care treatment to Antigua and Barbuda nationals.

The programme would diagnose persons suffering from various diseases of the eye and send them for specialist treatment in Cuba, including laser surgery. The diagnoses referral and treatment would be at no cost to the patients or the government. It is anticipated that patients referred to Cuba would be required to remain for one to two weeks in a medical facility in Cuba.

“I am excited by this initiative and I have asked Minister John Maginley to hold follow-up discussions with the Cuban team to see how best and how quickly we can agree on how to establish this programme,” noted Prime Minister Spencer.

PM Spencer also pointed out that the programme would be a tremendous boost for health-care delivery in Antigua

and Barbuda and adds a new dimension to the services available to the public. The fact that these services will be available free of cost also allows the public the widest possible access to the programme.

The Prime Minister also expressed government’s appreciation for this cooperation programme in health to Dr. Sucec, who indicated that she was very satisfied with her mission to Antigua and Barbuda.

Education Officials attend Commonwealth Meeting in The Bahamas

Antigua and Barbuda was represented by Acting Chief of Education, M. Lenore Henry and Executive Secretary to the Minister of Education, Mrs. Anne Jonas at the Mid-Term Review of the 15th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (15CCEM) in Nassau Bahamas.

Among the topics discussed were:

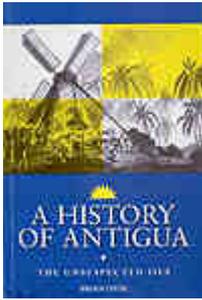
- Improving Quality Education
- Mitigating the Impact of HIV/AIDS in Education
- Using Distance Learning to Overcome Barriers
- Supporting Education in Difficult Circumstances
- Eliminating Gender Disparities in Education
- Expanding Access to Universal Primary Education

The meeting concluded on July 30, 2005.

ANTIGUAN CRICKET TEAM – 2005 UK TOUR

Tuesday 09 August (venue: Wellington College)	One day game against the Northwood CC, 12 midday start
Thursday 11 August (venue: Wellington College)	Two Day game against MCC Universities, 11am start
Friday 12 August (venue: Wellington College)	Day 2 of game against MCC Universities
Sunday 14 August	Coach transfer from Wellington College to Whitgift School, London for 1 Day International Match against Bangladesh "A", game starts at 11am
Monday 15 August	Option to watch one day game: Middlesex v Northants at Lords Ground including Lords tour
Tuesday 16 August	1 day game against the Surrey Championship XI, game starts at 11am at Dulwich College
Wednesday 17 August	High Wycombe cricket ground for 1 day game against the Home Counties, midday start
Thursday 18 August	1 day game against Reigate Priory (Surrey), 11am start
Friday 19 August	1 day game against Free Forresters at Spencer (London), 11:30am start
Sunday 21 August	1 day game against a combined Bunbury/Wimbledon XI at Wimbledon Cricket Club, 1pm start
Wednesday 24 August	1 day game against Kent League, 11:30 start
Friday 26 August	1 day game against Uxbridge CC, 11:30 start
Monday 29 August	UK public holiday – take part in the Wimbledon 6 a side cricket tournament
Saturday 10 September	Team returns home.

NATIONALS' CORNER



**A HISTORY OF ANTIGUA:
THE UNSUSPECTED ISLE.**

This book, written by Brian Dyde and published by Macmillan Education in 2000, not only covers the history of Antigua from pre-Columbian days until the achievement of Independence in 1981 but also deals with events over the same period in both Barbuda and Redonda.

The author is an Englishman who, having known the island for over 40 years and being married to an Antiguan, has taken great care to treat what could be thought of as potentially dry historical material from a balanced cultural perspective and to write for the widest possible readership.

His 360-page book covers the pre-Columbian migrations, colonialism, slavery and the plantation economy, the rise of the trade union movement, Associated Statehood, Independence, and the transition from an agricultural to a tourist economy in an interesting and highly-readable manner. As well as being illustrated with maps, reproductions of paintings and prints, and many photographs, the text also contains numerous apt contemporary quotations from each significant period of Antigua's history. It is a book which will appeal to anyone with any connection with Antigua, or with an interest in West Indian history.

The author has also written the definitive visitor's guide to Antigua (now in its third edition) as well as a history of the West India Regiments.

His book, ISBN number 0 333 75169 8, is available from any good bookshop, priced at £17.95

CALYPSO TENT EXCELS

It's virtually impossible to conceive of a UK calypso event more authentic than the one the Yaa Asantewaa produces each year.

Since the ABC (Association of British Calypsonians) created the London Calypso tent thirteen years ago, the shows have never been more sought after. It has developed into the eagerly anticipated precursor to the Notting Hill Carnival show, attracting around 300 people per night and serves as a flagship to Caribbean culture and sound.

The show promises to not only excite but also inspire since its format is exactly as one would expect from a calypso tent in the Caribbean. With the sultry, message based lyrics of social commentary to the faced paced rhythm of soca songs everyone is guaranteed a memorable time.

Whilst savouring traditional West Indian food and drink, viewers can expect to see artistes representing most of the Caribbean islands including Barbados, St Vincent and Jamaica to name a few. Everyone will even be treated to the likes of Explainer, a renowned calypsonian hailing from Trinidad whose music has been entertaining for over 30 decades. Parents need not worry about restless children as the Junior Calypso monarch from Trinidad also appears. Her talent is undeniable as at the tender age of eight she has already won several awards such as the Best Primary School performer and TUCO Junior Calypso Monarch.

The Tent takes place for six weeks during the months of July and August and is held at the Yaa Asantewaa Arts & Community Centre, 1 Chippenham Mews, Chippenham Road, London W9.2AN.

Remaining Dates: 12th August, 19th August, 25th August, 26th August.

For more info and a chance to win tickets visit www.londoncalypsotent.co.uk.

This is a must see event. To avoid disappointment tickets should be booked early.

Antiguans off to Cuba for specialist eye-care

On the 29th July the first group of persons to benefit from the Cuban/Antiguan and Barbuda Specialist Eye-care initiative left Antigua for Cuba where they will undergo corrective surgery and treatment free of cost.

A team of Cuban optometrists conducted eye examinations on over three hundred persons, testing for Strabismus, Cataracts, Ptosis and Terigium.

Special Advisor to President Fidel Castro of Cuba on Health Matters, Dr. Pura Sucel who accompanied the patients to Cuba, said that the Cuban government is offering the Humanitarian aid to Antigua and Barbuda and other countries in the region. She outlined that upon their return, another group will travel to Cuba for similar treatment and this will continue for a number of months.

Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador designate to Cuba Bruce Goodwin said that the majority of persons who are benefiting from the Cuban initiative are those who cannot ordinarily afford the cost associated with specialist eye care.

He said the government of Antigua and Barbuda deeply appreciates the assistance in health care being provided by the Cuban government.

The medical treatment and airfare of the patients are provided by the Cuban government at no expense to the patients or the government of Antigua and Barbuda.

Regional Group endorses Antigua and Barbuda for re-election to the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

In a meeting of the member States of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC), held in New York on the 18th July, Antigua and Barbuda was unanimously endorsed for re-election for another four (4) year term on the Nairobi-based Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

UNEP is the designated authority of the United Nations system in environmental issues at the global and regional level. Its mandate is to coordinate the development of environmental policy consensus by keeping the global environment under review and bringing emerging issues to the attention of governments and the international community for action

"I would like to thank the GRULAC Group for its unanimous endorsement of our candidature, and wish to acknowledge the considerable work done by UN Ambassador, Dr. John W. Ashe," said Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works, Transportation and Environment, Wilmoth Daniel.

"I believe that this action by our Latin American and Caribbean brethren serves to underscore that we are indeed capable of championing the concerns of the region in the area of the environment, while highlighting the widely held view that we are at the forefront of the global effort to protect our environment for future generations," the Minister added.

Chief Environment Officer, Mrs Dianne Black-Layne noted that UNEP is one of the main UN entities with which her Division is currently partnered on a number of initiatives therefore it is important for them to maintain representation on its decision-making body, in order to ensure that the country's unique concerns are given full consideration.

The Governing Council reports to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council. It has 58 members who are elected by the General Assembly, for four-year terms. The Council and its counterpart body, the Global Ministerial Environment Forum, is convened annually to review important and emerging policy issues in the field of the environment, with the Governing Council constituting the forum either in its regular sessions or special sessions. The Governing Council is charged with promoting international cooperation in the field of the environment; provide general policy guidance for the direction and coordination of environmental programmes within the United Nations system; and keep under review the world environmental situation in order to ensure that emerging environmental problems of wide international significance receive appropriate and adequate consideration by Governments.

The GRULAC endorsement of Antigua and Barbuda now goes to the General Assembly of the United Nations, where elections will be held during the upcoming (60th) session that begins of September 17.

The next (23rd) meeting of the Council will be held in February 2006 when Minister Wilmoth Daniel is expected to lead the Antigua and Barbuda delegation.



Minister of Justice, Senator Colin Derrick

Minister of Justice delivers feature address at Graduating ceremony

Minister of Justice, Senator Colin Derrick, delivered the Feature Address at a Graduating Ceremony at Camp Blizzard on Thursday July 7th, at which ten students from the Coast Guards and Marine Police Units of the Regional Security System (RSS) and Overseas British Territories successfully completed the Phase Two Operations Course.

The participants represented Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Grenada, St. Kitts-nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Turks and Caicos Islands.

The intensive 5 week training programme included - RSS, Maritime Law Enforcement Communications, Search and Rescue, Navigation, Rules of the Road, Theoretical and Practical Boat handling (40 ft and 920 RHB), Anti-Narcotic Operations, Planning/Extension and Physical Training.

Minister Derrick presented the top student award to Dexter Roberts of the Turks and Caicos Islands who scored an average of 92.1%

In his Address, Minister Derrick stressed that “the importance of training would be brought to bear on the ultimate reduction of the threats to the national security of our countries.”

(For the full text of the Minister's Feature Address, please visit our website at www.antigua-barbuda.com, under Latest News)

PM Spencer honoured by PMS Students Association

On 23rd July Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer was among a number of prominent past students of the Princess Margaret School (PMS) who were honoured at a 50th Anniversary Reunion Banquet at the Grand Royal Antigua Resort.

Prime Minister Spencer, who is among a line of politicians educated at the secondary school, said that the Princess Margaret School experience helped to shape his future and he owes the institution an eternal debt of gratitude.

“Any person who walked the halls of the Princess Margaret School, have had their lives touched in a significant way. I am humbled by this award and regard it as a reflection of what PMS has been to persons,” he said.

The country's leader outlined that the influence of the institution is legendary and he is proud to be a product of the school, which was the country's first experiment with free secondary education.

Among the past students honoured were former West Indies fast

bowler Andy Roberts, former government minister Molwyn Joseph, President of the Senate Hazlyn Mason Francis, former clerk of parliament Sylvia Walker and accountant Everett Lake.

Some of the past teachers from the institution were also honoured. They included Dr. Albert Aymer, Otway Davis, Dr. Billy Dyer, Mrs. Rosetta Etinoff, Natalie Hurst and Ilma James.

Also honoured were Mrs. Agnes Jeffrey, Mrs. Olive Josiah and George Pigott, while former government minister Reuben Harris was honoured posthumously. The highlight of the evening was the honouring of three of the former principals with a call going out to the government to change the name of the school to the Christopher O'Mard Memorial High School. Christopher O'Marde who was also a former member of parliament was the first principal of the school.

The 50th Anniversary Reunion Banquet also featured performances from Ambassador Rupert Blaize and the Laviscount Brass.

Training for Cruise Industry Entrepreneurs provided by the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association

The Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with the Antigua and Barbuda Cruise Tourism Association will be hosting two workshops conducted by the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA) targeting taxi drivers, tour operators, providers of ground transportation, vendors, and all persons interacting with cruise passengers on a regular basis.

The first workshop “Caribbean Taxi Pride” took place on August 9

at the Multipurpose Centre. It focused on three main areas: courtesy and professionalism, marketing, rules and safety, particularly as it relates to cruise passengers with a special focus on ways to increase cruise passenger spending on transportation while in port.

The training also provided an insight into cruise passengers' spending, improving the destination's marketability and learning what other destinations have done to increase business.

The second workshop entitled “Service Excellence” took place on August 10 and provided information on the importance that excellent customer service makes to the destination and what the cruise industry's economic impact is. Facilitator of the workshops was Adam Ceserano, Manager, Marketing and Sales for the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association.

Director of Product Development at the Ministry of Tourism, Lorraine Headley, described the training as critical in improving customer service levels in the cruise industry.

She said, “We thought it was important for us to benefit from the resources being provided by the Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association which has spent over US\$100,000 developing these customer service seminars and delivering them throughout the Caribbean. By partnering with the Antigua and Barbuda Cruise Tourism Association, we intend to take advantage of every opportunity and ensure that our cruise product stands out among other Caribbean countries.”

Assistance was provided by American Airlines, Heritage Hotel, and the St. John's Development Corporation in hosting the workshops free of charge to participants.

SOME CARNIVAL 2005 HIGHLIGHTS



QUEEN OF CARNIVAL
Mekela Williams (left) in Evening Dress and (right) in Costume



(above) Queen Ivena being crowned by the Minister of Culture, John Maginley as the Winner of 2005 Calypso Monarch Competition



(left) 1st runner-up Kimmorna Otto and (right) 2nd runner-up Arrianne White in the Queen of Carnival Competition



National Panorama Competition



(left) Winner ...
**WIOC
GEMONITES
STEEL
ORCHESTRA**



(right) 1st runner-up
**Caribseas
Harmonites**

(right) 2nd runner-up..Cable and Wireless Hells Gate Steel Orchestra



(left) 3rd runner-up AMP Halcyon Steel Orchestra

Photos compliments www.antiguacarnival.com. Please visit website for more information and photos of Antigua's Carnival 2005