



NEWSLETTER

The Antigua and Barbuda High Commission

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Cricket at Jolly Beach

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Frigate Bird Barbuda



A MESSAGE FROM HIS EXCELLENCY DR CARL ROBERTS, HIGH COMMISSIONER



Dear Readers,

There is a feeling of excitement in the air in Antigua and Barbuda these days. A feeling of pride and anticipation as the date for hosting thousands of visitors to our lovely islands draws near. As you turn the pages of this newsletter, I can just imagine the swell of joy and warm feelings which fill your heart.

On the 10th February, the new Sir Vivian Richards Cricket Stadium was handed over to the Government and people of Antigua and Barbuda at an impressive ceremony on the grounds of the new stadium. As many as seven persons cut a symbolic ribbon in front of the plaque specially erected to commemorate the occasion. The Chinese Ambassador spoke glowingly of their happiness in bringing to reality and on time, the completion of the stadium. The accompanying fireworks was just as impressive. The other activities in preparation for the hosting of



Symbolic cutting of the ribbon

the leg of the Super 8 Series. Work is in train repairing our roads, completing the landscaping for the stadium, finalising the outfitting of several rooms at the Mount St John Hospital, renovating the departure and arrival lounges at the V C Bird International Airport. Yes, Antigua and Barbuda is a hive of activities.

During all this the teams have begun to arrive in the Region. The Bermuda team has been in Antigua and Barbuda, making their final preparations for their matches. The full excitement starts with a series of warm-up matches on March 5th.

Sunday 11th March is the date for the Opening Ceremony in Jamaica. This will be followed by the first set of Group Stage Matches in Jamaica between the West Indies and Pakistan on the 13th and other matches in St Kitts/Nevis and St Lucia on the 14th. Sale of tickets has been going exceptionally good at all venues. The West Indies is on the verge of showing the rest of the world, true Caribbean hospitality, and demonstrate that we can host major international events.

If this does not make you feel proud to be a West Indian then perhaps that feeling may come upon you when you turn on your TV and see your favourite destination in full colour, in all its island glory.

I feel that sense of pride even as I write these few words. I pray that all will go well and that with God's help we will have a successful tournament undisturbed by any adverse events. May we all offer a prayer for the safety of all peoples in the region and a safe return to their respective homeland.

Finally it has been stated that the host team has never won the ICC CWC. Let us also pray for our team that their success at the finals in Barbados will break this trend once and for all.

**Dr Carl Roberts
High Commissioner**

BMI's Chairman contributes to Good Shepherd Home for children

Prime Minister the Hon. Baldwin Spencer recently made a presentation of a cheque for two thousand pound sterling to the Good Shepherd Home for Children on behalf of the Chairman of BMI Sir Michael Bishop.

During the presentation ceremony to Mrs. Mary-Rose Knight of the institution, Prime Minister Spencer said that the funds were donated by Sir Michael during a cricket match at Bowdon cricket Club in Cheshire England organized by the Antigua and Barbuda High Commission in London as part of Cricket Week.

The initiative was developed to promote the island's involvement and on-island developments for the ICC Cricket World Cup 2007 and included Sir Vivian Richards, Richie Richardson, Curtly Ambrose, Sir Clive Lloyd, some of the current players for the national team; Wilden Cornwall, Carl Simon and Gavin Tonge as well as the Lashings World XI team, which reads like a who's who of great cricketing legends.

Prime Minister Spencer said that he was pleased to present the donation to the Good Shepherd Home because the Home is imperative to the country in providing shelter and care to those children who are without parental guidance or support and those subjected to abuse or abandonment.

"Donations such as this are crucial in making sure that the children receive education, counseling and the life skills they need to reach their potential in adulthood and society," he said.

Prime Minister Spencer also thanked the employees of the Good



Members of the St Vincent de Paul Society with Prime Minister Spencer and Mrs Roberts

Shepherd Home for Children for their hard work and perseverance in providing excellent service for the children of Antigua and Barbuda. "We hope that people continue to donate to this much needed resource well into the future. Once again my sincerest appreciation is extended to Sir Michael for his generous contribution to this institution and to the people of our beloved nation," Prime Minister Spencer concluded.

Bishop Donald Reece of the Roman Catholic Church, which manages the institution, said that since 1984, the Home has created a safe, family-style environment, a significant improvement on the traditional institutional care homes of the past.

"The St. Vincent de Paul Society which oversees the running of the Home is concerned with the upliftment of people and imparting values so that they can live out lives to be good citizens and Christians and we are presently seeking ways and means to expand the Good Shepherd Home which is currently bursting at the seams and so this donation is very timely indeed," noted Bishop Reece.

"We are very happy that Sir Michael Bishop is able to extend his munificence all the way down here to Antigua and we are happy that he saw it fit to designate the Good Shepherd Home for that purpose," he said.

Also attending the presentation ceremony was the wife of the Antigua and Barbuda High Commissioner in London Mrs. Roberts, Mr. Lenny Coupel of the St. Vincent de Paul Society and Sister Anne of the Carmelite Sisters.

Antigua to assist UK in developing international remote gambling regulations and legislation

On February 8 Antigua and Barbuda's Financial Services Regulatory Commission, Division of Gaming announced that the country expects to play a key role in developing international regulations and legislation for remote gambling following publication of the UK Government's

communiqué regarding the 2006 International Summit on Remote Gambling.

The communiqué, released by the UK's Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) on Monday 29th January, highlighted the approval by the Summit's delegates for the proposal to set up an expert working group to advise on the scope for developing international minimum standards for regulating remote gambling.

The Honourable L. Errol Cort, Minister of Finance and the Economy commented, "Antigua offers its unique experience and insight wholeheartedly in developing regulatory standards for the international remote gambling industry as part of the expert working group proposed by the DCMS."

Kaye McDonald, Antigua's Director of Gaming, also highlighted Antigua's credentials for regulation of their online gambling industry, adding, "The regulations that Antigua has in place for online gambling are respected globally and have been a contributing factor in winning the WTO ruling against the US in 2005."

It is widely known that regulations put in place by Antigua and Barbuda are more stringent than those that the US imposes on its own legal gambling industries. The US recently admitted suffering a new setback in the long running trade dispute with Antigua over the provision of offshore gambling within the United States, having, according to the press agent for the United States Trade Representative, been on the losing side of a recent WTO report assessing the status of US compliance with the original adverse ruling from the WTO issued in 2005. While the new report is not officially released until mid February, the US has already publicly stated that the WTO panel did not agree with the United

States that they had taken the necessary steps to comply.

Official handing-over ceremony for the Sir Vivian Richards Cricket Stadium

On Saturday 10th February the government of the People's Republic of China officially handed over the Sir Vivian Richards Cricket Stadium to the Government of Antigua and Barbuda during a specially organized ceremony at the site.

Prime Minister the Hon. Baldwin Spencer accepted the keys to the facility and remarked that with the unwavering support of the People's Republic of China, the brightest and best minds in Antigua and Barbuda were able to work in harmony to produce a structure that not only symbolizes what binds Antiguan and Barbudans as a people,



but one that exhibits the skills and craftsmanship of the people of two continents that are separated by water but joined by friendship.

"The government of Antigua and Barbuda salute the many committed individuals for their involvement in the project. The involvement of the government of the People's Republic of China underscores the excellent bilateral relationship that has developed between



our two countries. It also represents another concrete step in deepening the relationship between the people of our two countries," Prime Minister Spencer said.

Speaking at the ceremony were Deputy Director General of the Department of Foreign Aid of China Wang Rensheng, the General Manager of the China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation Lin Rongxin and President of the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association Enoch Lewis.

Chairman of World Cup Antigua Inc. Minister John Maginley speaking at the function said that the challenge of having the country's national infrastructure ready has been a great learning experience for the entire country and people.

"The specific challenge of the preparation of the stadium, airport, the health infrastructure, the road works, the specific challenges of accommodation, transportation, finance and human resource preparation have forced our people to operate on a completely new level. The fact that we have risen to the challenge is a tremendous testament to the resilience of our people," he said.

During the ceremony, Prime Minister Spencer and Ambassador of



an historical event. A vision has been turned into reality. A reality that all of Antigua and Barbuda can be proud. Let us now with confidence move forward together and be host to the most exciting games of CWC 2007," he said.

remarks at the function and was the feature of a video profile during the event.

The event culminated with a grand fire works display and a concert featuring the Red Hott Burning Flames, Taxic Band, LA Crew and calypsonians Short Shirt and Swallow among others.

The Sir Vivian Richards Cricket Stadium was constructed by the People's Republic of China from a grant of over US \$55 million. It has a seating capacity of 20,000 of which 10,000 are permanent.

Sir Vivian

Richards, Antigua and Barbuda's National Hero and cricketing star whose name the stadium bears also gave

the People's Republic of China Her Excellency Madame Ren Xiaoping signed a number of agreements for the final drawdown of 20 million yuan from the grant to construct the facility, a US\$588,000 agreement for video screens and a Technical Team Agreement which provides for an expert Chinese technical team to remain in Antigua throughout World Cup Cricket.

Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador to China and Chairman of the Inter-Governmental Working Group, who managed the construction of the facility, praised the many local businessmen and women who supported the venture from beginning to completion. "We have now completed a task that many doubted could be accomplished. You have contributed to



Government signs partnership agreement with Polytechnic University

On February 23, the Government of Antigua and Barbuda signed a partnership agreement with Polytechnic University of New York, whereby the latter will offer six (6) annual scholarships -- at the undergraduate and graduate levels -- to qualified students from Antigua and Barbuda at its main

campus in Brooklyn, New York, beginning in September 2007.

Mr. Maurice Merchant, Chairman of the Independence Scholarship Committee, signed on behalf of the Government, and Ms. TC Westcott, Vice President, Finance and Administration signed on behalf of Polytechnic University. Dean of the Graduate School and Associate Provost Dr. Sunil Kumar and Provost Dr. Erich Kunhardt were also present at the signing.

Merchant also thanked Ambassador to the United Nations Dr. John Ashe for initiating the discussions with Dr. Sunil Kumar. "Ambassador Ashe has been extremely supportive of Prime Minister Spencer's mission of providing higher education to the nation's youth which he says creates a culture of excellence that positions Antigua and Barbuda to take advantage of the many opportunities that exist on the local, regional and international scale," he said

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Foreign Service Officer responsible for Trade Issues Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dia Christian

Antigua and Barbuda participates in meeting on EPA between CARIFORUM and the European Community

Antigua and Barbuda was represented at the recently held 2nd Meeting of the Technical Working Group on Legal and Institutional Issues for the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) between the CARIFORUM and the European Community.

Foreign Service Officer within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Dia Christian, who attended the meeting said that a wide range of issues relating to the upcoming negotiations between CARIFORUM and the European Community were addressed.

He said these included the status of negotiations on Legal and Institutional Issues, the identification of crucial issues arising from the previous Technical Negotiating Groups meetings, the critical issues facing CARIFORUM at this juncture of the negotiations, the draft text on CARIFORUM regional integration prepared by the Caribbean Regional

Negotiating Machinery CRNM and consideration of CARIFORUM and EC draft legal texts on Legal and Institutional provisions, General and Final Provisions and Dispute Settlement.

“All these issues are to be considered by each Member State through national consultation. Responses, recommendations and comments will be submitted to the Regional Negotiators before the next Trade Negotiating Group meeting in Brussels during the month of March,” Christian said.

He noted that the Technical Working Group meeting also looked at issues relating to the examination of CARIFORUM (Caribbean Forum of countries of CARICOM to include the Dominican Republic) and Joint Commitments and collective obligations in the EPA

According to Mr. Christian, “the Technical Working Group (TWG) which comprise officials from member states, experts from regional secretariats, private sector, academics and serviced by Regional Lead Negotiators agreed to make appropriate recommendations as to the treatment of development issues in the EPA.

The role of the TWG is to develop regional negotiating positions and mandates that are submitted to the Council of Trade and Economic Development (COTED) for consideration and action. “It is at these groups that the bulk of the technical work is done, and where the difficult issues are thrashed out before being put forward to the political directorate.” Dia Christian concluded.



Continued from page 5

He also stated that the Government is delighted that Polytechnic University has decided to partner with them to educate the people of Antigua and Barbuda by the provision of scholarships.

In addition to the partnership agreement, the Polytechnic University has also agreed to assist the government in developing distance learning capabilities in Antigua and Barbuda, and will be sending instructors to the twin-island nation to conduct courses in various fields of study during the summer months.



Chairman of the Independence Scholarship Committee Maurice Merchant signing the agreement with TC Westcott of Polytechnic University

The University offers an innovative curriculum that introduces students to engineering in the freshmen year and emphasizes projects requiring teamwork and a multidisciplinary approach, and its graduate division has a strong international reputation. The University is among the most successful institutions in the United States in producing science and engineering graduates who go on to earn PhD degrees.

Antigua and Barbuda excluded from the expansion of some categories of persons in the Free Movement of Skilled Community Nationals

Antigua and Barbuda has been excluded from the group of CARICOM countries that will be required to implement the free movement of non-graduate teachers and nurses.

Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda the Hon. Baldwin Spencer said that on day one of the Eighteenth Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community, leaders agreed on the country's exclusion from the list because of the existence of degree granting and higher level institutions that presently train teachers and nurses in Antigua and Barbuda.

The Council for Human and Social Development, an organ of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, "Professional Nurses are defined as persons who have successfully completed basic or higher level training for nurses and who are registered with the General Nursing Council of a CARICOM Member State and are designated Registered Nurses."

Teachers are defined as persons who have successfully completed an approved pre-service or in-service teacher preparation programme from an accredited/recognized institution offering teacher education.

During the discussions on Free Movement of Skilled Nationals, Prime Minister Spencer also made out a case for the exclusion of Antigua and Barbuda from the list of countries that will be

required to facilitate the free movement of artisans when it commences as soon as the Caribbean Vocational Qualification Model is launched by July this year.

Prime Minister Spencer said that Antigua and Barbuda is a unique case because of its history of having an open door policy and hence he believes that a study of the Antiguan situation, pre and post free movement, should be carried out to ascertain how best the country can meet its treaty obligations. The Heads agreed that Antigua and Barbuda should be exempted and that the CARICOM Secretariat will provide assistance in carrying out the study requested.

The Heads also agreed to implement the decision that CARICOM Nationals entering with a Skills Certificate issued by another Member State should be allowed to work immediately, while the receiving Member State verifies the qualifications of the holder.

It was also noted that Heads also requested that the Council of Ministers responsible for National Security and Law Enforcement advise on the possible standardization of the requirements for police records in order to have standardized requirements for all aspects of the free movement of skills regime.

Prime Minister Spencer says Trade Liberalization must not be to the detriment of the region

Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda the Hon. Baldwin Spencer said that trade liberalization should not be to the detriment of the countries within the region.



Hon. Baldwin Spencer
Prime Minister of Antigua
and Barbuda

Making an intervention during the discussions on External Trade Negotiations at the 18th Inter-Sessional Meeting of CARICOM Heads held in St Vincent and the Grenadines, Prime Minister Spencer said that through trade liberalization and negotiations like the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), the region must be strong on the importance of development being tangible and real.

"The granting of technical assistance and the exchange of experts by themselves cannot sustain our fragile economies, many of which are without mineral wealth. We accept that we must become competitive, but there must be a reasonable period of graduation with adequate support mechanisms to allow our enterprises, industries and sectors to retool, Prime Minister Spencer noted.

He noted that as leaders of the region, Heads must have an input in the articulations of the development dimension or Chapter of any Economic



Ambassador Clarence Henry (centre) in discussion with Governor of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank, Sir Dwight Venner (left) and Ambassador Colin Murdoch

“Therefore, there is need for greater public consultation/sensitization on the opportunities and challenges of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). The Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery, CRNM needs to urgently embark on a region wide programme of public awareness and acceptance of any eventual agreement,” Ambassador Henry pointed out.

He told Heads that the CRNM should copy what was undertaken when the region was revising the CARICOM Treaty bringing ordinary citizens on board.

Ambassador Henry also stated that the Caribbean must build a more mature relationship with its development partners, one which includes reduced waivers or preferences.

Antigua and Barbuda establishes formal diplomatic relations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The governments of Antigua and Barbuda and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has established formal diplomatic relations with the signing of a Protocol by their respective representatives to the United Nations.

“As two friendly, peace-loving nations, today's historic step of establishing diplomatic ties will undoubtedly contribute to our mutual goal of enhancing economic ties between our countries,” said Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador to the United

Nations, Dr. John W. Ashe, who signed the Protocol and the corresponding Joint Communiqué on behalf of Antigua and Barbuda.

“My government welcomes this development and it looks forward to strengthening fruitful cooperation in a variety of fields between our two countries,” said Abdullatif Sallam, Charge d' Affaires of the Saudi Mission to the United Nations, who signed both instruments on behalf of his government.

With this latest signing, Antigua and Barbuda has now established diplomatic relations with all six countries that make up the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Saudi Arabia, the largest GCC member, lies at the crossroads of Europe, Asia and Africa and extends from the Red Sea in the west to the Arabian Gulf in the east. It is bordered on the north by Jordan, Iraq and Kuwait, on the south by Yemen and Oman, and on the east by the Gulf States of United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Bahrain.

Partnership Agreement, noting that if the region is unable to properly articulate its development Chapter, it will not be able to quantify the needs of the region.

Antigua and Barbuda recently presented to CARICOM elements of what should constitute its development dimension and Chapter in any Economic Partnership Agreement with the European Union.

Trade Coordinator in the Ministry of Finance, Ambassador Dr. Clarence Henry who was also a part of Antigua and Barbuda's delegation attending the 18th Inter-Sessional Meeting supported the Prime Minister's arguments.

Ambassador Henry told regional Heads that CARICOM must work with the European Union as agreed on a timetable, but if CARIFORUM (Caribbean Forum) or CARICOM interests are not adequately covered, Antigua and Barbuda will have difficulty signing the document. He said that in that regard, there is the need for a good agreement which must have the input of all stakeholders.

International Women's Day

8th March 2007

International Women's Day is an occasion marked by women's groups around the world; it is commemorated at the United Nations and is designated in many countries as a national holiday. When women on all continents, often divided by national boundaries and by ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic and political differences, come together to celebrate their Day, they can look back to tradition that represents at least nine decades of struggle for equality, justice, peace and development.

LIAT, Caribbean Star implement combined flight schedule

Schedule includes improved timing, connectivity to benefit regional air travellers

The much anticipated commercial agreement between LIAT (1974) Ltd. and Caribbean Star Airlines Ltd. that combines the flight operations of both carriers for the first time has officially begun. The commercial agreement and its attendant new schedule, which features improved flight times and connectivity benefiting the travelling public, are key steps toward finalizing a proposed merger of LIAT and Caribbean Star.

On February 1, top executives representing both carriers were present at airports across the region greeting passengers and providing customer assistance to facilitate the transition. Mark Darby, CEO of LIAT, commemorated the event, stating, "This is a significant day for both airlines. Teams from both LIAT and Caribbean Star have been working feverishly over the past few weeks to ensure that a smooth transition takes place. We're looking forward to the benefits this alliance will bring to our customers, staff and shareholders."

The commercial agreement of LIAT and Caribbean Star means the flights of both airlines will be marketed as LIAT and identified by the "LI" airline designator although some planes will be clearly branded as Caribbean Star Airlines. Both LIAT and Caribbean Star will continue to operate as separate carriers under their own management until the proposed merger of the airlines is implemented.

William "Skip" Barnette,
President and CEO of Caribbean Star

Airlines noted, "Clearly, we believe that this combined schedule is the best thing for our customers as it will allow us to provide a broader range of services; better timing and improved connections. A lot of thought and planning has gone into this new schedule over the past few months and we are happy to see it finally come to fruition."

Darby and Barnette jointly added, "We understand that there have been some concerns expressed about our fare levels - which we believe are unfounded. The fare structure in use is the same one that we have been using since early December. We are approaching a very busy time with Cricket World Cup and Easter and the limited seats offered at the lower prices are quickly booked. If our customers can be flexible with their date and time of travel, and book further in advance, cheap fares are available."

Darby continued, "We constantly monitor fares and as promised last week, now that the new schedule has become established and patterns of travel demand have become clear, we have refined our fare program and reintroduced lower fares across the system - you only have to look at our website, call our call centre or visit your travel agent to see the great fares that we have on offer. Be on the lookout for special promotions in the near future."

Antigua and Barbuda to receive assistance from the Republic of Cuba in Heritage Site Restoration

Minister of Tourism Harold Lovell recently led a five member delegation from the Ministry of Tourism to the Republic of Cuba, where they sought technical assistance in the



Fort James

development of tourism in Antigua and Barbuda.

Following discussions with Manuel Marrero Cruz - Minister of Tourism in Cuba, the decision was reached to assist with the restoration of Fort James and other heritage sites on Antigua.

Under the agreement, a team of Cuban specialists will journey to the Antigua and Barbuda later this year.

The Cuban Minister indicated that, the group will visit the fort, make an assessment and advise on the most effective means to proceed with the restoration of this and other historical sites. They will also identify how best to convert the sites for tourism purposes.

Antigua and Barbuda's Minister of Tourism, is keen on receiving assistance by the specialists on this venture, having expressed full confidence in the government empowered Office of the Historian, who have been instrumental in the restoration and conservation work in Old Havana since 1993.

Old Havana, which was declared a World Heritage site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 1982, is considered one of the most dynamic cultural, tourist and financial centres on the Caribbean island.



Minister Harold Lovell, Minister of Tourism (second from left) while in Havana, Cuba

“With the restoration of historical sites on Antigua and Barbuda and the diversification of our product into the heritage tourism market, we can expect an enhanced visitor experience resulting in increased visitor arrivals, increased length of stay, greater foreign exchange earnings, and an improvement in the quality of life for residents of Antigua and Barbuda,” said the Minister.

During the discussions, provisions were also made for Cuba to assist in the skills training of tourism service providers and individuals desirous of pursuing careers in tourism. Both short-term 2 week courses and 5 year university courses will be offered.

Minister Lovell thanked Minister Cruz for the contribution of the Cuban Government, and said that his Government was also looking forward to extending whatever technical support and assistance it could, to assist in the development of yachting in Cuba.

A Memorandum of Understanding outlining the terms of the agreement between the two

governments will be signed at a later date.

Members of the delegation that accompanied the Minister on the 5 day trip included Research and Planning Officer Corthwright Marshall, Tourism Product Development Officer Darlene Lay, Senior Assistant to the Minister Elinor Oliver and Communications Officer to the Ministry Maria Blackman.

Incorporating indigenous culture into tourism product will help drive development process says Tourism Minister

In recognition of the potential for growth in cultural tourism in Antigua and Barbuda, talk during a recent trip to Cuba by Minister of Tourism, Culture and the Environment Harold Lovell, included+- discussing ways to ensure that Antiguan culture is integrated into the island’s tourism product.

According to a new study conducted by the Travel Industry Association of America (TIA) and Smithsonian Magazine, there is a growing interest by travellers to visit places where they can experience cultural, arts, historic and heritage activities.

This is a market that we are playing close attention to, said the Tourism Minister who is seeking to build cultural ties with the government of Cuba.

While in Cuba, the Minister took the opportunity to examine the workings of highly lucrative tourism sites with strong cultural offerings in the Pinar Del Rio province, in addition to viewing the popular Parisien cabaret in Havana.

He also attended the 16 annual International Book fair in Havana, where he joined the Cuban Minister of Culture Abel Prieto Jimenez, in honouring indigenous Cuban poets and novelists for their literary works.

“Our Ministry recognizes the importance of our cultural artists and their role in depicting through the various art forms, the Antiguan and Barbudan way of life. Furthermore, we acknowledge that it is the local creation of arts and crafts for sale both in and outside of the country, that will help to drive our economy and provide a better quality of life for our residents”, said Lovell.

“We are therefore committed to partnering with the Department of Culture in maintaining the integrity of our culture while at the same time showcasing our cultural heritage to residents and visitors alike”.



Antigua and Barbuda and Montserrat firm up arrangements for Ferry Docking Facility

Antigua and Barbuda and Montserrat move a step closer to the realization of joint ferry docking facilities.

The disclosure comes from Ambassador Dr. Clarence Henry, after a recent two-day working visit to Montserrat along with Mr. Wesley James, Engineer at the Public Works Department.

Describing his visit as successful, Ambassador Henry explained that apart from meeting with Hon. Dr. Lowell Lewis - Chief Minister of Montserrat, several Cabinet Ministers and Governor - Deborah Barnes Jones, they held working sessions with engineers and technicians to draft a Financing Proposal and elements of the design to advance the ferry docking facility proposal to the European Commission.

Last year, CARIFORUM Ministers approved the proposal as a priority project under the Caribbean Regional Indicative Programme, (CRIP), and advanced the request for European Commission support. The Commission has been sympathetic to the thrust of the proposal, but has indicated June-July 2007 as the cut off point for consideration of a draft Financing Proposal under the 9th regional programming. Accordingly, the CARIFORUM Secretariat has recently requested from my Office, background information and the receipt of an early draft of the Financing Proposal. The understanding is that the CARIFORUM Secretariat is hoping to complete all necessary work on the draft Financing Proposal by the end of March 2007 for submission to the Delegation in Barbados.

"To this end, it was agreed that as the National Authorizing Officer that I should travel to Montserrat with Mr. James to initiate and advance the work in order to meet the short timeframe. We have been provided with several studies including economic analysis of Montserrat, the transportation and environment sectors and that country's sustainable development strategy. I am convinced that Montserrat has been over studied and there is no need to conduct another study, in order to execute the joint ferry docking facility project. In fact, should there be an attempt to suggest the conduct of another study to legitimize CARIFORUM's request, would only further stifle the economic recovery efforts of the present Montserrat administration", Dr Henry said.

"Our experts have shown their competence and by the end of next week, the engineers and draftsman are expected to complete draft technical designs and costing for both facilities.

Moreover, it was agreed between the parties that the project will comprise rehabilitation of the Little Bay ferry jetty on Montserrat and the construction of a ferry facility west of the Ministry of Health in St. John's where a similar facility once stood. Additionally, the government of Montserrat will inject sums from its local development fund for the local component of the project", said Ambassador Henry.

It is also expected that Mr. James from the Public Works Department will continue to work with his Montserrat colleagues to finalize the draft designs and costs. Antigua is also to send a diver to conduct under water structural examination of the Little Bay ferry jetty along with the site in St. Johns with a report for insertion into the engineering design report.

"Our visit continues the close collaboration between the governments

and people of Montserrat and Antigua and Barbuda and I am looking to complete the draft designs and Financing Proposal for submission to the CARIFORUM Secretariat and in turn the Delegation for approval", Ambassador Henry said.

Financial Services Regulatory Commission Oversees BETonSPORTS settlement with Creditors

On February 19 the Financial Services Regulatory Commission (FSRC) announced it was assisting and supervising BoS (Antigua) Ltd ("BOS"), the operator of the BetonSports family of remote gaming products, in a process for the collection of funds owed to BOS and the onward, orderly payment of collected amounts to BOS creditors and employees.

The process has been implemented under the supervisory authority given to the FSRC in order to give extra reassurance to organisations that funds returned will be properly used in the settlement of creditors in line with legal requirements, as well as assuring that BOS creditors will be paid in a fair and balanced manner.

Presently, BOS has been unable to repay customers due to cash-flow constraints, along with legal and operational interruptions. A substantial amount of monies owed to BOS by payment processors and publishers have not been repaid and it is anticipated that the oversight of the process by the Commission will give these organisations the transparency and reassurance they are seeking in order to return funds, so they may be distributed appropriately.

The Commission under an order received by the Eastern Caribbean High Court of Justice will manage and supervise all funds remitted. The Commission and BOS Directors will be communicating with all account debtors directly. After evaluating, and verifying the obligations to creditors of BOS, these funds will then be paid in the legally prescribed order by Commission.

Kaye McDonald, Director of the Financial Services Regulatory Commission, Division of Gaming noted "We are pleased with the agreement of BOS's Directors to cooperate with Antigua and Barbudan authorities to ensure the proper discharge of creditors, namely players and employees in this difficult case. As regulators, it is our responsibility to ensure that licensees operate properly at all times even under adverse conditions. We expect that our involvement and the cooperation of BOS will encourage the prompt payment of amounts owed to BOS by payment processors and others, so that funds can be promptly returned knowing that they will be distributed properly." Ms McDonald added "we expect BOS debtors to cooperate with the process, and I am sure BOS is prepared to use all legal remedies available, to ensure that they do so."

Director of BOS, Mr. Clive Archer, said "we are pleased to be working with the FSRC to ensure that customers, staff and other creditors receive the money they are owed. We have been hampered by the slow return of funds owed to us and we hope that this process will give debtors the reassurance they need to swiftly pay, so that our creditors including our customers and staff can be paid. It is extremely sad that such a great business has been destroyed in this fashion but we are committed to ensuring to the best of our ability that it ends properly.

We are happy to cooperate with

the supportive staff of the FSRC and believe that they are best suited, as the regulatory authority to ensure that all are treated fairly. We know that the business is all about customers and staff and we want to ensure they are properly looked after."

Police to get state-of-the-art mobile command unit ahead of Cricket World Cup

On February 26, Prime Minister the Honourable W. Baldwin Spencer announced that his government is set to acquire a 22 x 12 x 10 ft mobile police command unit ahead of Cricket World Cup, after a delegation led by Minister of Justice the Honourable Colin Derrick and including UN Ambassador Dr. John W. Ashe and Assistant Commissioner of Police Wilhiem Samuels, concluded a purchase agreement with OBS, Inc of Canton, Ohio, a major supplier of police command units in the United States

"I am pleased to announce that our police force will be given a brand new mobile command unit that will enhance significantly their ability to project a presence and thereby serve as a strong deterrent to those who are bent on disturbing public order, while at the same time improving security at major events, beginning with next month's Cricket World Cup and beyond," he said.

Minister of Justice the Honourable Colin Derrick stressed the timeliness of this latest acquisition when he noted that "With Cricket World Cup less than a month away, this purpose-built mobile police command vehicle will be used as a command centre during major incidents, and will serve as a mobile command post to coordinate intelligence and communications between police commanders and front-line police."



Senator the Honourable
Colin Derrick,
Minister of Justice and
Public Safety

Assistant Commissioner of Police Samuels, who is in charge of the St John's area also expressed his satisfaction with this latest acquisition, which he said was sorely needed.

"A suitable specialist mobile command post is one of top priorities of our police force. This unit, which is a mini police station on wheels, will allow those in command to have ready access to units in the field, so that in cases where appropriate back-up may be needed it can be requested and coordinated," he said.

The mobile command unit, which will be able to accommodate a state-of-the-art communications systems, have secure wireless Internet connections and also include display screens and a video camera that can record crimes as they are happening, will be used to crack down on crime around the country.

