

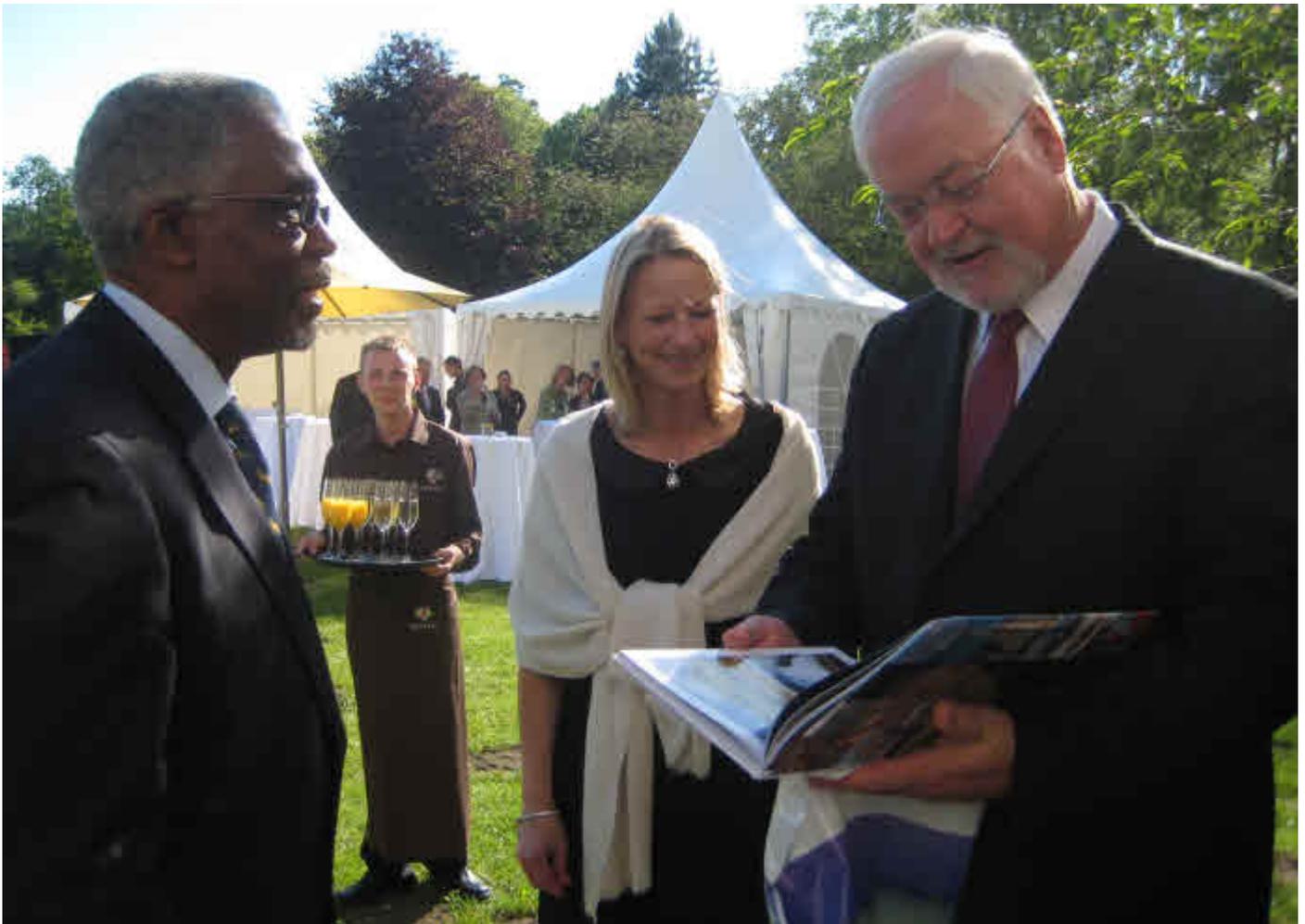


The Antigua and Barbuda High Commission

Official Newsletter - Issue 134 -- June 2009

Prime Minister Hon. W. Baldwin Spencer's remarks at National Economic Consultation

See pages 3, 10



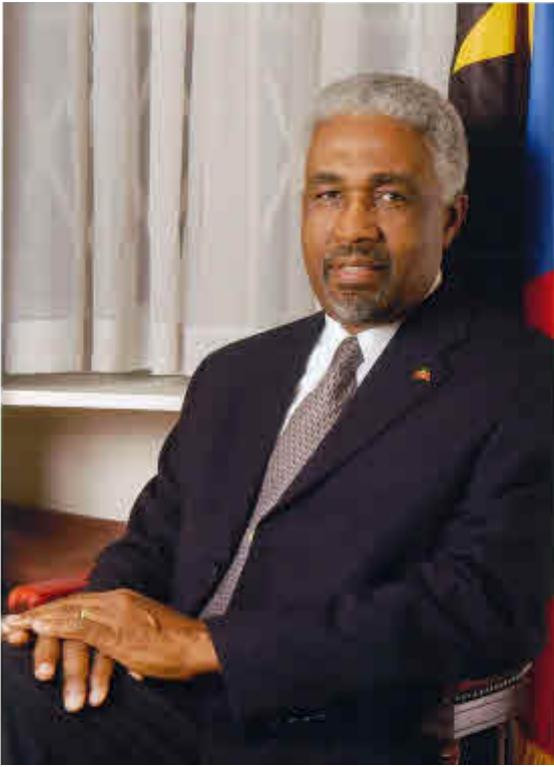
His Excellency Dr Carl Roberts presents 'A Little Bit of Paradise' to Prime Minister Peter Harry Carstensen of Kiel, Germany at the Kiel Regatta

See page 8

In This Issue

1. *Prime Minister's remarks at the National Economic Consultation (pages 3, 10)*
2. *World Environment Day Message - Commonwealth Secretary-General (page 4)*
3. *Antigua and Barbuda goes to cricket (page 6)*
4. *High Commissioner at Kiel Week regatta (page 8)*

A MESSAGE FROM HIS EXCELLENCY DR CARL ROBERTS, HIGH COMMISSIONER



Telecommunications in the Caribbean, then and

now

by

**H.E. Dr Carl B. Roberts
High Commissioner**

to

**Rotary Club of London
22nd June 2009**

PRESIDENT Marion, Sergeant-at-Arms Roy, Fellow Rotarians, Ladies and Gentlemen, Good Afternoon. It is indeed a pleasure for me to speak today about a subject which has been the focus of my life for over thirty-seven and a half years. Though the period over which I will point the flashlight spans from the 1960s to present day, if one were to go back further, one would find other interesting periods to speak about. I was very fortunate to have worked in telecommunications in not only one of the most dynamic periods, but in my humble opinion, one of the most interesting.

Although the Caribbean is predominantly made up of several small developing countries, in fact many micro-states, it is nevertheless a market where many changes are taking place in

telecommunication infrastructure. It is indeed a major telecommunication market. As several reports would readily admit, it is a market in which several parts have telecommunication infrastructure as advanced as anywhere else in the world. Good trading relations with the United States, Canada, UK and Europe and the dominance of tourism as the principal economic activity, are the main reasons for this.

Let me first state what I mean by the Caribbean. The Caribbean is a region or a chain of islands from the southern tip of Florida in the USA to the northern tip of South America and often includes such places as Bermuda, Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands in the Atlantic. The Region covers around 1000 square kilometres. In my presentation I will not include such places as Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Puerto Rico and the French and Dutch islands.

Let me first provide a little history of this important service. Telecommunication Service was introduced into the Region not long after Alexander Bell's invention of the telephone became commercially available in the capital centres of the then commercial world. The Service was owned by Governments and was introduced in the main to support mercantile interests, government official communications and to a lesser extent public service.

As any research using reports on the official site of the Caribbean Association of Telecommunications Organisations (CANTO) will reveal the 1960s began a period of rapid changes within the region. During this period, a US Company called Continental Telephone (Contel) bought the companies providing domestic service in Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. and the entities providing both domestic and international services in the Bahamas. Contel installed new electro-mechanical switching and transmission systems in those places. In the small English speaking territories of the Eastern Caribbean Cable and Wireless, then owned by the the UK government, provided both domestic and

international services in Barbados and it was through their links here that much of the traffic out of the region passed.

Early communications were simple. The main modes of communications were telegrams, government messages, press reports and operator-connected HF Radio transmitted telephone calls. I give you an example of the type of telegram message. After the mandatory heading the message read:

"Addition to family stop mother and daughter doing well stop still in hospital stop more later".

Or another:

"Reached safely stop place nothing like we discussed stop good prospects for business"

Or yet another:

"Richard in accident stop come quickly"

You will notice that brevity was the order of the day. Every word was counted and charged. Sometimes the conciseness of the message conveyed more worries than intended. Receiving a telegram was frightening in and of itself before one could decipher the contents of the message.

If it were marked urgent then you opened it with trepidation.

Making a telephone call was no less easy. If the country to which you were making that call had direct circuits to your homeland, you would simply call the operator, book the time of your call and await the call back. It could take hours and days and the quality was at best questionable. The cost was always higher than you expected.

In the late sixties, Cable and Wireless upgraded the radio systems serving the region. New emerging tropospheric scatter systems were introduced. Local switchboard operators were able to seize international circuits and connect directly to some destinations without going through transit points in Barbados, White Plains New York, Jacksonville Florida, and London. In the 1980s Cable and Wireless upgraded the radio system across the region with the installation of

Continue on page 10

Hon. W. Baldwin Spencer
Remarks
National Economic Consultation
25th June, 2009

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The world we live in today is drastically different from the one we knew of some two to three years ago. Since 2008, the world has been shocked by an economic crisis of enormous proportions.

The collapse of world financial markets has led to hundreds of thousands of persons in Europe, North America and Asia and most recently right here at home in the Caribbean and in Antigua and Barbuda, being placed on the unemployment line.

For Antigua and Barbuda, this global economic crisis has generated major challenges that are impacting our economic output and employment.

There is no doubt that as a small, open, developing economy, Antigua and Barbuda would have become susceptible to the economic crisis that has gripped the large, developed economies of the world. The recent developments within our region involving CLICO, British American Insurance, the R. Allen Stanford debacle and more recently the possible fall-outs from the alleged wrongdoings of the former boss of our financial services regulatory commission have further compounded the crisis for us here in Antigua and Barbuda.

This fourth instalment of the National Economic Symposium, therefore, is of vital importance not only to your government in charting the way forward but to every Antiguan and Barbudan as it would take all of our efforts combined to ensure that we survive these harsh global economic conditions.

Today's consultation is not about cosmetic changes to the economy of Antigua and Barbuda. It is about making structural changes to our domestic economy and finding real and workable solutions to effectively cushion the effects of a world-wide recession that has never been seen before in most of our lifetime.

We cannot simply remove the rose-coloured glasses and expect our problems to go away. We must remove them and focus our attention on whether or not our actions will catapult our economy over the brick wall that is before us or lead us head-on into a massive collision.

Your government is prepared to make the necessary sacrifices to address the issues that confront us by devising new plans and policies. You as Antiguan and Barbudans must also be prepared to make sacrifices for the good of this country – from public servants, to the private sector, the trade unions – we all must play meaningful roles if we are to overcome this economic hurdle.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Over the past few weeks, The Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Public Administration has been conducting widespread consultations with non-governmental organizations, community based groups, the private sector and regional and sub-regional partners in an effort to finalize a plan that would bring about the structural changes and social and economic transformation that are needed to propel our country into a secure and prosperous future.

The National Economic and Social Transformation (NEST) Plan was rolled out with four major components being the fiscal consolidation programme, an economic action plan, social transformation, and financial sector stability.

It is my government's belief that this NEST Plan will strategically address our fiscal and socio-economic concerns, fully cognizant that we, as a small open economy, have limited policy options.

This NEST Plan is not unlike various policies and strategies being developed and pursued by our regional counterparts as they too seek to cope with the fallout from the global economic crisis. In addition, our NEST Plan reflects the sub-regional approach to the crisis, which is outlined in the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union (ECCU) Eight Point Plan.

At this point I wish to commend and express the appreciation of the government of Antigua and Barbuda to the Governor of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank Sir Dwight Venner and his team for their expert guidance as we address this daunting challenge. Commendation must also go to the technicians in the Ministry of Finance for their dedication and hard work.



Honourable Baldwin Spencer
Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I wish to address just a few major challenges that we are facing today - Tourism and the effects of the recession, to employ or not to employ and to borrow or not to borrow – these are the questions that we must answer truthfully and with reality.

Our tourism industry is the driving force of our economy. It is also the sector that is hardest hit in the region and Antigua and Barbuda is no exception.

With an over thirty-percent reduction in occupancy, most if not all tourism related entities have had to reduce staff in order to remain in business.

My government has made the issues facing this sector immediate priority. The yachting, hotels, cruise, tours and attractions aspects of the sector must be addressed if we are to stave off massive unemployment.

It is my government's intention to continue to engage with members of the tourism industry to ensure we are able to stimulate the sector by focusing more on promoting the industry on a regional and domestic level.

The time has come when we have to look inward and promote regional holiday travel and on-island holidays. It is my government's belief that if we as a region

Continued on page 10

World Environment Day Message

5 June 2009

By

**Commonwealth
Secretary-General
Kamalesh Sharma**

The term 'rising sea levels' has real expression in the Maldives and Tuvalu. These and other low-lying states are effectively threatened with submergence. The tides have already risen, and wholesale migration is a possible response. The front lines have already been breached.

Elsewhere in the Commonwealth, we see the effects of climate change in poor crop yields, destructive storms, shrinking rainforests, dwindling fish stocks, thawing tundra, encroaching desert, flooded lowlands.

It is an existential emergency, in that it is concerned with our very existence. Typically and ironically, it is the countries with the least carbon footprints which are fighting for sheer survival.

The world knows this only too well. Last week it was reminded again, with the publication of the Global Humanitarian Forum's report entitled *Climate Change: The Anatomy of a Silent Crisis*. Climate change is already responsible for 300,000 deaths a year, the report said, and it directly affects 300 million people, mostly in the developing world. Unless radical action is taken, it argued, these figures can only rise. Within just 25 years, it estimated that climate change will push 20 million more people into poverty, with 75 million more people being displaced. Cavilling about figures is not the issue: it is incontrovertible that we are face to face with an incipient catastrophe.

These are stark reminders of the importance of recognising today's World Environment Day theme: 'Your planet needs you, UNite to combat climate change'.

Climate change is a core development challenge, and one which can only be

tackled by countries pulling collectively to achieve shared global solutions. Fortunately, consensus is building in this direction. Within the Commonwealth, climate change is central to our concerns. In 2007, Commonwealth Heads of Government demonstrated their commitment to making a difference, by agreeing to the Lake Victoria Commonwealth Climate Change Action Plan.

The Plan has seen significant results in supporting developing country negotiations on climate change, using the Commonwealth civil society network (statisticians, geographers, foresters, meteorologists, and others), launching new programmes on land management and forestation, and studies on the exports of agricultural produce, and supporting the management of natural disasters.

Further, the practical response to climate change has also been discussed by the wider Commonwealth family: governments, officials, parliamentarians, youth leaders, human rights officials, and others all have a role to play.

The Commonwealth recognises that all nations have different interests and objectives, and require freedom to shape their own development agenda. And it believes that it is possible to develop beneficial outcomes for all, providing we share the spirit of co-operation and a common goal. It expressed this in the Marlborough House Statement adopted by its leaders in 2008, which sets down the principles of inclusiveness, legitimacy, responsibility, transparency and effectiveness that should inform the new paradigm of international environmental governance.

Negotiations are currently underway in Bonn, under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to discuss and shape the international agreements that will be made in Copenhagen later this year.

Those debating in Germany should pay heed to the lessons of last week's report, and respond to the call of today's World Environment Day theme. We wish to see a strong climate change agreement that addresses the



**Commonwealth Secretary-General
Kamalesh Sharma**

concerns of the poorest and most vulnerable of people – for it is they who in general contribute the least to the way our climate changes, and who suffer the most.

Some of the other key outcomes which must be pursued in Copenhagen include new mechanisms for financing the preservation and regeneration of forests, that will deliver genuine development benefits both nationally and locally. We also need to see new frameworks emerge that will enable small and low-emitting developing countries to create their own low-emission economies, and remain competitive. These countries do not just need finance: they also need the technology, skills and institutions which will help them to adapt to changing circumstances well into the future.

Providing we stay united and true to the principles of collective responsibility and equity, and never lose sight of the goal of achieving genuine sustainable development and the alleviation of poverty, we can be hopeful of tackling the climate change challenge. I am heartened to see that this year's theme for World Environment Day captures this collaborative spirit.

Minister Maginley attends Annual Caribbean Tourism Summit

The Hon. John Maginley, Minister of Tourism, Civil Aviation and Culture and current chairman of the Caribbean Tourism Organisation, attended the Annual Caribbean Tourism Summit in Washington D.C. from June 8 to 10.

The Summit sought to provide Ministers and officials engaged in the tourism industry from the greater Caribbean region with the opportunity to meet with Congressional Representatives, members of the executive and private sector leaders in order to promote tourism by examining the various policies that affect the industry while crafting strategies to meet the requirements of the new global environment.

Among the officials with whom Minister Maginley interacted were those from the Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development USAID, the Department of Homeland Security, the World Bank, Congresswomen Donna Christian-Christensen, Yvette Clarke and

Congressman Eliot Engel. Issues discussed included the global financial crisis and its impact on the Caribbean Tourism industry, the impact of natural disasters, the managing of health concerns, energy, security and capacity building.

The first component of the summit that took place on June 8, consisted of a CTO think-tank session moderated by Adam Sacks, Founder and Managing Director of Tourism Economics who focused his presentation on establishing an understanding between the economy and tourism as a basis for destination strategy. In this regard, areas discussed included pricing, promotion, partnerships and policies.

Before leaving for Washington the Minister described the benefits he hoped to obtain from the summit as the importance of having an exchange of best practices with his colleagues as well as having the opportunity to meet face to face with officials in the United States whose work has a direct bearing on the industry in Antigua and Barbuda and the Caribbean.



(left to right) Mr Colin James, Minister John Maginley, Ambassador Deborah-Mae Lovell and Mr Cortwright Marshall

The Antigua and Barbuda delegation comprised Director of Tourism Policy and Planning Mr. Cortwright Marshall, Chief Executive Officer of the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority Mr. Colin James and Ambassador Deborah-Mae Lovell, Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador to the United States and the Organisation of American States.

Following his meeting in Washington, Minister Maginley travelled to New York where he attended Caribbean Week.

Maria Blackman appointed Marketing Executive - Communications

Maria Blackman has been appointed Marketing Executive - Communications for the UK, effective June 15, 2009. She is now part of the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority, having previously worked as acting communications officer at the Ministry of Tourism, where she assisted with the Marketing Department's development plans, and functioned as press liaison officer. Miss Blackman holds a BSc with honours in Tourism Management, and brings to the team a good knowledge of the Antigua and Barbuda market. She will assist both the Marketing & Administration Manager, Miss Cherrie Osborne and Antigua and Barbuda's Director of Tourism for the UK & Europe, Mr Hilary Modeste.

The Authority's CEO, Colin C James, said, "The appointment of Maria to the London office further demonstrates our commitment to ensure that the UK office is fully staffed with the right competencies as we implement new strategies to meet the challenges of the market head-on. It is also an investment in building the human capacity of our team. I wish Maria every success in her new role."

The role of Ascension Trust and Street Pastors

Ascension Trust is a charitable organisation which has been running for 15 years and takes teams to various parts of the world for short term missions. Ascension Trust has maintained a continual relationship with the Antiguan Government through its Street Pastors Scheme.

Street Pastors is an international initiative made up of individuals and groups from different denominations. Street Pastors initiatives work closely with governments, police, social, health and statutory agencies. The Street Pastors scheme was launched in Antigua in 2005 and reports to date have shown the positive and significant effect that this scheme has had in the country.

In a continued effort to foster social transformation in Antigua, Street Pastors Antigua propose to continue to encourage and facilitate medical missions where UK based doctors can come on a voluntary basis to Antigua and promote health and social well-being through innovative community projects.

Antigua and Barbuda goes to Cricket!

The Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority's- UK Office engaged and informed attendees at the Caribbean International Cricket Fun Day about Antigua and Barbuda, when the office participated in the fundraising event held at the Thames Ditton Cricket Club in Giggs Hill on Sunday.

Marketing Manager, Cherrie Osborne said: "The event attracted the affluent middle-class in Surrey, England and our presence there afforded us the opportunity to target this specific community that makes up a sizable percentage of our market."



Internationally known Antiguan cricketers, Richie Richardson, who is affiliated with the Thames Ditton Cricket Club, and Curtly Ambrose made guest appearances at the event and featured in a 20/20 cricket match.

The over 2000 attendees at the match between the Richie Richardson International XI and Lashings World XI, were also able to bid for an Antigua and Barbuda package holiday to St. James's Club for 7 nights, courtesy of Elite Island Resorts.

"The chance to win a holiday with flights to Antigua created a huge buzz in the ground, and raised over £1,500 for good causes", said Angela Slater, event coordinator.

Tony Pitchford, the proud winner of this holiday auction was excited about his spontaneously planned trip and was exploring the possibility of extending his stay in Antigua by an additional 7 nights.

The Antigua and Barbuda Tourist Office also supplied the Man of the Match with a gift basket containing a bottle of 5-year-old English Harbour Rum and two Gilly Gobinet books - Top 20 places in Antigua and Barbuda and Cocktail recipes. 50 miniature cricket bats branded with the Antigua and Barbuda logo were also distributed to the crowd for autograph signings.

The Caribbean International Cricket Fun Day hosted by Thames Ditton Cricket Club raised money for the Shooting Star Hospice, Thames Ditton Cricket Club and the Richie Richardson

Scholarship Foundation.

H.E. Dr. Carl Roberts, High Commissioner of Antigua and Barbuda for the UK and his wife were guests of honour at the event.

Photographs

Top - (l to r) High Commissioner Dr Carl Roberts, Tourism Staff - Cherrie Osborne, Joel Henry and Maria Blackman with Mrs Pauline Roberts at extreme right

Left - High Commissioner with cricket teams

Bottom right: High Commissioner with 'man of the match' and Cricketing Ambassador- Ritchie Richardson



THE Antigua & Barbuda INTERNATIONAL Literary FESTIVAL

6-8 November 2009 Jolly Beach Resort & Spa

FESTIVAL AT A GLANCE

The Antigua & Barbuda International Literary Festival, begun in 2006, is an annual 3-day celebration of literary arts, with workshops, author readings, book signings and special events in a beautiful tropical setting. This year the festival, held on 6-8 November 2009, features prominent Caribbean authors.

To date more than 65 authors have participated, and the line-up of literary stars for the 2009 Festival will soon be announced. Our goal is to include noted writers in a broad range of genres from poetry, photography and non-fiction to performance arts and drama.

The venue in 2009 will be the Festival Village at Jolly Harbour, an elegant resort, marina and business centre on one of Antigua's most picturesque beaches. The village will include a stage for workshops, readings and entertainment, a children's tent, a food demonstration tent, a bookstore, and food and beverage tents.

Among the specific activities planned for the 2009 Festival are:

Youth Day, where talented young writers attend workshops led by noted authors

School visits by authors brought in from other Caribbean islands as well as Antiguan authors

A **Gala Opening Ceremony** and reception attended by the Governour General, Prime Minister and government officials of Antigua as well as the authors and Festival participants

Two days of **workshops** on the practical aspects of writing as well as lively discussions on timely literary topics by panels of authors and publicists

A **book sales area** where participants can obtain books to be signed by the authors

A **children's tent** where children's authors and the crew from Sesame Street will entertain children with readings and other activities to encourage reading

A **cooking demonstration tent** featuring noted Caribbean cookbook authors and Antiguan Chefs

Food and drink vendors and live entertainment

U.S., Canadian and Caribbean region literary fans can join in all the activities by booking a "Booklovers in Paradise" package, which features all-inclusive accommodations at Jolly Beach Resort. These will be coordinated by Carib-World Travel in St. John's, Antigua.

To find out more about the Festival and see the latest list of authors participating in 2009, go to www.antiguaandbarbudaliteraryfestival.com.

c/o Carib-World Travel
Woods Centre • St. John's, Antigua
268-480-2987 • 268-723-7740

CDC ESTABLISHES PARTNERSHIP WITH BARBUDA CARIBANA COMMITTEE

On the 4th June the Carnival Development Committee announced that it had entered into a partnership with the Barbuda CARIBANA Committee that will result in greater participation of the winners of the annual CARIBANA festivities.

Vaughn Walter, Chairman of the CDC said that this year the winners of the CARIBANA Queens Competition, Teenage Pageant and Junior Calypso will be added to the number of contestants in the competitions for Carnival 2009. In addition, the Calypso Monarch of CARIBANA will be admitted into the semi-finals of the Wadadli Beer Calypso Competition. "The inclusion of the winners from CARIBANA 2009 is seen by the

Carnival Development Committee as demonstrating that Carnival truly belongs to all of us and the equal participation of persons from both Antigua and Barbuda demonstrates our uniqueness as a people and our varied talents. I am sure that all of Antigua and Barbuda is looking forward to this year's competitions," said Chairman Walter.

Secretary of the Barbuda Council which manages the CARIBANA celebrations, Mrs. Dorothy Rae said that she welcomed the inclusion of the winners from CARIBANA 2009 in the festivities in Antigua and believes that it is the beginning of a relationship that can further strengthen the ties between both countries and the expansion of the CARIBANA festivities.

Ms. Jameel Jones, the winner of the 2009 CARIBANA Queens Competition will become the seventh queen contestant. The Barbuda Council has

already indicated that they will be sponsoring the seventh contestant who will join six other girls for a night of competition at Carnival City on July 27 tagged "Fiesta."

16 year old Kendra Beazer, the Teenage Pageant winner from Barbuda will represent his school - the Holy Trinity School in the 2009 Teen Splash competition while 14 year old Chaç -chena "De Empress" Warner will join the Juniors in the Calypso Competition on Sunday July 26.

The winner of the CARIBANA Calypso competition Bonita "Missy" John will enter the semi-finals of the Wadadli Beer Calypso Competition on July 18.

Carnival 2009 runs from July 25 to August 4 with a theme of "It's Yours – It's Mine – Antigua's Carnival 2009."

CONRAD DORAM IS CARNIVAL 2009 PARADE GRAND MASTER

Conrad Doram, one of the nation's long-serving costume builder and avid lover of Carnival, has been appointed this year's Parade Grand Master. Doram said that he is honoured to have been given the title and is happy to make a contribution to the annual summer festival in this way. He also thanked the Carnival Development committee for sticking with the Grand Master tradition over the years. Doram also explained that, over the years, he enjoyed building Carnival costumes, even though it was hard work. "It was quite rewarding and enjoyable...because of the satisfaction you get at the end of it, which is seeing your own creation (move) from paper to reality," he stated. Building costumes as a sort of career, however, really began in 1981, Doram said, when his wife Heather began designing them. The demand for costumes created by the husband-wife team increased quickly – they were desired by contestants and sponsors and well received by the public. Of his wife, Doram said, "She's an artist." She is the one, he explained, who puts ideas down on paper for him to turn into reality.

High Commissioner attends Kiel Week Regatta

His Excellency Dr Carl Roberts, Mrs Roberts and other Ambassadors were invited by the Prime Minister Peter Harry Carstensen of Kiel, Germany to attend the Kiel Week Regatta from 24th – 27th June 2009.

The Kiel Week Regatta claims to be the largest sailing event in the world, but it is also the largest public festival in Northern Europe. Top class sailors from around the globe compete in various classes of small craft, and capture the view a sail-past by tall ships.

On land, a music festival kept the party in full swing.

More than 5,000 sailors attend each year, in international and Olympic dinghies, and about 250 off-shore yachts compete in the off-shore area of Alpha.

The Kiel Week got underway with the traditional ringing of the bell at the Town Hall Square, followed by a long blast on a ship's horn to signal the commencement of festivities.



The Prime Minister of Kiel, Germany, Ambassador Dr Carl Roberts and the other Ambassadors at the Kiel Regatta

Press Statement Issued by the Honourable Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs - 19th June 2009

The Government has been reliably informed that the US Securities Exchange Commission has today Friday June 19 2009 filed in the Northern District Court of Texas a Motion for Leave to file an Amended Complaint in its pending civil suit against Stanford International Bank Limited (SIB), Stanford Group Company, and R Allen Stanford among others. The civil suit was filed by the SEC in February 2009.

The Amended Complaint adds Leroy King, among others, as a defendant. Mr. King who is the Administrator (currently on suspension) of our Financial Services Regulatory Commission (FSRC) is therein alleged to have, among other things, facilitated the Stanford International Bank's Ponzi Scheme "by ensuring that FSRC 'looked the other way', and conducted sham audits and examinations of SIB's books and records in exchange for bribes paid to him over a period of several years".

2
The Government is naturally concerned over these serious allegations which suggest that Mr. King was engaging in unlawful activities for personal gain thereby compromising the due performance of his duties as an FSRC employee, given the strict regulatory standards established over the years by the Commission. Antigua and Barbuda's offshore business activities is once

again placed under intense international scrutiny, and this will clearly have adverse effects on the economy and raise questions about our regulatory legal framework. I wish to reassure the general public and the wider international community that the Commission's Board has itself been engaged during the past several weeks in rigorous self-examination along with an internal investigation of Mr. King's employment conduct.

The Government has confirmed that a number of criminal indictments have been laid against both R Allen Stanford and Leroy King which include conspiracy to commit mail fraud, conspiracy to commit wire fraud, conspiracy to launder illegal proceeds, and obstruction of the SEC. These charges do raise the issue of a possible extradition request by the United States authorities.

I can authoritatively state that following a meeting with Mr. King, the Commission yesterday penned a letter to the Hon. Minister of Finance making certain recommendations for Cabinet's consideration as to Mr. King's continued employment with the Commission.

3
The International Business Corporations Act provides for the appointment of and disciplinary action against the Administrator of the Commission are to be done by

Cabinet. This matter will be definitively addressed at the next Cabinet meeting to be held on Tuesday the 23rd.

These events touching and concerning the operations of Stanford International Bank Limited which began in February 2009 has had an adverse effect on the economy with employees being laid off or dismissed without payment of severance, trade creditors remaining unpaid from as far back as November 2008, and the inability by the various Stanford entities to provide their accustomed services. The Bank has been placed in liquidation in an effort to collect its various assets for distribution to depositors and creditors, but this will be a long legal process. Government's acquisition of the lands of these entities has been challenged in the High Court, and attempts by the Registrar of Companies to assess the financial viabilities of the entities are also being challenged. But Government cannot and will not sit idly by, given its abiding duty and obligations to its citizens and all those adversely affected by these unfolding events. Given the circumstances, we firmly believe that the compulsory acquisition of the lands, Government's financial support of the Bank of Antigua, the liquidation of Stanford International Bank, and the action initiated by the Registrar of Companies are all in the best interest of the country.



(Left) - High Commissioner Dr Roberts presents 'A Little Bit of Paradise' to the Mayor of Lyon Mr Ge'ard Collomb while at an official function in Lyon, France - Mrs Roberts and Mr Preud'homme look on.



(right) High Commissioner and Mrs Roberts with Honorary Consul to France for Antigua and Barbuda Mr Preud'homme and Mrs Preud'homme.

Continued from page 3
and as nationals support our own, unemployment will remain low and businesses related to the sector will be able to remain open and thriving.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Some have criticized our policy of placing a freeze on public sector employment. It has been touted that a policy of no new employment by the private sector and the government can only spell disaster on an already fragile economy.

However, with a 25 percent decline in government's revenue, we must be even more prudent in the management of expenditure.

This Government has however determined that it would seek to maintain the levels of employment, at least in the short term, so as not to add to the impact of the global crisis on the level of employment. I wish to also state that in these trying economic times, employees must also recognize that they too must make a sacrifice.

Now is not the time to agitate for pay increases. In fact some labour specialists may suggest that now is the time for the trade unions, employers and workers to reach tripartite agreements in the interest of job security.

Of course, issues such as productivity linked to wages and salaries and sharing

of gains must factor highly in any arrangement.

Lastly Ladies and Gentlemen:

Many have suggested that government should borrow to stimulate the economy and increase employment. In a limited way this cannot be ruled out.

However, the question is, in a financial crisis, who is willing to lend and on what terms? In an environment of tight liquidity and high risk aversion, the options are limited for small island economies such as ours that are not "poor" enough to access most concessionary or grant funding but are also not "rich" enough to either do it on our own or to afford the high premiums associated with borrowing in this financial climate. We simply cannot borrow our way out of this crisis.

The NEST Plan will re-prioritize our public sector direction and put emphasis on that which can deliver maximum benefits with minimum expenditure.

Our NEST Plan will ensure enhanced productivity and more efficient and reliable delivery of services to the citizens and residents of Antigua and Barbuda.

The NEST Plan will afford all Antiguan and Barbudans the opportunity to be a part of a transformative process that allows us to correct the mistakes of the past, address

the challenges of the present and secure the future of our beloved nation.

The trials that we are now facing are characteristic of the economic cycle. There will always be the peaks and troughs, lows and highs of economic activity.

However, I believe that by working together as one people, we are fully capable of overcoming the adverse effects of this global recession.

Our cooperation – our coordinated efforts will ensure that we emerge a stronger and better positioned nation, able to realize the promise of a vibrant economic future for every Antiguan and Barbudan.

I welcome each and every one of you here once again to this important interaction. I thank our regional and international partners for your continued support and assistance as we strive to develop a better Antigua and Barbuda.

To you the members of the audience, here and at home, I urge you to take advantage of this opportunity to engage in dialogue on the issues that are important to our development and critical for securing the welfare of the people of this great nation of Antigua and Barbuda.

I thank you very much and I look forward to a successful symposium.

May God bless each and every one of us.

*52nd Antigua Carnival Celebration
July 23rd to August 4th, 2009*

From page 2

the Eastern Caribbean Digital Microwave Fibre-Optic System (ECDMS). The investment in telecommunications equipment in the region was not undertaken by Cable and Wireless alone. Heavy investments by state-owned telephone companies resulted in more than 75 percent digital networks. By the 1990 with the additional laying of the Eastern Caribbean Fibre-optic System (ECFS), a link from BVI in the North to Trinidad and Tobago in the South, the region had the most modern network available. Over 75 of the international telephone links were digital with Cable and Wireless Dominica being heralded as the first fully digitalized network in the world.

Caribbean countries compared favourably with other developing countries in terms of teledensity measured lines per 100 population. This is nevertheless a crude

measure which provides very little indication of the accessibility to phone services. Many phone lines in the 1990s were at businesses, and specifically at service facilities which were involved in the main industries of the countries; e.g. Tourism and financial services. It was easier to call from Antigua and Barbuda to Trinidad and Tobago, than to make a local across that country. This situation Guyana was even worse.

Gradually new services were introduced across the Region. Internet services were introduced by the mid 1990s and mobile services shortly thereafter. The type of mobile services was TDMA, similar to the USA standards and unlike the GSM standard prevalent in the UK and Europe. It was not until 2003 that GSM was introduced in the Region.

Telephone charges varied widely across the countries in the region. As the CANTO

official website indicates "this reflects both the government policy and the quality and extent of service available. In general, in early 1990s English-speaking countries had relatively higher rates than elsewhere in the Caribbean, with Belize and Guyana being low-cost exceptions. On the other hand some countries with higher rates also had better - more varied and reliable - service"

The Wait lists for telephone service in all these countries remained generally strong. These vary in size from Jamaica where in 1990 unsatisfied demand for new lines almost equalled the installed base of 88,000 lines. In Trinidad and Tobago, the wait list was over 40 percent of the installed based of 216,000 lines and 7 percent of the population in the same year.

The situation now is very different. The upsurge in demand for mobile service has addressed much of this pent up and

Continued on page 12

Antigua and Barbuda's Economic situation

The direness of Antigua and Barbuda's economic situation was laid out at the Fourth National Economic Symposium yesterday.

The government has readjusted its projected revenues for 2009 from \$800 million to \$600 million, and so a number of measures were presented for public consumption at the symposium to bring order the country's fiscal imbalance, which is expenditure outstripping revenue collection.

Some of the measures proposed in the Nest (National Economic and Social Transformation) plan include a 25 per cent reduction in ministry expenditures, a freeze on all new employment, increasing the price of LPG gas, reduce the number of items in the basket of essential goods, increase the embarkation tax from EC\$35 and US\$20 to EC\$50 and US\$25, and introducing excise tax on alcohol, tobacco, ammunition and telephone equipment among others.

Macroeconomic Adviser Kevin Silston said with a revised budget the government would have a deficit of about \$100 million as opposed to about \$500 million including loans.

It was acknowledged that the government's fiscal mismanagement was a historical problem that got progressively worse over time. He showed that many loan options are closed to Antigua and Barbuda because loans dating back to 1967 have not been serviced and until those have been cleared those donors are not amenable to further helping the government.

As it stands, options are a loan from the Caribbean Development Bank of \$81 million to be distributed over two years, or \$324 million from the International Monetary Fund over three years. The Ministry of Finance has also been negotiating with the government of China.

Although an IMF programme was not essentially desired, Governor of the ECCB Sir K. Dwight Venner in his presentation emphasised the country's need to bring its expenditures in balance and pointed out that Dominica succeeded with its IMF programme and there was no reason why Antigua and Barbuda could not.

He said the problem is the discipline of its policymakers, who cannot stick with a strict economic programme because of the need to get votes.

Deputy Director of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank Hazel Corbin said that Antigua's economy will contract by 3.3 per cent in 2009, then by 1.1 per cent in 2010 because of the dependence on

construction and tourism, industries which have declined significantly throughout the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union with the global recession.

She said that it was imperative that appropriate policies be formulated to cushion the impact of the current financial crisis, and to place the country on a sound macroeconomic footing for renewed and sustainable economic growth once the crisis subsides. As Antigua is also the biggest economy in the ECCU, its success or failure would affect the other countries. Minister of Finance Harold Lovell said at the day's conclusion, "We are at a seminal moment in this nation's history and it is time for us to demonstrate our maturity with respect to the way forward."

Sir Dwight said he can judge from the response and participation of the people that the importance for drastic action with the support of the people was understood. "I got the sense that something has to be done. As I keep saying, if you and I make \$10,000 and it suddenly downs to \$7,000, it's not business as usual. We have to find a way to economise, to change our habits. "I think all across the currency union, people have to understand that this is a time of focus and change."

The symposium focussed on the NEST plan and addressed issues relating to debt, financial sector stability and financing options for Antigua and Barbuda.

Source: Antiguasunonline.com



Antigua and Barbuda Mango Festival

The Mango & Pineapple Magic Menu competition set for August 8th, at the Antigua and Barbuda, Hospitality, Training Institute (ABHTI), will be open to public viewing this year for the first time.

Madeleine McComas, chairperson of the Magic Mango & Pineapple Committee, said events are planned to bring members of the public to ABHTI on that day. She noted that the committee is targeting approximately 300 individuals

In addition to the Chefs and Bartenders competitions, which will be held this year in the Demo Kitchen building, "we are planning to have senior (non-competing) chefs do cooking demonstrations out on the lawn for the public to see and taste."

This year's Mango Fest is scheduled for August 15 & 16th

SIRMM Project being implemented; Codrington Lagoon to be protected

The Sustainable Island Resource Management Mechanism (SIRMM) Project is currently being implemented in Antigua and Barbuda to ensure the nation's environment is sustainable.

The initiative, which is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), is intended to ensure the sustainability and maintenance of the island's ecosystem integrity, health and function through integrated planning and management of island resources."

One of the SIRMM Project's main facets is the protection and sustainable development of the Codrington Lagoon.

The lagoon, is quite important to the Caribbean region and even the world.

It is one of the largest lagoons in the Lesser Antilles, has extensive mangrove systems and supports one of the world's largest Frigate Bird (*Fregata magnificens*) colonies.

The lagoon is also a highly vulnerable component of Barbuda's ecosystem that houses a variety of flora and fauna, serves as a habitat and nursery for a range of marine species, and a number of birds like the West Indian Whistling Duck — an endangered species.

As a result it has been designated as a biodiversity hotspot by national and international organisations.

This has made it both a tourist attraction and a landmark of great cultural and economic importance.

For the Codrington Lagoon to remain in its



Aerial view of Barbuda

along the waterfront needs to be carefully planned.

This becomes especially important with respect to the accessibility of water and proper liquid and solid waste disposal.

There is a need, therefore, for a detailed management plan to govern activities in and around the waterfront.

Since the lagoon supports 60 per cent of Barbuda's economy, through the sale of fish and lobster, and tourism, such a plan is made even more essential.

As such, a five year management plan has been created through financing from the SIRMM Project and co-financing from other stake-holding agencies.

This was formulated in conjunction with a financial stability plan and the two will be used together to guide the management of the lagoon towards a sustainable future.

Within the Codrington Lagoon, which is also a National Park, user zones have been identified with markers and signs have been installed within the park and village to inform users and visitors about the project work and information on the lagoon.

In the near future, there will be Park Rangers offering camping trips in the park to explore the diverse ecosystem.

The Codrington Lagoon National Park encompasses the entire West Coast of Barbuda; it comprises of both marine and terrestrial habitats.

The park is approximately 18 square kilometres and covers one-third of the island.

The area is generally flat and, in some places, rests just above sea level.

Source: Antiguasun.com

From page 10

Unresolved demand for fixed line telephone service. In almost all of the countries of the region the number of mobile subscribers exceeds that of fixed line. Many younger generation householders have opted for a mobile telephone as their main means of communication instead of the fixed line.

Telephone service providers now look to providing mobile networks to expand their service provision instead of more expensive landlines. Fibre to the kerb, is even being introduced in the region to address the pressing demand for higher bandwidth Internet services and IP telephony.

The increase in bandwidth and the quality of networks has facilitated the extension of

Extra-Mural studies through the University of the West Indies., which traditionally had campuses in Mona, Jamaica; Bridgetown, Barbados and St Augustine, Trinidad, to the other non-campus territories. The UWI Distance Teaching Experiment (UWIDITE) satellite system now reaches the OECS States and allows the first two years of the degree programme to be done at home.

The landscape has changed drastically from what it was in the 1960s. Most modern handsets, pricing packages which are available in this country, are also being offered in the region. Network congestion is virtually a thing of the past. Circuit quality is comparable, and sometimes even better than, in the developed countries. Network coverage has improved significantly and continues to do so each year.

Telecommunication in the region has come of age. Such taglines in advertisement as Free calls to friends and family are also available in some part of the region. You can now roam throughout the region whether your service provider is originally from the USA, Canada, UK or Europe. There is still some issues with roaming from some countries in Asia, but I believe that a solution to this issue will be found in the not too distant future.

Madame President, I have given a brief overview of telecommunication in the Region and hope I have succeeded in wetting your appetites for more information on this very interesting subject.

I thank you for your attention and will accept any questions for further expansion and/or clarification.