



# NATIONAL REVIEW



## ST. JUDE HOSPITAL SITE REDEVELOPMENT LAYOUT



## GOVERNMENT SAYS

# “THANK YOU” TO ALL CONTRIBUTORS TO THE RESTORATION OF ST. JUDE HOSPITAL

**W**ith the gutting of the island's second major hospital by fire last September, nationals have come out in full support of plans to rebuild the southern medical facility.

Under the guidance of a task force that was urgently formed two days after the fire of September 9, 2009, contributions have been pouring in from nationals both here and abroad, foreign governments and overseas associations, while the corporate community has also come forward to contribute to the rebuilding effort.

The St. Jude Hospital Restoration Task Force has over the last three months attempted to raise public awareness, gather funds

and support from the community as well as from overseas to facilitate a speedy design and reconstruction project.

The Task Force is chaired by Prime Minister Stephenson King.

With the assistance from PAHO, UNOPS, CEHI, other organizations, and individuals who have devoted time and money into restoring St. Jude's Hospital, the plan is to break ground later this month, for a new hospital to be built at the same location as the previous one.

In the rebuilding effort the country has recognized the contributions and pledges of friendly governments and non-nationals who are coming forward to help out with the rebuilding of St. Jude Hospital.

The Taiwanese Government has offered to provide technical sup-

port and to devise a master plan along with the Ministry of Health, the St. Jude Team, and local architects to design a state-of-the-art facility. On Monday October 19, 2009, the Embassy of the Republic of China (Taiwan) presented to the government, a master plan for the St. Jude Hospital.

The master plan encompasses plans to design and rebuild St. Jude Hospital to provide a world class health care facility with international accreditation standards that will also incorporate a teaching component of health related subject areas.

Numerous cheque presentations have taken place since the fire, from local and foreign agencies, private sector, students and individuals as well as donations of supplies.

Representatives from all over the world have visited the St.

Jude site at the George Odlum Stadium which is the temporary location of St. Jude Hospital since the fire, providing assessments of the damage, ideas for reconstruction and continued monitoring of the progress.

The Government of Saint Lucia wishes to take this opportunity to thank all who have so far contributed to the restoration efforts of St. Jude Hospital including corporate and tourism sectors, individuals and families, students, St. Lucia associations based overseas, local groups and other associations, faith based organizations, regional organizations, foreign governments and international organizations for their contributions whether in kind, cash, equipment, solidarity and for their general support.

The Government is also particularly heartened by the patience

and understanding of the sporting fraternity and the cooperation of Sports St. Lucia Inc. in agreeing to temporarily accommodate the St. Jude Hospital at the George Odlum Stadium.

The Government of Saint Lucia also takes this opportunity to thank anonymous contributors and everyone who made cash contributions directly into the bank accounts that have been set up for the reconstruction of St. Jude Hospital.

In this issue of National Review (Page 3) we have listed some of our many benefactors. We may not have included everyone, but we will endeavour to do so and acknowledge additional contributions in the next issue.

ST. JUDE HOSPITAL SITE  
REDEVELOPMENT  
LAYOUT

HOTLINE: 450-JUDE

## 2010 A YEAR OF REBIRTH FOR ST JUDE HOSPITAL "RISING FROM THE ASHES A PHOENIX WILL EMERGE"



## SEASON'S GREETINGS 2009

by the **Honourable Stephenson King**  
**Prime Minister, Minister for Finance, Economic Affairs,**  
**Economic Planning and National Development**

**December 29, 2009**

**M**y fellow Saint Lucians, ladies and gentlemen - permit me this opportunity; on the dawn of a new day and a new year, to commence my greetings to you with a quotation from Winston Churchill, who in 1941, standing beside President Harry Truman in Washington, DC, appealed to his war weary listeners by saying: "Let the children have their night of fun and laughter.... let us share in full, in their unstinted pleasure, before we turn again to the stern tasks in the year that lies before us. Now, by our sacrifice and daring, these same children shall not be robbed of their inheritance or denied the right to live in a free and decent world."

Fellow Saint Lucians, in this festive season, at the sunrise of a new year, I am aware that we are weary from fighting a global recession that has placed tremendous pressure on our already limited resources. During the year just gone, we were compelled to make further sacrifices and to tighten our belts that already nip at our waists.

We were faced with: rising food and fuel prices; instability in the tourism sector; sustained international pressure on our banana industry; unstable employment figures and some dis-

turbing trends in our beautiful country, among them the growing violence and criminal activity against our own and visitors we welcome to our shores.

Nevertheless, we were also blessed with the requisite competence and capacity to weather those difficult challenges and to plan for the future.

As I mentioned in my New Year's Address at the beginning of last year, we have been through recessions in times past, and we have learnt how to be resilient, and to survive. Because of our tenacity and our prudence, we have seen resilience in many of our sectors:

Agriculture has been further diversified and our new investments in this sector have yielded



**Agriculture has been further diversified and our new investments in this sector have yielded an increase in production by 32%**

ed an increase in production by 32%

Visitors' arrivals grew from 100,000 in 1989 to over 650,000 in 2009. This continued growth has provided more revenue for our country in recent times and we are extremely grateful for its impact.

Meanwhile, in the social sector the establishment of the Saint Lucia Social Development Fund (SSDF) with its appendage of social safety-net programmes, particularly the Holistic Opportunity for Personal Empowerment (HOPE) has brought much hope to our youth, unskilled, skilled and vulnerable citizens in our society.

At the regional level we have worked hard to ensure that the global financial crisis did not af-



fect our banking and financial sector and so far our efforts together with the support and initiatives of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank have proven to date to be very successful.

Your Government remains steadfast in its resolve to deliver a better quality of life and a higher standard of living for all Saint Lucians. In this regard we were able to continue to support the subsidies that we introduced earlier last year. Our social safety net programme ensured that our poor and vulnerable were well protected from the recession and to cushion the shocks caused by the worst financial crisis ever since the Great Depression.

In all of this, one thing that was quite clear to all Saint Lucians during this last year was that we had to make every effort to ensure that the gains of independence over the last thirty years were not eroded by such exogenous shocks.

Yet, through all this challenge, domestically and internationally and even amidst the daunting criminal activities of a few who are bent on destroying our social and moral fabric and our international reputation, we remained resolute and loving as a people, caring for each other's well-being, about each other's safety and about each other's children.



We demonstrated our benevolence by pooling our resources for the benefit of our country. Nowhere has this been more apparent than in the national, regional and international efforts demonstrated by our citizens and friends, who have joined Government's determined effort to ensure the commencement of the reconstruction of St. Jude Hospital this New Year.

Our efforts will be further bolstered this year as we conclude negotiations for the construction of a new airport terminal at the Hewanorra International Airport, while new investments in the water sector, the recommencement of three major hotel projects and the opening of the Bay Walk Mall, comprising 70 stores, 30 apartment units along with the country's first casino.

These are just a few of the development programs to be undertaken by government this year.

Citizens, visitors and friends; and on this occasion particularly, the constituents of Castries North who I have the distinct privilege and pleasure to represent: Let me seize this opportunity to wish you every success in this New Year and to encourage you to continue to build on the achievements of last year.

Let this New Year be one of patriotism to country caring for your fellowmen, sharing with your neighbor and uniting as one people in community under God's guidance.

I pray that this Festive Season is one of tranquility love and happiness, and this New Year brings you good health, peace and prosperity throughout.

To all of you I say Happy Holidays and a Happy and prosperous New Year.

May the Good Lord protect you through. I thank you.



**Visitors' arrivals grew from 100,000 in 1989 to over 650,000 in 2009**



## ST JUDE HOSPITAL NATIONAL FUNDRAISING RALLY

# “Rising From The Ashes – Rebuilding The Love”

Under the theme: “Rising from the Ashes Rebuilding the Love” a massive rally will be held next month in an effort to raise funds for the reconstruction of the island’s second major hospital that was gutted in a fire last September.

Slated for February 28, 2009,

the rally seeks to galvanize public support for the St Jude rebuilding effort and in particular provide Saint Lucians the opportunity to tangibly express their commitment to the reconstruction campaign.

This rally will also form part of the official programme to mark

the island’s 31st. independence anniversary.

Since the fire of September 9, 2009, Prime Minister Stephenson King formed the St. Jude Task Force on September 11th, 2009 with the mandate to: “raise public awareness, gather funds and support from the local commu-

nity as well as from overseas and to facilitate a speedy design and reconstruction project”.

From this, the St Jude National Fundraising Rally sub-committee was soon formed as an off-shoot of the St Jude Task Force comprising over twenty representatives of a number of stakeholder bodies such as community based organisations, relevant government ministries, local government authorities, religious organisations, the St. Jude Hospital, enforcement agencies and the office of the Prime Minister.

The programme for the rally will include activities such as: songs, dance, drumming, drama, poetry and other cultural performances.

Addresses will also be delivered by senior government officials and a brief history of the St Jude Hospital will be given.

Tributes will also be paid to those who tragically died in the fire as well as to the many heroes who stood out during the disaster and rescue effort.

Saint Lucians are expected to come out in large numbers to support and take part in the fundraising rally and to join the government in its bid to rebuild St Jude Hospital.

In coming weeks, a public relations campaign will be launched to inform and mobilize all Saint Lucians with an aim to getting more participation from the public.

## List of Contributors to the Restoration of St. Jude Hospital

### Corporate Sector

Caribbean Metals  
Consolidated Foods Ltd  
Royal Bank of Canada  
Bank of Nova Scotia  
Windward Island Gases  
First Caribbean International Bank  
Bank of St. Lucia  
St. Lucia Electricity Services  
Michael Chastanet  
R.J. Clarke Ltd  
Fast Cash  
Arnott Valmont, CBE, SLC  
National Fair Trade  
NLBA  
WIZO  
Consolidated Foods Ltd. (Staff)  
Kein's Trucking  
Prio's Country Club  
Morne Bakery St. Lucia Ltd.  
Mirache 2000 Barber Shop  
Hewanorra Service Station  
Total Health Care Pharmacy Patrons  
Bank of St. Lucia (Staff)  
Johna's Barber Shop  
St. Anthony's Medical Center  
Cyrill Dornelly Construction Co. Ltd.  
LIME  
J.Q. Charles Group of Companies  
SLASPA

### Schools

Gros Islet Pre-School  
Plain View Combined School  
Choiseul Secondary Students Council  
Vieux Fort Comprehensive Secondary School Campus B  
Calypso Association of Grambling State University, USA  
Augier Combined School  
Vieux Fort Comprehensive Secondary School Campus A  
Vieux Fort Infant School

### Tourism Sector

Jade Mountain/Anse Chastanet  
Hotel Charity  
Bay Gardens Hotel  
Island Windsurfing Ltd. (The Reef)  
Cool Breeze Rental  
Red Cap Association  
Royal Caribbean Cruise Line

### Individuals

Vivian Chastanet  
Patricia Allain  
Joseph Harris  
Francisca Henry  
Dennis Auguste  
Rose Beausoliel  
Leonie Samuel  
Marise & Wendel Skeete  
Monique Jean  
Laurencia Mondesir  
Janice & Remy Avril  
Aaron Hutchinson  
Paula Augustin  
Sylvia Moonie  
Dr Vincent Hughes  
Anthony Griffith  
Ignatius Evans  
Anslem Daniel  
Peter Martin  
Majorie William/Cyril Boriel  
Arvin Denis  
Mc Kaye Mc Farlane  
Helene Dornelly  
Evariste Simeon  
Theresa Antoine  
John Burns  
Jerome Herda  
Stanley Lloyd Auguste  
Nigel Eudoxie  
Anita Flavien  
Mr. Webster Orie  
Norbert C Edward  
& Deloris Francis-Edward  
Mr. Denis Ishmael  
Jones Eugene  
Lazarus Alphonse  
Hubert Moonie  
Louis Promese  
Elizabeth Henry  
Mathew David  
Christiana Sylvester  
Juliana Joseph  
Merlin Didier  
Angel Garnier  
Jacob Tobierre  
Petrona Bartlett  
Cynthia Fontene  
Mary Jeremie  
Peter Mark  
Herwin Joseph  
Donald E. Hoach Sr.  
Diana Thomas

Lester Mathurin  
Bernard Patchett  
Gregory Melchoir  
Deborah Francois  
Deborah Moses  
Paulene Peltier Coutter  
Rose Hilton Taylor

### Local Associations

Southern Taxi Co. Service Association, Vieux Fort  
The Tropics Band  
Soufriere Taxi Association  
Concerned Citizens Group of Vieux Fort  
Soufriere Mothers & Fathers Group  
Iyanola Council for the Advancement of Rastafarian Inc.  
Etangs Health Center  
Art of Living Foundation  
Extra Love Band & Rotaract South  
National Farmers & General Workers  
La Ressource Mothers and Fathers Group  
Soufriere Prayer Group  
Southern Region Admin Support Group

### Regional Organisations

OECS-(Pharmaceutical Procurement Service)  
Caribbean Environmental Health Institute

### Faith Based Organisations

Victory Pentecostal Church  
St. Lucia Mission of Seventh Day Adventists  
Church of God Holiness-Choiseul  
Fr. J. Justin  
Tabernacle Baptist Church

### Diaspora

St. Lucia American Progressive League  
St. Lucia Martinique Association  
Norbert C. Edward and Delores Francis-Edward, UK

### Foreign Governments and International Organisations

Government of Israel  
Taiwanese Government  
Embassy of the Republic of China on Taiwan  
Canadian High Commission/Gov'n't of Canada  
U.S. Southern Command  
MEDSHARE  
Food for the Poor  
Pan American Health Organization  
UNOPS  
United States Embassy  
The French Dept of the Americas  
OAS  
Consul General of St. Lucia in Toronto  
Consul General of St. Lucia in Martinique  
Good News Project, USA

## WOULD YOU LIKE TO DONATE?

Several funds have been established at local banks, where accounts have been established to allow the public to assist in any way they can.

Below is a list of these accounts where funds will go directly to the restoration efforts:

BANKS	:	ACCOUNT NOS.
Bank of St. Lucia	:	901266335
Bank of Nova Scotia	:	2001980
First National Bank	:	6002688
Royal Bank of Canada	:	1008234

Cheque contributions from overseas donors can be made out to “The Accountant General.”

If you would like to assist with the relief efforts for the St. Jude Hospital, make formal presentations to the Prime Minister or for further information and updates on activities being carried out to re-establish health services in the South of the island, please call Kimberly Mathurin at hotline: (758) 450-5833 (JUDE) at the Office of the Prime Minister.

You can also reach the following officials: Ms Esther Brathwaite – Permanent Secretary (Special Initiatives) at (758) 468-2169 or Dr. Marilyn Morris – Policy Advisor at (758) 468-2170.



## Annual Motor Vehicle License In Effect This Month



Motor vehicle owners in Saint Lucia will as of this month – January 2010, be required to pay an annual license for their motor vehicles.

That's according to the Transport Division of the Ministry of Communications and Works. Under the new license agreement, vehicles under 3 tons will

pay \$150 and those 3 tons and above \$300.

The Division further states that motor vehicle owners are required to go through the normal procedure of inspecting and insuring their vehicles. Presentation of the insurance and inspection will be followed by a simple verification process and payment of the required fee.

A sticker representing proof of roadworthiness, insurance, registration and license payment will be issued. This sticker must be displayed on the front windscreen of the motor vehicle.

The new licenses will allow the transfer of each motor vehicle into "ATLAS" - Advanced Transport & Licensing Authority System.

*Under the new license agreement, vehicles under 3 tons will pay \$150 and those 3 tons and above \$300*

Developed with the help of the Taiwanese International Cooperation & Development Fund, this project is being done in 2 phases.

Phase 1 was launched in October 2009 with a focus on the issuance of new drivers' license cards and motor vehicle registration.

This commences the replacement of the current AS400 database by a system that will: (i) address the loopholes identified in the current system, (ii) provide superior security features, (iii) meet the needs of the public and other clients, (iv) incorporate revenue forecasting requirements and (v) facilitate interfacing with appropriate stakeholders.

The new system will make

provision for: (a) driver registration and management, (b) motor vehicle registration and management, (c) reports, (d) audit logs & trails, (e) high-end security features, (f) interfacing facilities (for government & non-government departments) and (g) issuance of drivers' license cards.

Phase 2 of the project will focus on addressing the development of modules for route and taxi permits, driving Instructors matters, production of notices and reminders to customers, such as reminders for payments of fees and other license related permits.

ATLAS will gradually replace the current AS400 system.

## Agro-Processing, The Way To Go!

Construction to begin on a multi-million dollar facility at Babonneau

In a bid to diversify Saint Lucia's agricultural sector and to enable the island to become more self-sufficient with agricultural products, the Government of Saint Lucia is aggressively pursuing agro-processing as an alternative to "straight farming".

Last month officials here observed the sod turning of an agro processing facility in Fond Assau, Babonneau that is expected to be up and running by mid-year. The plant is to be funded in part by the Taiwanese government that has allocated EC\$1.5m for the construction of the Fond Assau Agro-processing Facility.

Located on the grounds of the old Fond Assau boxing plant, the new facility will churn out paper from pseudo stems – a technology of turning banana waste into paper – as well as manufacture vacuum packed products for export, made from locally grown produce such as dasheen, green plantain and green bananas.

Saint Lucia's Agriculture Minister Ezekiel Joseph has fully endorsed the project stating his commitment and excitement

about the prospect of an agro-processing facility here.

Speaking at the recent sod-turning ceremony in Fond Assau, Mr. Joseph emphasized on the need for such a facility: "There is a need for us to utilise our locally grown products to produce downstream products that can provide much greater returns to our farmers.

"As the minister for agriculture, my ministry thought it was important for us to go the direction of agro-processing and to revisit some of the gains and experiences which were accomplished in the past, to enable us to undertake this project and make it a reality."

He said he was especially excited about the idea of the island producing vacuum packed products that can be marketed locally, regionally and internationally.

"With regard to the international markets, there is already a great demand for vacuum-packed products, so I would like to indicate that the new agro-processing facility will be operating at international standards. Because we will be dealing with food, we will have to satisfy ourselves that we are meeting all the requirements

to ensure that we are in a position to export our products. I was in the UK recently, and I met with several supermarkets that have indicated their willingness to purchase vacuum-packed products from us" the Minister said.

He added that the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), will be closely involved in training nationals in the area of agro-processing in preparation for the new facility.

Taiwan's Ambassador to Saint Lucia, Ambassador Tom Chou says when completed the facility will play an important role in creating employment for locals particularly in the rural areas.

"The role of the Taiwanese government in this project is to provide technical support and financial assistance to renovate and equip this facility"

The agro-processing facility is the latest in several projects financed by the Taiwanese government for the development of agriculture in Saint Lucia.

Meanwhile, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture Hubert Emmanuel says in the government's continuing efforts to diversify the local agricultural sector, funds have been



**Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Ezekiel Joseph and Taiwanese Ambassador Tom Chou Turn the Sod at the Site of the Project**

allocated for the renovation and upgrade of an already existing agro-processing facility in Anse Ger, Micoud.

He said when fully operational the two agro-processing facilities will have the potential to transform the island's agriculture sector.

"For years we have been engaged in primary agriculture,

but as a deliberate policy effort, the ministry of agriculture has recognised the need to engage our farmers in agro-processing in order to add value to our local products. With the assistance of the Taiwanese government, we are now ready to enter that next phase of our agricultural development," the Permanent Secretary said.



# Saint Lucia Youth Make Sweet Music!!

A music programme targeting youth at risk in the community of Marchand and supported by the Organisation of American States (OAS) continues to flourish with 54 young people from the area learning the finer skills of string instruments.

This is part of an OAS initiative involving St Lucia, Jamaica and Haiti that each form a pilot project in a special Caribbean Youth Orchestra Programme targeting youth at risk by providing them with intensive training in orchestral instruments and choir over an initial three-year period.

The programme is closely modeled on the very successful Youth Orchestra Movement in Venezuela and a similar programme in Colombia.

The programmes are founded on the belief that a training in orchestral playing and choir for youth at risk in areas of high urban density, with a high incidence of unemployment, gang activity, drug abuse, domestic violence and crime, will make a significant difference in ameliorating the lives of those young students who participate and also improve the general quality of life in the community in which the project is based.

A collaborative venture between OAS, the Ministry of Social Transformation, the Ministry of Education and the St Lucia School of Music, the programme has been progressing successfully according to Musical Direc-

tor John Bailey of the School of Music.

To date, the OAS has provided up to 54 string instruments including: violin, viola, cello and double bass for the young residents of Marchand aged 10 to 18 years old.

A full symphony orchestra which is the final goal of the local programme comprises: Strings; Woodwind - flute, clarinet, oboe, bassoon; Brass - trumpet, trombone, tuba, French horn and Percussion - drums, triangle, cymbal etc.

Mr. Bailey explained that since string instruments are harder to learn and take a longer time to master the art, it was decided that the first phase of the local programme would be to instruct the young people in strings.

He added that in the upcoming second phase of establishing a full-fledged symphony orchestra, youth will learn woodwind - flute, clarinet, oboe and bassoon and from then onto brass and percussion.

The current phase of training young people ends formally at the end of this school year. The Youth orchestra will then recruit new youngsters for the upcoming new school year beginning September 2010 to add the new segment onto the orchestra.

To date the response to the programme has been more than encouraging Mr. Bailey said with the young residents of Marchand being consistent in their interest



At the recent end-of-term concert, the Marchand youngsters thrill the crowd with their musical prowess on the Cello and other string instruments

and in turning up for regular lessons after school.

He said their enthusiasm has paid off as was seen in a recent end of term concert in which the youngsters took part and which

received wide acclaim from OAS representatives in Washington when the concert was broadcast live by web streaming.

He said the Ministries of Education and Social Transforma-

tion are also very pleased with the progress of the programme, believing that if they give disadvantaged youth an instrument to learn and play, it would help them grow into productive and responsible citizens.

## Cuban Eye Centre of Excellence Opens at Victoria Hospital

Saint Lucians will be better able to avail themselves of the expertise and technology of the Cuban medical field with the recent opening of an Ophthalmological Centre recently opened at the Victoria Hospital.

Minister of Health and Wellness Dr. Keith Mondsir lauded the facility saying that it will cater to the needs of Saint Lucians, as well as to that of residents of neighbouring islands.

The Cuban Eye Centre of Excellence was formally opened at the Victoria Hospi-



The ribbon is cut, symbolizing the formal opening of the Cuban Eye Centre of Excellence at the Victoria Hospital

*To date more than 40,000 Saint Lucians have received eye care under the ongoing Cuban Eye Programme*

tal last month and is staffed by over seventeen highly qualified Cuban eye care professionals.

The new ophthalmological unit represents the continuation

of assistance given to Saint Lucia by the Cuban government, particularly in the area of eye care, a project that began in 2005.

The new Cuban Eye Centre of Excellence at Victoria Hospital comprises two surgical rooms and the most modern equipment in ophthalmological care.

To date more than 40,000 Saint Lucians have received eye care under the ongoing Cuban Eye Programme including close to 6,000 surgical operations having been conducted, providing better eyesight to nationals.





**H**on. Minister of Social Transformation, Youth and Sports, Hon Leonard Spider Montoute, Permanent Secretaries, Deputy Permanent Secretaries and Programme Officers, Development Policy Advisor, Dr Marlyn Morris, Programme Discussants, Symposium Facilitator, Mr Ezra Jn Baptiste, Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I have much pleasure in welcoming you all to this very significant workshop. Just over a decade ago, at the World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen, Denmark, the leaders of the world came together and in a display of unity and unanimity not often seen in international fora, committed to tackling the issue of global poverty in all its forms and to work to build a better world for everyone.

This timely and most important vision was encapsulated in the Millennium Declaration and the eight Millennium Development Goals which embody the framework of this most important initiative. The centrepiece of the Millennium Development Goals speaks to the issue of poverty and dictates that all member states of the United Nations pursue a strategy of reducing by half the number of people living in extreme poverty and hunger by the year 2015. The other goals are complementary to this effort and include; achieving universal primary education; promoting gender equality and empowerment of women; reducing child and maternal mortality; combating HIV/AIDS and other diseases and ensuring environmental sustainability.

Achievement of these Millennium Development Goals, is underscored by a commitment on the part of wealthier nations to build a global partnership for development. In reality, the anticipated support from the developed countries has not been forthcoming as expected. Nevertheless, the Government of Saint Lucia hastens to renew its commitment to the reduction of poverty as exemplified by current programmes now being implemented such as the Koudmen Ste. Lucie. Indeed we are seeking not only to reduce extreme poverty by half, but through the mentioned programmes to eradicate conditions of indigence or extreme poverty experienced by unacceptably large segments of our society.

There appears to be growing consensus that poverty is a violation of human rights and that promoting human rights can reduce poverty. Consistent with the principle of social inclusion embraced by the Government of Saint Lucia we as a Government are committed to the improvement of the standard of living of those most in need. The current economic crisis has not enabled our cause.

A world renowned donor agency named OXFAM, has warned that another 100 million people worldwide may be forced into poverty by rising food and energy prices.

The urgency to act has become a national priority for the Government of Saint Lucia and in this regard a comprehensive National Poverty Reduction Strategy is currently being developed by Government through the Minis-

try of Social Transformation and in collaboration with the Caribbean Development Bank.

Despite St Lucia's categorization as middle income and the significant investments in social development in recent times, St Lucia' economic achievements can be described as fragile, given its high level of vulnerability to external shocks, such as hurricanes, commodity price fluctuations, and global economic crises. Price increases in food and fuel and the global economic crisis have contributed to a reduction in growth, job losses, reduction in employment opportunities and declining remittances. These situations expose many poor and vulnerable households to increased risks and threaten their sustainable livelihoods. St Lucia therefore faces significant challenges in ensuring an adequate safety net in the face of economic and environmental pressures and the changing social landscape.

A 2009 Social Safety Net Assessment Report supported by the United Nations Children Fund, The United Nations Development Fund and the World Bank has revealed that despite some good social indicators for St Lucia such as low levels of maternal and infant mortality, universal primary education, low fertility, and increasing life expectancy, there exist in parallel, high and increasing levels of poverty - 25.1% in 1995 and 28.8% in 2005/06 and the incidence of children in poverty has been recorded as higher than adults living in poverty. Over 50% of the poor are under the age of 20. The incidence of poverty is slightly higher among men than among women, 29% and 25% respectively. The incidence of poverty among female headed households (21.2%) is about the same as among male headed households (22%).

These are interesting figures that point to the need to re-examine our gender and age related social development policy and programming focus, to determine the extent to which interventions are meeting the needs of those who are really in dire need of social assistance. This also raises the related question as to how well existing policies and programme intervention initiatives are helping households to manage their social, economic

and environmental vulnerabilities which according to the 2009 Social Safety Net Assessment Report is due to: *Chronic poverty and the inter-generational transmission of poverty, transient poverty, and vulnerability to poverty; Risks that threaten human capital development of children and adolescents, who are particularly vulnerable because they are unable to care for themselves; Limited human capital, unemployment, and risky lifestyles among youth; Limited or no income due to underemployment, unemployment, disease, or disability among working age women and men; Loss of income due to retirement and disease/disability among the elderly; and Needs of special groups, including single headed households, the elderly taking care of children, persons with disabilities, migrants, and persons affected by HIV/AIDS and/or non-communicable diseases.* (2009 Social Safety Net Assessment Report)

The emphasis on the reduction of poverty is a high priority for St. Lucia. The Government has committed itself to the reduction of poverty as an important factor towards the achievement of equitable and sustainable development, and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. These goals, which we seek to vigorously pursue, provide a framework to help respond to a number of developmental challenges which are economic, social and environmental in nature.

Poverty represents an important barrier to the achievement of social cohesion and is often a subtle, but major cross-cutting issue in other areas of social development which include: high incidence of crime; high rates of adolescent pregnancies; the proliferation of unhealthy lifestyles; particularly those that involve substance abuse, and risky sexual behaviour; increases in the importance of vagrancy and the HIV/AIDS pandemic that has reached critical proportions, with potentially devastating impacts on society and the economy.

The current global economic crisis will serve as a major test to the social and economic resilience of our small island developing state as we endeavour to navigate the turbulent waters of international trade. These difficult conditions have in recent times devastated the mainstay of our agricultural economies and indications are, the immedi-

ate future of the Tourist industry upon which so many of our islands depend for their economic survival, appears under an imminent threat.

The urgency to act has become a national priority for the Government of Saint Lucia and in this regard, a comprehensive package of social safety nets, and economic stimulation measures are currently being pursued.

We have implemented some Social Safety Net Programmes in recent times. These include: **Koudmein Ste. Lucie Programme - Ministry of Social Transformation (A programme of the St Lucia Social Development Fund (SSDF))** - The programme focuses on the family as a unit of intervention in the fight against poverty. It seeks to empower indigent families with the necessary psycho-social support necessary to improve their quality of life in various dimensions.

Though we have made strides in achieving these goals and associated targets we are still grappling with what appears to be a never ending war against poverty.

Currently, poor families in three pilot areas of Saint Lucia are receiving special assistance with the introduction of the Koudmen Ste. Lucie. This ambitious social protection programme will cater to the needs of our poorest households by the provision of a range of direct services including, psycho-social support, cash transfers and provision of training and employment opportunities which will redound to an overall improvement in the socio-economic circumstances of these families.

The work of supporting institutions such as the Poverty Reduction Fund and Basic Needs Trust Fund now amalgamated to form the St Lucia Social Development Fund (SSDF), in the thrust for the reduction of poverty, must be commended. Each year millions of dollars have been spent by these institutions to help improve the quality of life of the poorer citizens of the country.

Interventions range from improvements to water supply systems, construction of footpaths and home improvement to capacity building and skills training. The skills training programme has been particu-

## Keynote Address by PRIME MINISTER STEPHENSON KING At SOCIAL POLICY SYMPOSIUM - November 16, 2009

lar popular with large numbers unemployed young people participating. Training programmes are also gender sensitive with increasing numbers of women opting for training in traditionally male-dominated vocations such as auto body repair and refrigeration.

National efforts at poverty reduction are also strengthened by the programmes of the National Skills Development Centre, the OECs Skills for Inclusive Growth, and the James Belgrave Micro-enterprise Development Fund. Many young people are given a second chance by participating in the many training opportunities offered by the Centre. There is also the Youth Business Trust being implemented by the St Lucia Development Bank to facilitate young entrepreneurs in establishing business enterprises. For this Government it is not sufficient to train our youth in acquiring a skill but to assist them in becoming employers rather than employees, thereby encouraging business development and expansion of that particular sector. In parallel, unemployed persons with viable business ideas can also receive both technical support and credit from the BelFUND. Hundreds of micro-enterprises throughout the island have benefited from the excellent support provided to young entrepreneurs by the Fund.

**Public Assistance Programme - Ministry of Health** - This programme provides public assistance and welfare services to vulnerable groups within the society to alleviate the impact of poverty. It entails the assessment and payment of a monthly allowance to citizens of the state as a result of their socio-economic circumstances. The following groups are eligible for public assistance and welfare services: Indigent persons; Disabled persons; Persons infected and affected by HIV/AIDS; Children in Care; Elderly persons and Out Patients of the Mental Health Facility.

Other services provided to vulnerable groups under this programme include: Burial assistance; Spectacles assistance; Admission to Senior Citizens' Home; Educational Assistance; Medical Exemptions and Disaster/Fire Assistance

**The Textbook Rental Programme - Ministry of Education** - The Textbook Rental Programme is principally to assist disadvantaged students. Beneficiaries are required to pay an annual fee of \$175.00. This is solely for the purpose of sustaining the initiative.

**The Book Bursary Programme - Ministry of Education** - The Book Bursary Programme provides textbooks for student attending primary and secondary schools in St. Lucia. Students are officially recommended for a bursary at the school level by the principal, councilor or class room teacher, a welfare officer in the family court or a district representative.

**The School Feeding Programme - Ministry of Education** - The programme is specifically aimed at feeding underprivileged children who were regularly absent because of their low socio-economic status. The programme is open to all children now and it presently serves approximately 7,110 beneficiaries.

**Holistic Opportunities For Personal Empowerment (HOPE) - Ministry of Social Transformation** - This programme facilitates labour absorption, and help to protect the indigent, poor and vulnerable from the scourge of unemployment and the vagaries of seasonal employment such as characterises the Tourism and to a lesser extent Banana Industries.

The objectives of the programme are the following: Increase food security of households; Absorption of a segment of the pool of unskilled persons into labour market; Provide basic skills training; Provide seasonal relief to households in support of education, health, nutrition etc and Functions as a vital social safety net.

**Expenditures on the Safety Net** - Expenditures on social assistance was estimated at EC\$34.1 million (US\$12.6 million) in FY08/09. This represented less than 1.3% of GDP and 2.9% of central government expenditures. Between FY06/07 and FY08/09, social assistance spending decreased by 5% in nominal terms and 14% in real terms. The FY09/10 budget included an estimated 43% real increase in social

assistance, driven largely by the addition of programs and projects implemented by the SSDF. Approximately 54% of social assistance expenditures is funded from the capital budget, mostly with donor funding. The SSDF accounts for the largest share of social assistance spending - 35.5% in FY08/09. In contrast, Public Assistance absorbs about 11% of social assistance expenditures. Student welfare assistance and school feeding take up 2.2% and 3.8%, respectively.

While we are committed, we recognize however, that the need is great and funds are limited and that we must be creative, efficient and effective in the allocation and use of resources for social investment.

We recognise that our brothers and sisters living in poverty are able agents of their own change, but they are in need of the necessary support to enable each and every one of them to achieve their personal dreams and a promising future for their children. We should as a nation recommit ourselves to the noble fight against poverty, and to the eventual achievement of the eight Millennium Development Goals by the year 2015.

We are mindful of the fact that in our context, poverty is both pervasive and multi-dimensional. Complex issues such as poverty require multiple interventions to bring about the most desirable outcomes. Each of the interventions by these institutions outlined previously, is carefully designed as complementary elements in the poverty reduction milieu.

We cannot ignore the plight of the poor and vulnerable. We cannot just hope and pray that growth in the economy will provide the surplus needed, to redistribute incomes and provide for essential goods, facilities and services, needed by our people from the limited and ever shrinking public sector investment resources.

In these challenging times we must look within to find innovative means of harnessing all available resources of the public, private and civil society sectors, toward growing our economy and providing for the economic development and social change necessary for the qualitative im-

provements in the lives of our people.

Above all, we need to ensure sustainable growth of our economy to provide the financial resources to support these programmes on a sustainable basis. We can no longer depend mainly on foreign development cooperation and preferential treatments in trading with our traditional foreign development partners.

Therefore, given the developmental challenges we face at this juncture, as a government we see it as important to focus our efforts on the following: Stabilization of the Economy; Investment promotion; Employment creation and maintenance; Protecting the balance of payment; Protection of the Economy and creation of a climate of sustainable investment, continued development and social change; Maintaining economic competitiveness; Promoting economic resilience, social stability and social security; Promoting household survival and sustainable livelihoods through appropriate social policies and programmes

These areas of focus and the related interventions must include a people-centred planning approaches in the face of these economic challenges. Therefore, our targeted policies and strategic interventions, as well as the incentives regimes we pursue, must be supported by firm performance criteria, as conditionalities for accessing these incentives.

We recognize that the public sector cannot act alone. We must establish strategic partnerships with our, private and other non-state actors and civil society groupings in charting a sustainable social and economic development programme, with clearly articulated objectives which involve converting strategic vision into specific performance outcomes relating to national growth, development and social change. Our policies and programmes must therefore be clearly targeted to ensure efficient and effective use of resources.

Central to this thrust is recognition of the importance of monitoring and evaluating performance and initiating corrective adjustments in vision, long term direction, objectives, strategy and implementation activities, in light of actual experience, changing conditions, new ideas and new opportunities.

The Government therefore, recognises that there is a need to periodically re-examine or revisit its social policies and programme intervention initiatives, to determine their impacts, level of efficiency and effectiveness

and to inform policy makers of any need for the re-formulation of such policies that might be required in furtherance of social development and social change. This is the main reason for this symposium

We recognized that the private and non-state sectors such as our NGOs and CBOs are engaged in a commendable charitable effort aimed at social improvements in the lives and livelihoods of many St Lucian households with their own limited resources. Yet their activities are largely not informed by existing national development policy direction and they often do not get the support they need from central government in pursuit of their social development activities.

We wish to acknowledge their effort and to work with them in finding new opportunities for collaborative actions, that will strengthen their efforts, increase resources availability and sustain any new partnership relationships that may be forged through consultation and dialogue such as this Symposium has the potential of developing. We see this commitment to partnerships as significant and one based on our ethical persuasions and the principles of participatory democracy and governance to which we subscribe to as a nation. We want to encourage a deepening of the cooperation between the government and the social development partners of the private and civil society groups, in the planning and implementation processes. This engagement will serve to realize the critical objectives of fostering and promoting a people-centered approach to development and social change that we as a government subscribe to.

Ladies and gentlemen having contextualize the present climate within which we have to commit to social investment it is imperative that we act prudently and rationalize the allocation and use of available resources in our planning and development strategies to facilitate the realization of the desired outcomes for social development of our people. This speaks to the need for identifying an institutional framework for integrated, multi-sectoral social development policy and planning process which I hope will be one of the outcomes from this symposium.

I thank you for your commitment to participate in this partnership exercise and I have no doubt that your deliberations over the next three days will redound to the benefit of the people of St Lucia. I wish a successful outcome to this symposium



## Address by Minister of Ministry of Social Transformation, Youth & Sports At SOCIAL POLICY SYMPOSIUM November 16, 2009

*Our social development and poverty eradication agendas have emphasized three strategic objectives which include: (1) The empowerment of people and communities and the promotion of social integration, individual self esteem and cultural identity; (2) The provision of sustainable economic opportunities and (3) The promotion of universal access to infrastructure and services*



**Hon. Leonard Montoute**  
Minister for Social  
Transformation, Youth and Sports

The Ministry of Social Transformation is delighted to partner with the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Finance, Economic Affairs & National Development in hosting this very important symposium.

Over the past few months, my Ministry has been able to continue to fulfill its mandate of directly impacting on people's lives through a myriad of interventions and sustainable social development programmes. Our social development and poverty eradication agendas have emphasized three strategic objectives which include: (1) The empowerment of people and communities and the

promotion of social integration, individual self esteem and cultural identity; (2) The provision of sustainable economic opportunities and (3) The promotion of universal access to infrastructure and services.

They objectives are far reaching and consistent with the strategic priorities articulated by my Government, particularly in respect of poverty reduction; investing in human resource development and the provision of quality community services and infrastructural development.

The question must be asked: what kind of future do we wish to bequeath to our children? How might we act today to ensure a promising future?

At least part of the answer lies in our prudent and sustainable use of existing resources and a social domain characterized by the absence of fear, poverty and deprivation. We seek the eventual emergence of a St. Lucian Society built on equity, fairness and social wellbeing which future generations would fully enjoy.

The Government of St Lucia is resolute in its determination to improve the quality of life for all St. Lucians. With this commitment comes the solemn responsibility to provide adequate social protection to the more vulnerable groups among us, and to work assiduously towards the creation of a more just, more equitable and more inclusive society.

*Continued on page 9*



Minister Montoute delivering his address



Participants at opening ceremony





Dr Marlyn Morris-Development Policy Advisor and Chairperson of the Opening Ceremony



Prime Minister, Hon. Stephenson King delivering the keynote address

*Continued from page 8*

Many of the issues earmarked for discussion at this Symposium are influenced by or intertwined with the global realities we face on a daily basis as a nation. We are all too familiar with the plight of the banana industry and the impact of players who are able to dwarf our feeble attempts at reasonable participation in fair trade.

Saint Lucia has made significant investments in human and social development. As a result, the overall Human Development Index for Saint Lucia was .728 in the Human Development Report of 2000. The 2007 report placed the country in 69th position from among 189 UN member countries. This represents an improvement from 2000 when we were placed in 88th position among 174 countries.

Saint Lucia is among the countries with medium human development status, as are most of the independent Caribbean nations, except Barbados and the Bahamas on the one hand; ranked as 30th and 33rd, and Haiti ranked 149 at the other extreme.

Encouraging as this may seem, as a Small Island Developing state, we still have a considerable way to go.

As a Ministry, we note that unemployment is still unacceptably high among the youth and several complain of not being able to get jobs and even if they do manage to get a job, the pay is so low that it is insufficient to meet one's day to day needs. Several of these young people hold the view that the education system does not adequately prepare them for the demands of the job market.

Persons with disabilities are another group at risk in the society, and are likely to be poorer in an environment that often fails to recognize their capabilities, and to provide them with the opportunity to achieve their full potential. There is much that needs to be done, by the Government as a matter of social policy regarding this vulnerable group. Nevertheless, there remains in the general population, a lack of appreciation, of the needs and challenges



Mr Ezra Jn Baptiste, Symposium Facilitator

of the ten percent or so of our citizens who suffer from significant disabilities.

Increasingly, we are witnessing a proliferation of socially displaced persons; some of whom have taken up residence on the streets and sidewalks of Castries and Soufriere. This disturbing phenomenon must be brought under control, and as a policy measure, the Government of Saint Lucia is seeking to develop programmes to help reintegrate those unfortunate citizens into mainstream society.

Our attitudes towards older persons leave much to be desired. Ageing is a natural process which every human being will ultimately experience. As a society we need to recognize the contribution of our older citizens; for having set the foundation on which we now build.

Saint Lucia has experienced the travails of adjustment of two of its export sectors. This has created hardship and social deprivation for a population and for a country that has had limited experience in dealing trade adjustment.

Given the scale of the changes that have been necessary in the banana industry, elimination of

marginal producers has created major social dislocation, initially in rural communities, and with the flight to Castries and environs, and eventually excessive concentration and overcrowding, crime, and other forms of social decay.

Saint Lucia boasts a wide range of safety net programs, which if adequately reconfigured and made more efficient could address critical risks faced by these segments of the population which are most poor and vulnerable.

Governments often overlook the capacity of civil society as an instrument of social wellbeing or even the creation of wealth. As a nation we recognize the power of these institutions that play such a pivotal role in national development by promoting social cohesion and building social capital.

In light of the foregoing, the effective coordination of social policy should be seen as a national development imperative of highest priority.

Social policies are not an end in themselves but a means of forging a balanced society and promoting the national good.

Social development institu-



Participants in working group sessions

tions within the public service must work in tandem to achieve the synergies we so often crave. Civil Society Organizations are encouraged to come on board so as to ensure the achievement of holistic social development and ensuring the optimal reach of existing social safety nets to help protect our numerous vulnerable groups.

My Ministry is therefore actively seeking to foster partner-

ships with the NGO Community through more active engagement in Community Development and social Transformative processes.

In closing, I wish you pleasant and fruitful deliberations during this Symposium and may we continue to reinforce the partnership that will enable the collective effort to fight the still lingering scourges of marginalization, poverty and hunger in our country



# Toward a Fresh Approach to National Social Development Policy and Planning Process

The Government of Saint Lucia is committed to substantially improving the quality of life of Saint Lucians and promoting sustainable development within an enabling policy environment characterized by peace and prosperity. This commitment is embodied within a new National Visioning Exercise that aims to coordinate and harmonize the key interventions of all social development institutions from the public and private sectors, civil society organizations and community-based organizations.

This goal is, however, unlikely to be achieved in the absence of a comprehensive social policy that complements, guides and supports all domains of national development.

The current culture of social policy formulation appears largely based on gut feelings, hunches and initiatives developed without a methodical basis. What is needed is evidence-based policy formulation and a modern decision making culture within which social policy is framed and developed based on empirical evidence pertaining to the particular environment.

Consistent with the over-arching themes of integration and collaboration, the National Social Policy and Programming Symposium initiated as a collaborative venture involving the Ministry of Social Transformation, Youth & Sports, the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Economic Planning and National Development. The Symposium was designed to bring into sharper focus, contemporary social development issues and explore the policies and strategic interventions that could provide the most effective way to develop the social sector on a sustainable basis.

It is recognized that a coordinated social development approach is imperative at this juncture of our development and demands a social policy framework that is both relevant and appropriate in order to address several current and emerging critical human and social development issues and concerns that characterize the Saint Lucian society today.

Furthermore, this approach underpins integrated development planning which seeks to align sectoral planning with national development planning and the convergence of social and economic planning.



Mr Donovan Williams, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Social Transformation addressing participants at Opening Ceremony

The Government of Saint Lucia fully appreciates the intrinsic value of a people-centred, multi-sectoral and collaborative approach to national development.

The phenomenon of poverty, is considered both as a symptom and as a cause of a myriad of social problems, which affect many individuals, households, and communities in Saint Lucia. Indeed poverty is at the centre of human development issues facing the society at this time. Consequently, the need for comprehensive Social Policy is heightened due to the extent and severity of social issues that affect people and society today.

It is envisaged therefore, that the further development and implementation of social policy will result in the further enhancement of the welfare and wellbeing of all individuals, families, groups and communities in the society, giving special consideration to those among us who are poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged.

The Government of Saint Lucia envisages that this keystone initiative will facilitate the development of a collaborative, integrative and multi-sectoral framework which will serve as a platform to continuously engage all social development partners from the public, private and Civil Society Organizations.

Such an approach is even more critical now as it is becoming increasingly apparent that evidence-based policy formulation is a critical success factor for promoting and guiding strategic interventions for national social development in a scientific and sustainable manner.

In keeping with this philosophy, the Symposium is expected to provide an avenue for social development partners to work together towards identifying a sustainable framework for streamlining, rationalizing and harmonizing institutional responses to social development.

The Integrated Development Planning Approach provides both the platform and the centrepiece for the symposium insofar

as it promotes good governance through multi-level consultation and consensus building in a manner that is inclusive and participatory. The approach prescribes strategic management of social processes in an organized, inclusive and systematic manner and policy development through dialogue, cross-sector planning, information exchange and research

Part of the Social Development

framework will be the formal adoption of the Millennium Development Goals as a benchmark for achievement of social development targets. Despite being a signatory to the Millennium Declaration, St Lucia has not been able to purposefully pursue achievement of the Goals their associated targets and indicators. Adoption and pursuit of the respective targets will provide yet another premise for inter-sectoral collaboration as we join the international community by seeking consensus to meet all MDG goals and targets by 2015.

Among the key objectives of the symposium are: examination and enhancement of the prudent use of resources; review the policy-making and implementation processes; rationalization of existing programmes for improved and effective delivery of service; development of an institutional policy and planning framework for building social resilience and sustainable livelihoods; and articulation of a roadmap for addressing key social development issues.

Private sector and civil society institutions are also encouraged to adopt this inclusive framework which offers more effective outcomes for their programme interventions.



Participants in working group sessions



# 375 Nationals Benefit From The SSDF Christmas Stimulus Package

For the third consecutive year, the Government of Saint Lucia through the Ministry of Social Transformation and the administration of the Saint Lucia Social Development Fund (SSDF) made Christmas a little happier for some needy families on the island.

Through what was called the Christmas Stimulus Package, the SSDF provided temporary employment for hundreds of nationals so that they

could have money for the festive season.

The SSDF explained that the objective of the package was to ultimately inject money into the island's economy by providing employment for some 375 people.

The beneficiaries of the programme were selected from four constituencies, namely Dennery North, Gros Islet, Micoud South and Dennery South and they were employed to undertake short term projects such as the

construction of footpaths, clearing up of grass and debris and general beautification in their respective communities.

By the SSDF's account (See table below) the beneficiaries were each awarded a total of EC\$1,500.00.

Scott Evans of the SSDF said the just concluded stimulus programme was most gratifying as it allowed many Saint Lucians to have a most enjoyable season. "The response was great and one

must never underestimate what an injection of cash can do. The figures might have seemed small, but the money went a long way towards making it a better experience for many Saint Lucians this past Christmas."

The Saint Lucia Social Development Fund is funded by soft loans and grants from regional and international funding agencies.

The SSDF is funded by four main organizations / institutions: (1) The Caribbean Development

Bank (CDB) through its continuing BNTF programme; (2) The European Union (EU); (3) The Government of Saint Lucia and (4) The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), through the CDB.

The SSDF is committed to its mandate to reduce poverty through financial and moral support in education, health and socio-economic programmes designed to improve the lot of indigent and poor people in Saint Lucia.

## Saint Lucia Social Development Fund Christmas Stimulus Package Expenditure Statement

<b>Project / Constituency</b>	<b># of Beneficiaries</b>	<b>Amount (\$)</b>
<b>Gros Islet</b>	26	89,690.00
<b>Micoud South</b>	30	76,304.00
<b>Dennery North</b>	56	162,740.00
<b>Dennery South</b>	263	89,888.00
<b>Administration Fee</b>		50,000.00
<b>Total Expensed</b>		<b>468,622.00</b>
<b>Total Received</b>		<b>(500,000.00)</b>
<b>Surplus /Deficit</b>		<b>(31,378.00)</b>
<b>Total Beneficiaries</b>	<b>375</b>	
<b>Average Income Per Person</b>		<b>1200</b>



# Bird Book For Schools Launched Here!



The Bananaquit



The Green Throated Carib



The Royal Tern



The Saint Lucia Oriole



The Saint Lucia Warbler

Young Saint Lucians in particular will soon be educated about the many birds that inhabit the forests and flora around the island.

The government of Saint Lucia in collaboration with the Embassy of the Republic of China (Taiwan) earlier this week launched a book and two DVDs on birds prevalent to the island.

The teaching material is aimed particularly at schools in Saint Lucia and in other Caribbean islands.

Unique to Saint Lucia's national identity is some of its wildlife and in particular its birds.

About 74 species of birds are resident on the island six of which are endemic or unique

only to this island. In addition, twenty-four of the 58 species of birds found in the Caribbean are also found on St Lucia.

Some species have gained notice on postage stamps and in books and the Saint Lucia Parrot has become the national bird.

All of these birds will be featured in the recently released book.

The Bird Book of Saint Lucia for Caribbean Schools is expected to help sensitize and educate the children of Saint Lucia to appreciate the environment in which they live and to respect nature.

It will also enable future generations to take pleasure in recognizing and being able to name

the birds that make up their environment.

The Bird Book of Saint Lucia for Caribbean Schools was initiated by Mr. Denys Springer, who is currently Director of Information Services and it is hoped that it will raise a consciousness among Saint Lucians to preserve and appreciate its wildlife more.



Author Denys Springer shares a light moment with Prime Minister Stephenson King and Minister of the Environment, Richard Frederick



The author receives congratulations from the Prime Minister while Ambassador to Taiwan Tom Chou looks on



**Tout Sent Lisyen Se Yonn - July 16th, to 31st, 2010**

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