



NATIONWIDE

A publication of the Department of Information Services



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PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION FOR REVIEW

The Government of Saint Lucia plans to establish a review commission to examine a wide range of issues related to the operation of the public transportation system in Saint Lucia. The commission will examine such issues as quality of service and management of routes. This was one of the main decisions from a meeting of representatives of Government and the National Council in Public Transportation (NCOPT) which was convened to review the response of the NCOPT to the recommendations for increases in the price of bus fares.



**Hon. Felix Finisterre
Minister for Communications,
Works, Transport and Public Utilities**

According to Minister for Communications, Works, Transport and Public Utilities, Hon Felix Finisterre, new recommendations from the NCOPT for children in school uniform irrespective of their age to pay 75% of the adult fare, instead of 50% proposed by government will also be presented to the Saint Lucia Road Transport Board for consideration. The parties at the meeting also agreed that additional changes to the new fare structure will include a change in the normal operational hours to end at 11.00 p.m. instead of 10.00 p.m. and that mini bus operators will be permitted to charge 50% above the adult fare to transport persons outside of normal working hours (i.e. between 11.00 p.m. and 4.00 a.m.).

The meeting was held on Monday September 26th, while minibus operators from around their island withdrew their services leaving commuters, including school children stranded for the entire day. Some schools were closed that Monday due to the low attendance of students and teachers.

Addressing the nation last Thursday ahead of the first announcement of increased fares, Minister Finisterre government was conscious of the increase in the cost of operations of minibuses, but also mindful committed to ensuring that parent were able to meet the cost of transport for school children.

The address was delivered on all local television stations on the night of Thursday September and also broadcast on local radio stations. The Minister's address follows.

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PRIME MINISTER BACK IN SAINT LUCIA



Prime Minister Dr Kenny D. Anthony returned to the state on Sunday September 25th following a nearly four-week absence.

The Prime Minister, who has resumed official duties, left the island on August 24, 2005 to be with his wife, Dr Rosemarie Belle Antoine, who undertook surgery to her spine. Dr Antoine has now returned home for recovery.

The Prime Minister thanked citizens of St. Lucia for their several expressions of best wishes for his wife's speedy recovery. He also expressed, on her behalf, his gratitude to all who prayed or called, sent cards or e-mails of concern.

The Prime Minister was on Monday briefed about ongoing issues attracting the Government's attention at this time. The updates included issues addressed by the Cabinet of Ministers on economic, financial and political matters.

Dr Anthony was also updated on other local and national developments, including the recent fare increases and the subsequent minibus strike.

The Prime Minister thanked Commerce and Tourism Minister Hon. Philip J. Pierre and Minister of Education, Youth, Sports and Human Resource Development Hon. Mario Michel, both of whom held the position of Acting Prime Minister during his absence, for their stewardship.

PESTICIDES AWARENESS

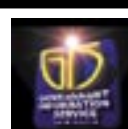


Minister for Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries Hon. Ignatius Jean is flanked by the winners of the national poster competition in observance of Pesticides Awareness. On the left is Ambrosia Augustina Smith of the Ave Maria School and on the right is Marisha Augustin of the Corinth Secondary School. Also in the picture is Mr. Keith Smith Managing Director of Harris Paints which was a corporate sponsor of the competition. The Ministry also received support from the Caribbean Agro Chemical Management project in the implementation of its public awareness work on pesticides management. (See pages 4 -5)



"Take ②" - A fifteen minute news review of the week.
Every Friday at 6.15 p.m. on **NTN**, Cablevision Channel 2.

Government Notebook
A fresh news package daily
on all local radio stations



PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION FOR REVIEW



Flood mitigation works continued whilst hundreds of commuters and minibuses were absent on Monday September 26

Continued from page 1

Review Overdue

“Fellow Saint Lucians, Good evening. Only a few weeks ago, the Government of Saint Lucia took the very painful yet inevitable decision to approve an increase in the price on fuel. This was done after many years of subsidising the price at the pumps, and consequently ensuring that the prices of many other goods and services did not increase.

When the new price came into effect on September 14th this year, many service providers felt that it was time for them to make a case for their own price increase. Government is conscious of the tremendous strain on these entrepreneurs who were grappling with the price of other inputs. In the case of the minibus operators, there is evidence that insurance in particular increased by over 20%, and not to mention the prices of vehicle parts and servicing.

Recognising that minibus drivers in particular had not been granted a fare increase since 1996, Government agreed that a fare review was overdue. I must hasten to remind the public that notwithstanding the absence of a fare increase Government has agreed on a series of wide ranging measures to would provide some relief to the minibus operators in return for maintaining their service at existing fares.

Government Concessions

In November 1998, there was a negotiated agreement between the Government of Saint Lucia and the National Council on Public Transportation. The said agreement incorporated five (5) basic elements namely: (i) Consumption Tax Concession of \$0.75 per gallon for up to 500,000 gallons of gasoline purchased by the Cooperative membership; (ii) No new Route Bands would be issued for the next (3) three years; (iii) Concession to Minibus Operators to sell their Route rights; (iv) No new passenger fares for the next 4.5 years as of November 1998; (v) A reduction of 10% consumption Tax in respect of vehicle replacements purchased through the Cooperative.

It must be noted that as a result of this agreement, the award of new route band rights is controlled by the NCOPT.

Following discussions with the representatives of the National Council on Public Transportation, Government of Saint Lucia made a commitment to review the proposals for new fares and announce a decision which would come into effect on September 23rd 2005.

The Ministry for Communications, Works, Transport and Public Utilities set out immediately to address the issues in the proposal from the NCOPT. It was agreed, in keeping with Sections 48 (7) and (8) of The Motor Vehicle

and Road Traffic Act of 2003, the St. Lucia Road Transport Board appointed a Committee of five (5) persons to conduct a review of a proposal submitted by the National Council on Public Transportation for Bus Fare increases.



The normally busy embarkment area for the Castries to Gros-Islet buses

It was noted that the proposal highlighted three major components: The request for fare increases on most of the routes; The reduction in the age threshold for children’s fare from age 15 to 11 years; The introduction of a night time fare.

It is noted that while the summary proposal from the NCOPT requested the reduction in the age only for children out of uniform, the route associations are insisting that all children, in and out of uniform pay the full fare.

Main Recommendations

The committee reviewed a wide range of issues and all available data, and accepted the request for the increase in the price of bus fares. The first major recommendation was for the Minister to approve an increase in bus fares for adults in the range of 25 cents to \$1.00 during normal operating hours that is from 4.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m. An additional 25% of the stipulated fare between the hours of 10:00 PM and 4:00 AM is recommended as

an incentive to operators, to provide a critical service at a time when there is a low volume of commuters.

This increase means that for the short routes such as Castries to Mongiraud, the fare goes up from \$1.25 to \$ 1.50 representing a 20% increase; Castries to Piaye goes up from \$8.00 to \$9.00 reflecting a 12.5% increase and Soufriere to Quarte Chemin from \$1.00 to \$ 1.25 resulting in a 25% increase. In the case of Dennery - Castries to Dennery Village from \$3.00 to \$3.50 or an increase of 16.7%. These are only some examples and the entire listing of new fares will be published in the official gazette and the local media. The Road Transport Board has also made recommendations for routes where no established fare was in place.

Let me reiterate that the smallest increase was 25 cents and the largest increase was \$1.00.

Notwithstanding, the St. Lucia Road Transport Board at its meeting of September 19 2005, to consider the report of the Committee acceded to a proposal from the member representing the N.C.O.P.T. and approved a \$1.00 minimum bus fare or 50% of the adult fare for children below age 15, whichever is greater.

Committed to Universal Education

Government’s decision is based on the simple fact that the Education Regulations set the compulsory school age between the ages of five and fifteen years. The Government is further committed to realising its vision and policy of universal secondary education and

therefore remains steadfast in its decision to the recommendations for the fares for school children. This we are certain will be welcomed by the thousands of parents who must get the bus fares for children daily.

Finally, it has been brought to brought to our attention that some form of protest action may be planned for tomorrow that will have commuters stranded and perhaps unable to return to their homes.

Government wishes to discourage this action and hopes that good sense will prevail among mini-bus drivers. In the event however that protest action is taken, we want to advise the public to be cautious and make back-up plans, especially in respect of school children.

We believe that the increases are fair, and Government remains committed to continue addressing all the other issues in the transportation sector. Thank you and good Night.”



Minibuses back on the road

Tourism Minister Assures Public of Access to Beaches

Government has assured the public, continued access to the Cas-En-Bas Beach as the Plantation on Cotton Bay Resort prepares for opening by April 2006. However the Ministry of Tourism has warned the riding of horses and driving of vehicles on the beach, a common practice in that area, will have to stop.

Minister for Commerce, Tourism, Investment and Consumer Affairs Honourable Phillip J Pierre says the general harmony of beach use by locals and visitors is what is being encouraged through this measure. Minister Pierre says the practice is being perpetrated on other beaches, but is more prevalent on the Cas-En-Bas Beach, because of the nearby location of a riding stable, heavily subscribed to by tourists.

"There must be a dual use - the beaches are for our St. Lucian people

and we must allow visitors the pleasure of enjoying our beaches. Whereas the beaches are not private, we are hoping that the custom of driving vehicles on the beaches, riding horses on the beaches, riding horses in the sea—we're hoping it can stop," Minister Pierre said.

Located also on the Cas-En-Bas beach is a heritage tourism establishment which the minister says will remain at its current location. Minister Pierre says his Ministry is working with the proprietors of the project and the developers of the Plantation on Cotton Bay property to ensure harmony is achieved.

"It was 1997 when I inaugurated the St. Lucia Nature Heritage Tourism Programme—the reason for that was to cause our tourism to be sustainable—and that's the mantra of this St. Lucian Government as far as tourism is con-

cerned—the mantra that the benefits of tourism must accrue to many people as possible. What we want is an inclusive tourism industry. So any investment in nature heritage tourism is welcomed," the Tourism Minister said.

The property which is the first major resort on the east coast of Saint Lucia will cater to travellers searching for comfort and extravagance rather than cost. When completed the resort is expected to employ at least 180 people.



One of the popular beaches in Saint Lucia

Pigeon Island Belongs to Saint Lucia



Pigeon Island - a national treasure

Government representative of the Council of the Saint Lucia National Trust (SLNT) Mr. Earl Bousquet has issued a statement reminding the public that Pigeon Island is owned by the Government and people of Saint Lucia. He said "It is the sovereign property of all of the people of St. Lucia and there is absolutely no need for its ownership to be passed on

to any other entity" Mr. Bousquet was responding to statement made in the local media by the SLNT chairman Mr. Leslie "Andy" Lake that investment in the development of Pigeon Island by the SLNT is hampered by the fact that the SLNT does not own the island.

"According to Mr. Bousquet "On August 1, 2000, the Trust itself hosted a ceremony at Pigeon Island, at which

the Prime Minister, Dr Kenny D. Anthony, presided over the final and formal handing over of Pigeon Island from its former private owners to the Government and People of St. Lucia. On that day, all 44 acres of the island and the accompanying 10 extra acres of beach front were formally handed over by CLICO and CDC, the two private entities that owned the island over the years. Until that day, Pigeon Island was leased, not to the Government of St. Lucia but to the National Trust. But the Trust could do nothing on the island without consulting the private owners, CLICO and CDC. Under successive previous administrations, all the Trust had for Pigeon Island was a lease. From that day on, the lease was replaced by a title deed. On that day, we moved from tenants to landlords, as the PM said in his speech that day. On that day, the status of Pigeon Island changed from private property set aside for public use, to public property reserved in perpetuity."

He added "This Government of St. Lucia leased Pigeon Island to the National Trust for 99 years for the pur-

pose of preservation, conservation and development. It is being held by the Trust, leased by the Government, in the name of the People of St. Lucia. It is therefore strange that Mr Lake should say that in order for the Trust to develop Pigeon Island, it will first have to own it. The People of St. Lucia already own Pigeon Island and there is no need for anyone else to own it.

The Archaeological and Historical Society worked hard to convince the previous administration not to give permission for Pigeon Island to become an upscale private property; and the present Government of St. Lucia did not work hard to secure Pigeon Island from private ownership to hand it over to any other body, in any other form of ownership.

The Government has entrusted the Trust with the management of Pigeon Island and the Trust is paid over half-a-million dollars in annual subventions to manage the island and other landmarks in its trust. The Trust therefore has no need to own the island in order to develop it. It already has that mandate and does not need title deed."

ANNIVERSARY OF THE PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF CHINA

The St. Lucia-China Friendship Association salutes the People's Republic of China on the occasion of the 56th Anniversary of the People's Republic.

The 56th Anniversary of the People's Republic coincides with the observance of the first anniversary of the formal establishment of the SLCFA on September 27, 2004.

It also comes at the end of a month which began with the observance of the 8th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between St. Lucia and China on September 1, 1997.

The Association is pleased to note that the diplomatic, political and economic relations between the Governments and People of China and St. Lucia have grown from strength to strength during the past eight years and have continued to deepen over past year.

Similarly, the ties of friendship between the people of the two countries have also been enhanced in the past year, with the strengthening of the St. Lucia-China Friendship Association during its first year of existence.

At the domestic level, there have been

several developments that have deepened the bonds of friendship and cooperation between China and St. Lucia.

There have been exchanges of visits between representatives of the Chinese and St. Lucian Governments. St. Lucia's Ministers of External Affairs and Health have paid official visits to China during 2005. The Speaker of the St. Lucia Parliament and the President of the St. Lucia Senate also led a local parliamentary delegation that visited China this year.

Two local journalists -- one from GIS and the other from One Caribbean -- are also among over a dozen from throughout the region currently visiting China at the invitation of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The six members of the Executive Committee of the St. Lucia-China Friendship Association also visited China this year, during which a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the local association and the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries.

Two representatives of the Government of China also visited St. Lucia earlier this year to discuss matters pertaining to United Nations Reform and satisfactory results

were achieved by both sides.

Economic and Technical Cooperation between St. Lucia and China have also increased in the past year, with several agreements signed that will result in over two million Chinese yuan worth of material assistance to St. Lucia. Business and trade ties between the two countries have also increased in the past year as more St. Lucian businesses import from China and more Chinese nationals open businesses in St. Lucia.

Recently, the Governments of China and St. Lucia signed agreements and the contract for construction of the new \$27 million psychiatric hospital, which will begin by the end of this year.

In addition, another St. Lucian student has received a scholarship from China to study Environmental Sciences in China. China's relations with the Caribbean Community (Caricom) have also deepened in the past year with the hosting in Jamaica of the China-Caribbean Economic Forum in February, which was attended by the Vice President of the People's Republic of China.

At the international level, China's role in global economic and political matters continued to expand in the past year, as ac-

knowledgeed by all of the major financial and economic institutions of the world.

The SLCFA has consolidated its membership during its first year and is moving to accelerate the pace of its activities in the weeks and months ahead. The association is quite pleased with the continuing high level of public interest in its activities and in St. Lucia's relations with China, as indicated by the number of new applications received for membership so far during 2005.

The Memorandum of Understanding signed between the SLCFA and the CPAFFC in May 2005 holds much promise for practical deepening and strengthening of the direct people-to-people ties between St. Lucia and China. It is therefore the intention of the association to activate its clauses to ensure the process of friendship and cooperation continues in the years ahead.

The SLCFA salutes the Government and People of China and takes this opportunity to thank the Ambassador and staff of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in St. Lucia for their valuable support and cooperation during its first year of existence

Safe Pesticide Management

Address by Hon. Ignatius Jean Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries to open Pesticides Awareness Week September 25th – October 1st 2005

Fellow Saint Lucians, it's another year since we observed Pesticides Awareness Week. Safe chemical management must not to be an event we remember only once a year. Safety first must be a way of life. We must make the protection of human health and the environment the absolute priority in pest and disease management decisions.

We have a very rich biodiversity and varied ecosystem. Pesticide Safety Awareness Week is a part of our effort to preserve this legacy and to pass on to future generations.

Toxic chemicals, pesticides and other agro chemicals are used to enhance production of goods and services in sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing and tourism. At the same time, if these chemicals are not properly utilized, they may adversely affect human health and the environment.

How can we balance the risks to humans, plants, animals and the environment posed by the presence of toxic substances as against the benefits to society? We cannot prevent the use of pesticides and toxic chemicals in our country but we can ensure that they are utilized and managed wisely so as to safeguard human health, our natural resources and our environment, while enhancing our economic development.

The theme for Pesticides Awareness week 2005 which commences Sunday 25, September is "Integrating Actions for Safe Chemical Management". This theme emphasizes the value and necessity of partnerships among agencies, individuals and communities engaged in environmental management strategies, as well as the general public.

The Government of Saint Lucia has initiated several policies, strategic action plans and legislation aimed at food safety, protection of the environment and sustainable agricultural and industrial development. Many of these initiatives require a collaborative



Hon. Ignatius Jean, Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

approach or mechanism for successful implementation.

We have approved the establishment of a National Agricultural Health, Food Safety and Standards Committee whose mandate is to establish a national mechanism that strengthens the capacity of the country to protect human, plant and animal health as they relate to domestic and international trade.

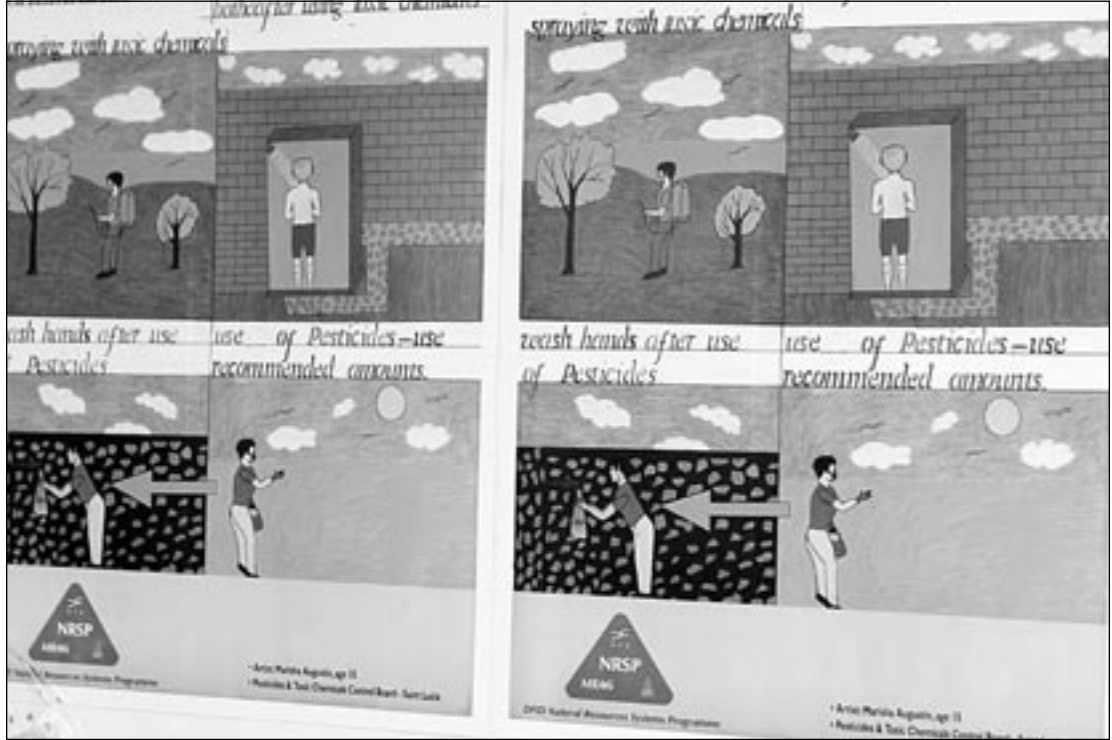
The membership of this committee will include representatives from public and private sector, commercial and scientific agencies.

The Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals Control Board which was appointed in 2004 is currently engaged in the review and amendment of the Pesticides & Toxic Chemicals Control Act of 2001 and associated regulations to include sections related to implementation of the Chemical Weapons, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions.

Our Ministry has proposed the es-

tablishment of a Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals Control Authority which will be responsible for the day to day operations of implementing the provisions of the Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals Control Act.

The Government of Saint Lucia has endorsed two regional initiatives which were developed and will be implemented through a collaborative and integrated approach involving a number of national and regional agencies: (1) The strategy for improved management and use of agro-chemicals in the Caribbean. This strategy was forwarded to and approved by Ministers of Agriculture at COTED (Council on Trade and Economic Development); (2) The establishment of the Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFSA) which will support the work of the National Agricultural Health, Food Safety and Standards committee.



A winning poster in the Pesticides Awareness Competition

In Saint Lucia and indeed the rest of the Caribbean, there is still much work to be carried out if we are to fulfil the obligations of the various trade, environmental or other agreements or treaties that we have ratified as a country.

We recognise that no individual, government or agency can achieve a safe chemical environment. However, we must all commit to working together to promote our economic viability while safeguarding the health of our people, our environment and our biodiversity not only during Pesticides Awareness Week but on a daily basis. This is an effective way to achieve our goal and objectives of a safe chemical management plan.

I wish all Saint Lucians - chemical suppliers, manufacturers, farmers, households and all who use chemicals – to remember always "Safety First.". Thank you.



Safe application of pesticides



The Giant African Snail - A permanent pest today



Public Awareness is essential aspects of public safety

Co-exist With Pesticides

Pesticides have toxic elements which render them poisonous not only to the pest they are intended for, but also to humans and other animals. When these pesticides are handled during mixing or spraying, man assumes responsibility regarding their use. The dangers he places himself into cannot be overemphasized.

Since pesticides are poisonous using them involves risk. Man accepts industrial risks in many occupations and there are established safety pro-

cedures for handling pesticides just as for any other industrial activity. Unfortunately, many workers ignore safety procedures and pay the price for their negligence. Basic protective clothing has been recommended for pesticides depending on manner of usage. However, these precautions are ignored. Other fatalities result from ignorance or negligence. For example, surplus pesticides should not be stored in empty beer or soft drink bottles, or in places accessible to children. One must remember that other toxic chemicals (medical drugs, kerosene, bleach) are regularly stored in the home and have been involved in similar fatalities. Proper storage of pesticides can eliminate this. The user has to be informed of the hazards involved in their use.

Concern should be attached, not only to acute toxicity problems but also to the dangers attached to chronic or regular intake of small quantities of pesticides as residues in food. The high incidences of death due to acute poisoning by pesticides

are fairly well known but not much is known on the incidence of non-fatal poisoning. It is important to adhere to the harvest limits after spraying a crop or re-entry times after spraying a field.

Pesticides can be leached through the soil and finally arrive in waterways. Fortunately, their movement in the soil matrix is a dynamic process and upward as well as downward movement is controlled by a number of factors. The most important factors are the physical properties of the pesticide, the physio-chemical composition of the soil, organic matter content of the soil,

undesirable quality. This is done by alternating the pesticides of different groups.

Before the advent of pesticides man's chief weapon was to manipulate agricultural practices and deny pest of food in an effort to control them. These practices cannot be compared with that of pesticide that there is no technique that is as effective, simple and quick to significantly replace pesticides.

Unfortunately, it is this success of pesticides which has masked the significance of the other methods of



A selection of prohibited domestic pesticides

control. Pest control is changing as a result of environmental awareness and associated legislations, the ability of organisms to respond to hostile environment and the understanding of the crop-pest ecosystems. Persistent organo-chlorines for example – aldrin, heptachlor are now replaced by the short lived organophosphates for example – Mocap, basudin and carbamates for example – Vydate, furadan.

Since all methods of control have their advantages and disadvantages, the emphasis now is on integrating all these control techniques to minimize the damage caused by pests with minimum disturbance on the environment. Using resistant cultivars, monitoring the pest population and applying pesticides safely if the pest reaches economic significance and destroying of crop residues at the end of the crop will reduce on the range and quantity of pesticides needed. Thus we can reduce on the quantity of the chemicals used but it is unlikely that with commercial agriculture that we will stop the use of pesticides.

Pesticides cause an imbalance in the eco-systems. However, the reasons pesticides are used is because there is already an imbalance which has been caused by man's cultivation practices. Conditions have been created for the rapid development of the pest. If parasites and predators were effective under these conditions there would have been no imbalance and hence no need for pesticides. Thus, if man continues his system of agricultural productions agro-chemicals will always be needed.

Pesticides can loose their efficacy due to the appearance of the tolerant strains of the pest. This is a real problem since a large number of pesticides may be ineffective as a result. These chemicals take a long time to be developed and be put on the market so that efforts should be made to avoid this

ASYCUDA++)

The Saint Lucia Customs & Excise Department is introducing the Automated Systems for Customs Data (ASYCUDA++) to Saint Lucia later this year. It is an integrated computer system for the management of Customs procedures and operations. The pilot site for this System will be Customs operations in Vieux – Fort.

Here are some snapshots of features and benefits of new system:

The system seeks to maximize efficiency within the Customs clearance processes, as well as to maintain and continue to increase revenue without increasing duties & taxes.

ASYCUDA ++ Guarantees to improve the economy of the country by: providing an efficient service to the trading community, providing an effective control and collection of revenue, and a high quality statistical and trade monitoring mechanism.

The system will assist customers in achieving Better Trade control; Increased Revenue collection; Increased

Trade facilitation; Environmental protection; Reliable Information collection.

ASYCUDA ++ will enable: Institutional strengthening of Customs through reform and modernisation; Better conditions for trade operations; Better management and control of Government finances; Reliable source of information on foreign trade; Apply international trade recommendations and best practices; Help reduce clearance times and processes; Provide DTI/EDI services for the submission of trade operations; Risk analysis and risk assessment for the selection of entries; Effective management and automatic selection of examining officers; Automatic calculation of duties and taxes, as well as preferences and exemptions; Accurate accounting of all Customs derived revenues; Accurate management of information and statistics for all stakeholders

Expected Results are: Simplified procedures; Faster clearance times; Reduction of overall costs; Enhanced revenue control; Reduction of discretionary actions; Accurate & timely data



The Customs Building on Jeremie Street in Castries

Potential Benefits: Simpler formalities and rational documentation; Improved Customs effectiveness and efficiency; Available information to formulate fiscal and trade policies; Reduce administrative burden; Provide other users with information to monitor trade; Electronic data exchange between Customs & Traders

The new Clearance Process will involve: Automation of cargo manifest;

Electronic submission of manifest by carriers; Inventory control of sheds and warehouses; Electronic processing of declarations by declarants; Risk Management for physical examination & documentary check; Payments through Banks and e-payment; Electronic release of goods; Post Audit controls

Six simple steps will ensure integral control, consistency checks and quality control by responsible officers.

THE UNITED NATIONS MUST ADDRESS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

AMBASSADOR, DR. THE HON. JULIAN R. HUNTE, SLC, OBE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SAINT LUCIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED THE 60TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY NEW YORK SEPTEMBER 22, 2005

Mr. President, Saint Lucia supported your unanimous election as President of the Sixtieth Session of the United Nations General Assembly, confident that your diplomatic skills and experience is just what we need to ensure a positive outcome of this historic Sixtieth Anniversary Session. I congratulate you and the Government and people of Sweden on behalf of the delegation of Saint Lucia and on my own behalf, and pledge our co-operation to you in our common endeavour.

My Government and delegation also extend our thanks to your predecessor in office, His Excellency Mr. Jean Ping, for his stewardship of the Fifty-ninth Session of the General Assembly, charged as it was with the preparatory work for this Sixtieth Anniversary.

Mr. President, in these times when the demands on the United Nations are significant and increasing, resources limited, and we the Member States are called upon to strengthen our cooperation and keep detractors and cynics of the organization at bay, my Government wishes to express its appreciation to the Secretary General for his continuing support for the work of the United Nations.

In this sixtieth year of the United Nations, our world is certainly not the prosperous and peaceful one built on the unity and strength of nations that the Charter envisaged. Should we conclude, therefore, that had the United Nations exerted more authoritative influence in global affairs, our twenty-first century world would be a better one? Such an assertion seems plausible in today's world, replete with poverty and hunger, disease, lack of sustainable



Ambassador H.E. Dr. Julian R. Hunte

development, human rights violations, terrorism, conflict and war, glaring inequalities and a multitude of other grave problems, including the unfinished agenda on decolonisation.

The record of the United Nations, however, does not bear out so simplistic an assertion. If we look with historical retrospection at the organisation's record, we see that it has wielded enormous influence over the years. The challenge we Member States must take up at this sixtieth anniversary is to ensure that the United Nations, the key organization in global affairs, has the authority and prestige to anticipate and meet challenges of the nature and scale we are witnessing in today's world.

Development is foremost among the challenges Member States identified for urgent attention during this sixtieth anniversary. There is logic in this approach. A significant proportion of the

critical problems the world faces now, and in the future, is intrinsically linked to development. It is for this reason that Heads of State and Government, in their Millennium Declaration, defined succinctly what must be done to advance socio-economic development in areas of vital concern. As we know, this comprehensive blueprint underpins the Millennium Development Goals.

The global leadership was sufficiently confident to place their goals within specified timeframes, understanding as they did the desperate need for improvement in the socio-economic conditions in numerous developing countries. What will we, the Member States of this United Nations, say to the people of the developing world, grappling with poverty, hunger, HIV/AIDS and other deadly diseases, illiteracy, gender discrimination and other challenges if, by the dates set, we have not met the targets of the MDG's? My Government sees no merit in the discussion

as to whether target dates should have been set. Our orientation should now be towards accelerating the pace of implementation, so that the goals can be accomplished within agreed time frames, or better still even earlier than the target dates.

The United Nations must also show the people of the developing world that comprehensive measures are being taken to address the environment and sustainable development. Natural disasters of phenomenal proportions, from hurricane Ivan in the Caribbean to the tsunami in Asia and now to hurricane Katrina in the Southern United States, have brought death and destruction to developing and developed countries alike. I take this opportunity, on behalf of the Government and people of St Lucia, to extend our sympathy to the Government of the United States for the tragedy still unfolding in the Gulf States.

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The Saint Lucian delegation at the United Nations General Assembly in 2004

Continued from page 6

Resource rich developed countries are better positioned to mitigate the impact of natural disasters, although they, too, are not without their challenges. For developing countries however, including St Lucia and other Small Island Developing States in the Caribbean and Pacific, decades of progress can be obliterated in the course of a few hours, by one hurricane or typhoon. Beyond doubt, the environment is a critical element of the United Nations development agenda. It is a compelling reason for all to sign on to the Kyoto Protocol.

It is also in our common interest to meet all the commitments made in the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development. In many instances, however, expectations are not being realized. Developing countries still



Hon. Senator Petrus Compton
Minister for External Affairs, International Trade and Civil Aviation

cannot rely on wide-ranging development cooperation and assistance and debt reduction responses that are predictable and reliable. Needless to say my Government joins in urging the developed countries that have not already done so to meet the 0.7% target. We recognize the G-8 initiative to take enhanced measures for Africa's development, and hope that initiative would be speedily implemented.

Related to concern for the development and well-being of all the world's people, the government of St. Lucia commends the establishment of the one billion dollar emergency fund to be finalised later this year which will enable the organization to more quickly and effectively respond to humanitarian crises.

This sixtieth anniversary provides us with yet another opportunity – to give impetus to initiatives to spread the benefits of globalisation and trade liberalization more widely.

Priority must be given to ensuring that all developing countries benefit from freer world trade; that the decline in their trade sector be halted and reversed, and that the competition they face in the world economy be on a level playing field – One size cannot fit all – an indisputable fact which the WTO stubbornly refuses to acknowledge with respect to Bananas and Sugar in CARICOM and SIDS, among other things. Indeed, the cause of development would be greatly enhanced by a positive outcome from the next round of the Doha trade negotiations sched-

uled for Hong Kong, China, in December 2005, and an early and successful conclusion of the round overall.

Developing countries must be equal partners in this process, and together with the developed countries take the decisive action required at the World Trade Organization.

What my Government seeks to emphasise by drawing attention to the development imperative is that the time has come for a paradigm shift in the United Nations approach to development.

For more than a decade we have, through a series of United Nations summits and conferences in the economic and social fields, formulated and agreed the framework of a United Nations development agenda, which includes the MDGs. To these, we have now added the Outcome Document of



Ambassador Anthony Servin
former Permanent Representative to the United Nations

the Sixtieth Anniversary Summit.

Are these courses of action which we have agreed, to be regarded as mere platitudes, destined to be relegated to the archives of the United Nations?

The developing countries have communicated through the Group of 77 and China that the partnership and cooperation of the countries of the developed world are urgently needed to accelerate action and implementation of the United Nations development agenda. This sixtieth anniversary, we believe, has a responsibility to launch this process afresh, and to carry out the commitments that we have made in this development agenda.

A more influential Economic and Social Council and a United Nations development system that is strong and cohesive would ensure that the organization implements its development mandate effectively.

Making the United Nations responsive equal to its challenges through reform and revitalization was an important element of our deliberations in the preparatory process for this sixtieth anniversary.

Let me say that my Government is prepared to actively work together with other Member States to set precise and unambiguous mandates for new or reconstituted bodies including a Peace Commission and Human Rights Council, on the basis of consensus. It is our considered opinion, however, that a credible process of United Nations reform must result in a strong General Assembly, the organization's sole universal organ, from which no Member State can be, or is excluded.



CARICOM Heads at the 26th Regular Session in Saint Lucia July 2005

We can ill afford to further erode the General Assembly's role and authority, since the Charter confirms in a practical sense the importance of the Assembly by the expansive mandate it has been given in areas that include the maintenance of international peace and security. No other organ has been given such broad responsibilities, nor has the potential to deliver over such a wide range of Charter ideals. We are also convinced that a strong General Assembly would enhance the credibility and standing of the United Nations as a whole.

Therefore, the momentum of General Assembly revitalization must be maintained, and our efforts in this area must be as dynamic and flexible as are the forces shaping today's world.

Reform of the Security Council has also been a major preoccupation in the lead up to this sixtieth anniversary, as it has been for some twelve years. An indisputable case has been made for the expansion of the Council to reflect the exponential growth of the United Nations membership from 51 in 1945 to 191 today.

We all know that the obstacle to moving beyond this point is the diverging, and strongly held views about whether an expanded membership should include new permanent members. This is an issue my Government would wish to see resolved by consensus.

Perhaps this matter might be put in better perspective if we were to reflect on the role and function of the United Nations as a whole.

Within the broad range of human endeavours entrusted to the organization, the Charter gives the Security Council one specific, albeit critical mandate – the maintenance of international peace and security. My government is of the view that it was not intended for this collective security mandate to be carried out by the Security Council functioning as an independent and separate entity. Rather, it is intended to be carried out in cooperation with the United Nations as a whole, and certainly in tandem with the General Assembly, where the Member States of this organisation, that have delegated authority to the Security Council, all have voice and vote. After all, global peace and security concern all citizens of the world, not just the citizens of those countries who happen at any given time to hold seats on the Security Council. For the present, war and conflict loom large, and this must be of concern to the Council. But we must hold out hope that we, the Member States of this organization, can make its constituent parts, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the development system, other organs and agencies and particularly the Security Council, work together to substantially reduce, if not eliminate war, conflict and crises.

We must also ask ourselves, what is the nature of the membership the Council requires to implement its mandate? Far more than any other consideration, it is the commitment of the Council's membership, permanent or non-permanent, to enforcing its decisions, all of them, to responding to situations that threaten international peace and security, wherever they may arise, and to combating the insidious spread of international terrorism that determines the success of the Council's work.

Mr. President, we can no longer posture and bicker while the people of the world, and particularly those of the developing world, who so desperately need the United Nations, wait. We must take the historic opportunity this sixtieth anniversary presents to set our sights on a 21st Century world framed in the ideals enshrined in the Charter, a world of prosperity, peace and security, with a strong United Nations at its core. We need the United Nations; it has the unmitigated support of the Government and people of St Lucia.

I thank you.



Caribbean trade negotiators at a technical EU/EPA meeting in Saint Lucia

Cariforum And European Negotiators Meet In Saint Lucia

The fourth meeting of the CARIFORUM and European Principal negotiators was held in Saint Lucia on Wednesday September 28th 2005. This was a meeting of technical officials responsible for trade and other multilateral issues in the Caribbean and Dominican Republic (CARIFORUM) on the one hand and the European Union countries on the other.

Among the matters discussed were the joint report of Phase II of the negotiations on the CARIFORUM and European Union Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), and preparation of Phase III of the negotiations. The two groups of officials also exchanged views on the 6th ministerial conference of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and shared information on recent developments in CARIFORUM products of Special Interest – sugar bananas and rum.

The CARIFORUM team was led by Ambassador Richard Bernal head of the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM) and included trade officials from the Member States of CARIFORUM, the staff of the CRNM and the OECS Secretariat.

The negotiators meeting followed two days of preparatory talks among regional trade officials which took place at in Saint Lucia.

According to Ambassador Bernal “At all three levels of the negotiations – Ministerial, Principal Negotiator and subject-specific technical experts - CARIFORUM has underscored the need for an EPA to become a tool for development. Consistent with the core provisions of the Cotonu Partnership Agreement, in addition to pursuing sustainable development and achieving poverty reduction, EPAs are to be complemented by specific support measures. These measures are primarily



Ambassador Richard Bernal of the Caribbean Team and Principal Negotiator for European Union Karl Falkenberg

aimed at strengthening CARIFORUM regional integration, and mitigating the adjustment resulting from any degree of trade liberalization and preference erosion. CARIFORUM countries require the articulation of special and differential treatment in a manner that is reflective of their level of economic development. The adequate reflection of this principle in all aspects of an EPA is critically important. One such element would be the adequacy of the length of the transition period for the Caribbean's removal of import duties on EU imports, along with sufficient policy flexibility to allow CARIFORUM states to develop new, competitive industries in the future.”

The negotiators meeting preceded the CARIFORUM Ministerial meeting which also took place in Saint Lucia on Friday September 30th.

Commenting on the Ministerial meeting Trade Policy Advisor with the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery Dr. Claudius Preville says “Essentially as you would imagine, the

ministers need to meet, agree on certain key milestones—what has been accomplished at the technical level by the principal negotiators—to sign off on that and provide further direction and mandate for the principal negotiators on both sides.”

Immediately following the Joint Ministerial meeting in Saint Lucia, the CARIFORUM Principal Negotiator will participate in a meeting in London of his counterparts from the five other ACP regional configurations. The meeting will provide an opportunity for negotiators to take stock of where their respective regions are in EPA negotiations with the EC, to share experiences and map out common strategies in facing the EC.

The third phase of EPA negotiations has as its objective channelling the points of common understanding into elements of a draft EPA. The fourth and final Phase will concentrate on consolidating the results of the negotiations; ultimately EPA negotiations will be completed by the end of 2007.



CARICOM and the European Team settle down for a technical session

WIBDECO – OUT OF THE RED

The Windward Island Banana Export and Development Company (WIBDECO) has come out of the red. That's the good news coming from the company's recent annual shareholders meeting, which took place in the UK recently.

At its last shareholders meeting, the good news was that WIBDECO had finally paid back the loan for the four ships and was now in a better financial position. As the figures moved from the red to the black, the directors reported the company had settled all its debts. In addition, the company was now reporting a two million pound profit – the first time in years.

Soon after the meeting, WIBDECO's Chief Financial officer Paul Hilaire said the board also agreed to immediately begin sharing some of the profits with the farmers of the Windward Islands. He announced that as of that very week, WIBDECO would be paying to farmers a 3.5 cents per pound increase on fruit sold through the company. This, Mr Hilaire said, was meant to be a production incentive for the farmers, whose efforts drove the industry.

WIBDECO was established several years ago when the winds of change swept through the region's banana industry as a result of impending global changes.

As the UK-based Geest Industries phased out of the industry, WIBDECO

gradually took over arrangements for shipping, marketing and export of the industry, which at the time employed thousands of families in the Windward Islands.

WIBDECO gradually took responsibility for the sale of fruit on the UK and European banana market, negotiating contracts and prices with purchasers, including supermarket chains.

As Geest pulled out of the shipping aspect of the industry, that also became the responsibility of WIBDECO. To ensure proper and reliable transport was maintained after the Geest Line

withdrew, WIBDECO secured a loan of 20 million pounds (Sterling) from the Allied Irish Bank to purchase four refrigerated ships.

The cost of the loan for the ships, the dwindling prices for bananas and other operational factors led to WIBDECO remaining in the red and unable to meet its commitments to shareholders.

For several years, WIBDECO was unable to make any direct payments to the farmers of the Windward Islands, whose associations are among the shareholders of the company.



Prime Minister Dr. Kenny D. Anthony examines Winward Island bananas in the U.K.



THIS WEEK ON NTN

**Mon. Oct. 3rd - Fri.
October 7th, 2005**

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- GIS News Breaks and Kweyol News daily from 6:30 p.m.

- Issues & Answers/Mondays at 8:00pm:

- Interview/Tuesdays at 6:15pm :

- Konsit Kweyol/Tuesdays at 8:00pm (Kweyol Discussion):

- Your Right to Know/Thursdays at 6:15 p.m. (Min. of Ed. Prog).

Take 2/Fridays at 6:15pm
(Week in Review)

- Weflechi/Fridays at 6:40pm - (Week in Review—Kweyol)

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