



NATIONWIDE

A publication of the Department of Information Services



New Crown Prosecution Service in effect - page 2



Saint Lucia seeks to build synergies regarding MEA's - page 3



Dollars for illegal guns: Is it helping? - pages 4 & 5



The right to sight - page 6



Film Festival - Creole Heritage - page 7

RECORD GROWTH RATES FOR OECS COUNTRIES BUT WORRIES OVER FUEL

The economic outlook for St. Lucia and the other member-states of the OECS looks good for this year and the next, with predictions that member-states are poised to register their highest growth rates in over a decade.

The Monetary Council of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB), at its most recent meeting in St. Kitts & Nevis last week, assessed the economic situation facing the member-states of the OECS and welcomed the favourable outlook for growth in 2005, which was estimated to reach 5.8%.

The Council also projected that the region was set to register an even higher growth rate of 7.0% in 2006. This growth rate, if it materialises, will represent the highest recorded growth rate in the sub-region in over a decade.

Members of the ECCB Monetary Council -- which serves as a Board of Governors of the Central Bank - noted that the favourable growth outlook for the sub-region was driven by the expansion in construction



OECS leaders at a recent meeting in Saint Lucia

and in tourism-related activities.

They said the positive projections were fuelled largely by further growth in the tourism sector and construction activity in preparation for the Caribbean's hosting of the Cricket World Cup in 2007.

In the case of St. Lucia, it was estimated by Prime Minister Dr Kenny Anthony during his 2005 Budget Address

in April that St. Lucia would have experienced an improved growth rate of 3.6% for 2004 and that would be the second year of consecutive growth as the economy recovered from the battering of 2001 in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Continued on page 2



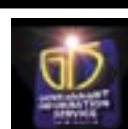
First response team arrive on location of the simulated plane crash - An emergency exercise coordinated by NEMO



"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



RECORD GROWTH RATES FOR OECS COUNTRIES BUT WORRIES OVER FUEL

Continued from page 1

However, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) recently reported that “real GDP growth” in 2004 rose to 4% -- up from 2.9% in 2003 -- again, “largely driven by the buoyant tourism sector.”

The Prime Minister, who is also Minister of Finance, says from all indications, the economy is on course for another period of record growth and could result in another 5% growth in 2005 and 2006 as the Cricket World Cup approaches.

Meanwhile, as the OECS continue to monitor economic developments, a major change is in the offing in the way in which the price of fuel is to be determined in the OECS. This was decided at the just-concluded 54th meeting of the Monetary Council of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB).

The Monetary Council met in Saint Kitts and Nevis on October 20 and 21 under the Chairmanship of St. Lucia's Prime Minister, Dr Kenny D. Anthony.

The effect of oil prices on the economies of member-states of the OECS was one of the subjects that occupied the attention of the sub-region's Central Bank.

The meeting noted that the subsidisation of fuel prices increased the budget deficits of the member-states

and agreed that the governments may have to make further adjustments in all countries, given that the continued subsidisation of oil prices is not sustainable.

As a consequence, the Council agreed that member-governments of the OECS should adopt a common oil pricing mechanism for the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union, which is transparent, credible and predictable.

The new mechanism for assessing fuel prices will be based on a “pass through” system that reflects the changing price of oil.

The meeting adopted a common minimum consumption tax rate on fuel within the sub-region, as well as common retail and wholesale margins, taking into account the circumstances of member-countries.

The meeting also adopted the US Gulf Price as a common spot price to calculate movements in the price of fuel.

The ECCB Monetary Council agreed to the establishment of a permanent regional body to monitor the movement of oil prices within the sub-region and advise on appropriate energy policy and to engage in discussions with the oil suppliers at the regional and international levels.

But even as the governments keep their eyes on the fuel prices, it is still a



Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony with ECCB Governor Dwight Venner and Dr. Kenneth Hall of UWI

fact that St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines currently have the lowest fuel prices in the member-states of the OECS.

Following recent fuel adjustments in the member-states of the sub-regional grouping, prices for fuel still remain higher in Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada and Montserrat.

Anguilla has the record for the highest fuel prices in the sub-region, with a gallon of petrol currently priced at \$13.86. In Antigua & Barbuda, the price now stands at \$11.89, while in Dominica it costs \$10.32 per gallon. In Grenada, a gallon costs \$10.89 and in Montserrat the price is \$10.06 per gallon.

In the case of St. Kitts & Nevis, a gallon of gas currently costs \$8.30, but the Government there has indicated the

price will increase as on November 1 to \$10.50 per gallon.

In St. Vincent and the Grenadines, fuel still costs \$8.00 per gallon, while in St. Lucia the cost is \$9.50 per gallon.

The member-states of the OECS recently revisited the effect of rising oil prices on the economies of the sub-region and have adopted new mechanisms for accessing and adjusting fuel prices within the grouping of island-states.

The member-states of the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union (ECCU) have agreed that continued subsidisation of fuel prices is no longer sustainable and have been warned that should the increases continue they may have to make further adjustments to fuel prices in the future.

NEW CROWN PROSECUTION SERVICE IN EFFECT

Attorney General Senator Philip La Corbinere says the recently-established Crown Prosecution Service is in full operation and will ensure a better and more coordinated approach to the prosecution of criminals in the island's courts of law. Mr. La Corbinere, who was a guest on last week's edition of Radio St. Lucia's Constitution Park With Earl Bousquet, said the new unit, which was launched last April, combines the services of the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) and the Police Prosecution Department, “to ensure better coordination of their complementary services.”

The new Service, which is under the supervision of the DPP, he said, will also feature “decentralisation of the prosecution services to other parts of the country.” Senator LaCorbinere said it's “too early to judge” the full effectiveness of the new service, “but it has resulted in better organized capacity on the ground.” However, the efforts to improve the prosecutorial services do not end with the creation of the new combined approach.

He says efforts are also well underway to improve the quality of evidence submitted by the state and police prosecutors with the plans for a Forensic Laboratory. Senator



**Attorney General
Senator Phillip La Corbinere**

LaCorbinere said plans are well under way for establishment of the Forensic Laboratory at La Toc, and he expects it to come on stream by next year. He said the Laboratory will also help improve prosecution of criminals, as it will also assist with ballistics examinations.

St. Lucia's prosecutors currently depend on cooperation with other Caricom territories -- and sometimes countries outside the region -- for assistance with forensic and ballistics examinations. But the Attorney General says this situation “will change when the Forensic Unit comes on stream.”

PLANE CRASH SIMULATION



The Saint Lucia Fire Service team



Caring for the injured



Transporting the injured



Officials review the operations

Saint Lucia seeks to build synergies regarding MEA's

The Sustainable Development Unit of the Ministry of Physical Development, Environment and Housing is intensifying its efforts to efficiently implement the wide range of multilateral environmental agreements (MEA's) to which Saint Lucia is a signatory. The latest effort took the form of a one-day workshop on Wednesday, October 19th, 2005 at the Bay Gardens Hotel in the north of the city, Castries.

Minister for Physical Development Housing and Environment, Honourable Ferguson John, says ratifying these international agreements which are critical to global and national survival, require much on the part of small island developing states like Saint Lucia.

Among the costly requirements, he says, are passage of appropriate legislation in some cases, attendance at international negotiations and submitting regular progress reports. He says under many of the agreements that Saint Lucia has ratified, it has been possible to secure technical support and resources for capacity building in order to better address the relevant environmental is-



Honourable Ferguson John
Minister for Physical Development
Housing and Environment

sues. However, the Environment Minister says, "Obligations placed upon signatories to these conventions can

often be significant and may go far beyond the requisite direct financial contributions." Minister John says becoming party to a MEA "is a commitment to take on the responsibility of doing all that is necessary to fulfil its aims and objectives as required."

Saint Lucia is party to over twenty multilateral environmental agreements which cover the use of marine space and resources to the protection of human health and the environment from dangerous pollutants. Wednesday's workshop formed part of a broader mandate of the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) which seeks to build awareness of MEA's.

"We held a regional workshop in Jamaica in 2003 in which there was support for capacity building at the regional level but also a very strong desire to do more at the national level. Therefore this activity represents a specific request from the Government of Saint Lucia to collaborate in raising awareness to implement international environment agreements at the national



Multilateral agreements address issues of pollution and ship generated waste

level," says UNEP representative Carl Bruch.

Saint Lucia is said to have a first rate track record in the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements. The island's achievements under the UN Convention on Biodiversity and under the Montreal Protocol are often highlighted as prime examples in the region

NEMAC Reviews National Disaster Plans

Saint Lucia's National Disaster Response Plans have been going through a consultative review by the National Emergency Management Office – NEMO and its sub-committees.

Director of the National Emergency Management Office NEMO Miss Dawn French says the results should be a much needed updating of the Plans which were last revised in 1996. 2005 The National Emergency Management Advisory Committee- NEMAC met last week and reviewed the final batch of plans before presentation to the island's Cabinet of Ministers.

The schedule of reviews included the Donations Policy, Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis Policy, Damage Assessment Needs and Analysis Plan, Disaster Auxiliary Corps Guidelines, Transportation Plan, Relief distribution Plan and the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Once Cabinet has approved the schedule of Plans, they will become the definitive response policies for the country says Miss French. The meeting was chaired by Deputy Chairman of NEMAC Dr. James Fletcher.

NEW EVIDENCE ACT



The Court Building in Castries

The Attorney General's Office says all is in place for the bringing into force, legislation that would make it possible for closed-circuit television (CCTV) images to be admissible in court. Attorney General Senator Phillip La Corbiniere told the Government Information Service (GIS) he had "already signed the Ministerial Order that would make the new Act law come November 1st 2005." The use of close-circuit TV images in court is seen as a vital tool in the fight against crime.

The drafting of the Evidence Act comes on the heels of the decision by local petroleum dealers to call off their early closures and return to normal working hours. The dealers say a spate of violent robberies had prompted the action, but after

receiving assurances from Prime Minister Hon. Dr. Kenny Anthony of even tougher crime fighting measures, they agreed to revert to normal operations.

Prime Minister Anthony meantime has welcomed the decision, saying it was vital for the country not to engage in actions that appear to give in to criminal acts or criminal behaviour. Prime Minister Anthony says the police have also carried out an assessment to determine how many gas stations in the country have surveillance cameras and other adequate security arrangements in place. This information, he added, will be made available to the petroleum dealers to better inform and guide them in their present and future security arrangements.

CARIBBEAN ELECTIONS SAINT LUCIANS PUBLISH BOOK

Two Saint Lucians, Mrs. Cynthia Barrow-Giles and Dr. Tennyson S.D. Joseph, have published a book on Elections in the English-Speaking Caribbean. The book is entitled Party Systems, Elections and Voting in the English-Speaking Caribbean 1992-2005, and it is published by Ian Randle Publishers of Jamaica. The authors are both lecturers in Political Science in the Department of Government, Sociology, Social Work and psychology at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus.

The book provides a historical, descriptive and analytical account of elections and election processes in the Commonwealth Caribbean in the six decades since the introduction of Universal Adult suffrage in the region, and it builds upon the groundbreaking work of Patrick Emmanuel (Elections and Party Systems in the Commonwealth Caribbean) which covered the period 1994-1991.

In addition to the inclusion of a number of territories such as Guyana, Belize and Anguilla which had been omitted in the earlier Emmanuel study, the book by Barrow-Giles and Joseph, not only extends the story of Caribbean elections into the first decade of the twenty-first century, but addresses new and emerging issues such as political party financing, and women and electoral politics in the Caribbean.

Party Systems Elections and Voting in the English Speaking Caribbean 1992-2005 by Barrow-Giles and Joseph will be launched at the Cave Hill Campus, UWI on October 26. It is expected that the book will be launched in Saint Lucia in late November

**CONVERSATION
WITH THE NATION**

An encounter
Greetings, fellow Saint Lucians. On my way home this past weekend from the meeting of the Board of Governors of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank in Saint Kitts and Nevis, I encountered a family friend who lived and worked in Antigua. Inevitably, the conversation turned to Saint Lucia, to politics, to tourism and crime. Like many Saint Lucians, he was worried about crime and its consequences on our society and economy. The he turned and said, “I hear you all paying criminals for illegal guns.” I asked him where did he get that from. He replied, “In the news. It was reported on the radio and television, and in the newspapers.”

I confessed my surprise, because, my friend, like many others, had been led to accept, without more, an interpretation of the programme that was clearly incorrect. The way my friend put it suggests that criminals walk to the Police and hand in their guns and are paid \$2,500. That is not so.

I explained to my friend that the programme paid a reward to persons who provided information which led to the recovery of illegal firearms. True, it is possible that a criminal, attracted by the reward of \$2,500, would betray another criminal and provide information that eventually would lead to the recovery of an illegal firearm. But if one criminal could expose another criminal, then all the better in the fight against crime.

This encounter with my friend encouraged me to add my voice to the ongoing debate about the Programme for the Recovery of Illegal Firearms. Actually, the debate has been helpful, because it has popularised the programme even more.

I think I should explain the programme again.

A waste of money?
Under this programme, persons who supply the police with information leading to the safe recovery of illegal firearms are rewarded with a cash award of EC \$2,500.

The critics say that the programme



Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony
“Some criticism are well meant”

is a waste of time and money; that the criminals are only enriching themselves by turning in guns that cost less to buy or to make. Some even suggest that the money paid so far could have been better spent on repairing the Central Police Station. Choice words have been used to describe the programme: dumb, stupid, reckless and irresponsible, are some of the adjectives used.

Some of the criticisms, I must say, are well-meant, in that, they are made with a view to trying to ensure that the taxpayers of this country are not being taken for a ride by criminals. The Commissioner should listen carefully to all of these views, and, if necessary, make adjustments to the programme.

Here are the facts
In order to understand the effectiveness of the incentive programme for the recovery of illegal firearms, one needs to understand the programme, its objectives and benefits.

To begin with, the programme is not one year old, but ten months old. To date, up to October 20, 2005, the total number of firearms recovered under the

programme is 150. Of these, 94 were recovered as a result of direct information from informants, while 11 were recovered as a result of police investigations and direct search operations such as patrols and road blocks. However, 45 guns were recovered as a result of searches carried out by the police, with warrants. And, very importantly, approximately just as many – about 45 persons -- were arrested, charged and convicted as a direct result of the programme.

Compare the success of the programme with previous years. In 2001, only 54 guns were recovered; in 2002, 55 were recovered; in 2003, 60; and in 2004 the number went down to only 48. The evidence shows quite clearly, therefore, that if 150 firearms have been recovered for only eight months of this year, then it must mean that the programme is working – and working effectively.

Dangerous and deadly guns recovered
Let us also look at the types of firearms that have been recovered. A close

examination of the recovered illegal firearms displayed by the police and shown on your TV screens and in the newspapers recently, reveals that the types of weapons on our streets are becoming increasingly dangerous, lethal and sophisticated.

I know it will not surprise you that there are also the more sophisticated types among the illegal guns. Just last week, the police recovered a point-two-two sniper’s rifle, complete with telescope and silencer.

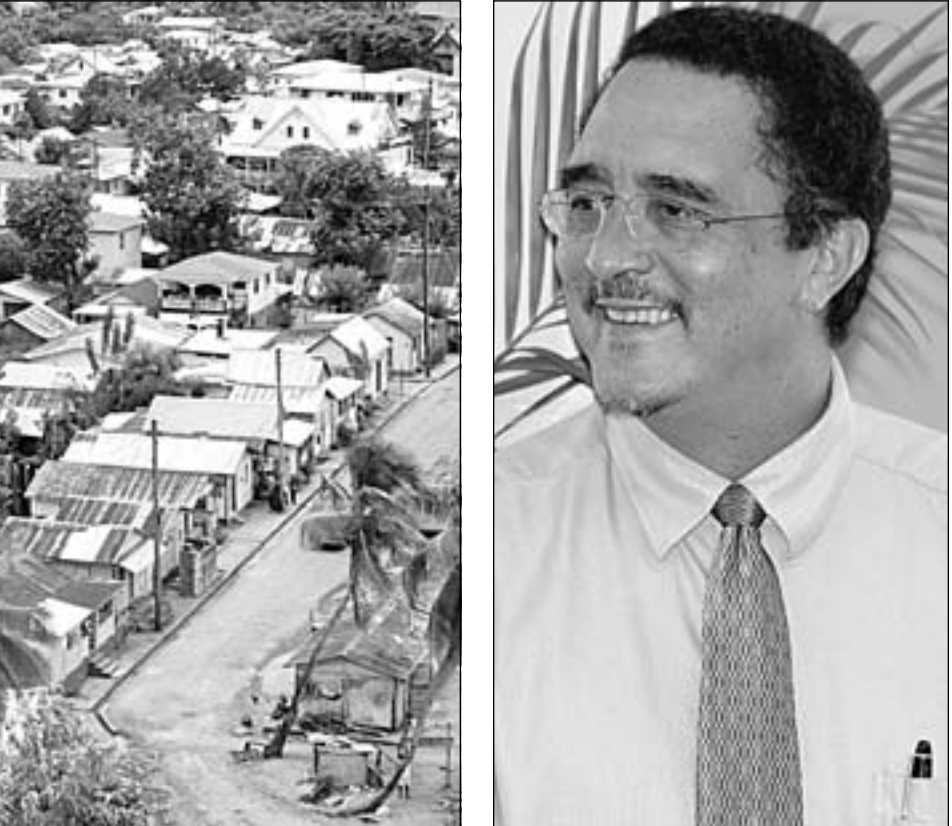
The issue is not whether the guns look used, rusty or even disfigured. The real issue is this: Can the recovered gun kill, maim or injure? If it can kill, then clearly, there is every reason to remove it from the streets.

Yielding positive results
Incidentally, about 45 persons are facing jail terms or fines for the possession of illegal firearms. Those who are in jail will obviously be denied the possibility of getting involved in gun-related crimes, such as robbery or homicide – at least for the time being. It may be described as a drop in the bucket, as claimed by some, but it is a major step in emptying that bucket.

Life is valued in more than just dollars and cents
The main criticism of the programme has been the amount involved. Some claim the \$2,500 is too much to pay to take an illegal gun off the street. This is a simple dollars-and-cents argument. But let’s look at the figures again.

First of all, I do not believe that \$2,500 is too much to pay to save a life. Look at it this way. By taking 150 illegal guns off the streets, the police have effectively and practically reduced the possibility of some of these guns taking a life.

The cost of burying or treating a single victim of gun crime has to be estimated in more than just dollars and cents. That’s because life is in fact worth more than just dollars and cents. We must not forget that each person killed with a gun has left a grieving family – and that could include parents, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, cousins, nieces and nephews – and



Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony



Keeping our communities free from illegal guns

Dollars for Illegal Guns: Is It Helping?

lots of friends. Similarly, initial surgery costs for a victim of a gunshot wound is way over \$2,500 – not counting after-surgery and subsequent recovery costs, including costs of medicine.

We must not forget that each gun taken off the streets also reduces the risk of a police officer encountering an armed assailant while executing his or her duty.

But there is a more fundamental point. The level of the reward must be such that it can entice people to give information, entice also those criminals who wish to give information about other criminals.

The conditions
Unfortunately, it has been made to appear that the police are paying \$2,500 for each gun recovered. That is not so. There are conditions.

For example, money is only paid when an illegal gun is safely recovered. The amount paid to an informant, for instance, will depend on whether the gun is working or not. Contrary to what is being said and written, no one gets \$2,500 for a home-made gun -- or for a gun that does not function. Besides, each gun recovered is tested and subjected to ballistics examination. This can help determine whether the gun was used in a crime already under investigation, or if the bullets from that gun match any found in any case being investigated or so far unsolved.

Helping in the wider fight
The programme has other benefits. The information gathered by the police in recovering each illegal firearm adds to the pool of information available to the police in the wider crime fight. For example, the information also helps to recover illegal drugs and stolen items; and it also helps the police better know or understand the criminal networks involved, the gangs and the gang-related criminal activity. No Police Force can fight crime without good intelligence.

Dollars for guns: two examples from elsewhere
Some have also argued that the programme does not work elsewhere. They say no one offers \$2,500 for an illegal gun anywhere. That is definitely not so. Rewards are offered for illegal guns in other places. I will offer two examples – one where it works and one where it has not worked, so far.

Let’s first take the example closer to home
In Trinidad & Tobago, Crime Stoppers took out advertisements in the local papers earlier this year offering \$10,000 – Trinidad & Tobago dollars -- for information leading to the recovery of illegal guns or arrest of criminals. To the best of my information, that programme has not brought the desired or expected results in Trinidad & Tobago.

The question, therefore, is this: why is a reward of \$10,000 Trinidad & Tobago dollars not working in Trinidad, whereas \$2,500 E.C. is working in St. Lucia?
Those involved in research of such factors say the reason has to do with confidence – with the level of confidence that the people have in those

making the offer – whether the Police or the Crime Stoppers. I believe that there is good reason to have confidence in our programme. Of the 150 cases of illegal weapons recovered, there has not been, so far, one single complaint of a breach of confidentiality, of any person’s identity being exposed.

For those who say the programme of giving dollars for guns does not exist anywhere else, I wish to point them to Brazil. Last year, 36,000 persons were killed as a result of gun crimes across Brazil. This year, the government instituted a programme of inviting persons to surrender guns for dollars – whether illegal or not – and the Brazilian police are today reporting that the number of deaths by guns has decreased so far this year, in comparison with the same time last year.

Like here too, the dollars-for-guns programme in Brazil is just one part of a series of measures aimed at reducing gun crimes. There, the government held a referendum over the weekend on whether to make it more difficult to purchase legal guns, even while it is tightening on its liberal gun laws.

Reducing the influx
As I speak, our police are trying to reduce the influx of guns into the country. The French authorities in Martinique are cooperating with us. They have tightened their own liberal regime to make it more difficult to purchase firearms. Our police have also been increasing their interdiction of vessels arriving from Venezuela and Colombia with drugs and illegal guns. But, at the end of the day, even while we tighten the dragnet at sea, even while we in-

crease security at our bays and coves, it is even more important that we go after those guns that are already on land, already in hand and being used by those who attach no value to human life.

Not a programme for criminals
This programme is also testimony to the fact that more and more St. Lucians want to take the Police into their confidence and assist in the fight against crime in all its manifestations.

This is not a programme for criminals. It is a programme for protecting citizens. If crime pays for the criminals, those who help stop or solve crime could at least be rewarded for their efforts.

Until next week, God Bless. Do take care; Be vigilant and fight crime. Never give up or give in to criminals!



Police on the beat during public festivities



Keeping rural streets safe as well

THE RIGHT TO SIGHT

Early in October, the St. Lucia Blind Welfare Association celebrated World Sight Day and White Cane Day. Patron of the Saint Lucia Blind Welfare Association Dame Pearlette Louisy delivered an address to the nation via television. Nationwide presents the address to readers, which was based on the theme Vision 2020: The Right to Sight.

"But what is Vision 2020 and how can we assist in its realization? Vision 2020: The Right to Sight is a global initiative of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness and the World Health Organisation with a collation of non-governmental organisations, which aims to eliminate unnecessary blindness by the year 2020, in order to give all people in the world, particularly the millions of needlessly blind, the Right to Sight. We say "needlessly blind", because it is estimated that 80% of blindness is avoidable, either treatable (60%) or preventable (20%). We are told that prevention and treatment interventions for vision loss are among the most cost effective health interventions currently available. These include cataract surgery, treatment of glaucoma, prevention of trachoma, Vitamin A for the prevention of childhood blindness, and the provision of glasses for persons with refractive errors, like myopia or short-sightedness. Yet for all this, "every five seconds one person in the world goes blind...and a child goes blind every minute". Current statistics show that there are 44 million blind people in the world and 135 million with low vision, comprising an astonishing total of 180 million people with significantly low vision. Ninety percent of these live in developing countries. If this trend continues, it is estimated that by the year 2020 76 million will be blind, of which more than half will be from curable cataract, Vision 2020 aims to reduce by half the prevalence of blindness worldwide and so save about US\$102 billion dollars in lost productivity by the year 2020. Vision 2020 obviously has significant socio-economic benefits.

Globally, the resources to tackle the issue of blindness are insufficient, especially in developing countries where, as I mentioned earlier, nine out of ten of the world's blind live. There is lack of trained personnel, medicines, ophthalmic equipment, eye-care facilities and patient referral systems. It is out of this inadequacy that Vision 2020 was born. This new partnership, it is hoped, will raise awareness, mobilize resources and develop national blindness programmes with governments to prevent an additional 100 million people from being blind in 2020.

And this is where all of us as a community and as a country come in. World Sight Day 2005 and White Cane Day 2005 have come and gone, but the issue of blindness and its prevention and treatment remains. As the President of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness put it: "The celebration of World Sight Day as an annual event is fantastic, as it brings to focus the devastating social and economic impact of blindness on the many disadvantaged among us. How much we keep this in our conscience and do something concrete about it between successive World Sight Days will be the ultimate determinant of the success



H.E. Dame Pearlette Louisy

of World Sight Day." To this we can add that the extent to which we commit ourselves to doing something concrete and continuous about reducing the prevalence of avoidable blindness will be the ultimate determinant of the success of Vision 2020.

We can contribute to its success here in St. Lucia by supporting the work of the St. Lucia Blind Welfare Association. There can be no doubt about the quality of service and the nature of the contribution that the Association has been giving to the blind and the visually impaired here in this country. And yet, sadly, the Association reports that it continues to experience serious financial difficulties in sustaining its programmes and services, with the result that a number of the programmes planned for 2004 could not be fully implemented. A reminder of some of its current programmes might serve to rekindle our efforts at supporting the ambitious work-plan that it has undertaken.

(1) Its Eye Health Unit conducts island-wide sensitization programmes focusing on low vision assessments, eye-screening and teaching/training programmes. However only one Eye Health Officer services that Unit.

(2) Eye – Care St. Lucia supplies quality, attractive low-cost glasses to persons who cannot afford the regular

cost of glasses in the private sector. The Clinic needs its own Optometrist or Ophthalmologist, a larger inventory of glasses especially for children, and a Supervisor to oversee its day-to-day operations.

(3) The Kids Insight Project addresses pediatric eye-surgery and other specialized eye surgeries to a large number of children who otherwise would not have access to these services. Last year 120 children were examined and 16 pediatric eye-surgeries were performed by two volunteer Teams from West Virginia in the United States in a joint project with the Lions Club of St. Lucia.

(4) The Association has been offering school eye-screening programmes throughout the island. Last year 3419 students were screened and 151 referred to doctors for treatment. The goal of equal right and access to education for all St. Lucians depends significantly for its success on early detection of potential eye problems. The number of students referred last year represents less than 5% of those in need of referral; underscoring the critical and urgent need for support of this programme.

(5) Health Centre Workers get updated vision assessment training through the Association's Community Health Centre Vision Assessment programmes. These sessions, which form part of the Association's prevention and awareness drive, have been very well received. A call has gone out for attention to be given to glaucoma screening in communities.

(6) The Association's Rehabilitation Programme assists blind adults to re-assimilate into the mainstream of their community, and to gain some level of independence. Fifty-six blind and visually-impaired persons benefited from the programme last year.

(7) The Association's Education Unit provides integrated education support for blind and visually-impaired children. Its Braille and Large Print Unit is responsible for the production of all the educational material that supports that initiative. Twenty-seven students were served under this programme last year. The Association also runs a special outreach home-based service for multi-disabled blind children, providing them with therapy, stimulation and support as they deal with their other major physical, mental and emotional disabilities.

Obviously, the needs of the nation's blind and visually-impaired are many. But the resources are woefully inadequate. The response to the current eye-care programme offered by the Government of the Republic of Cuba is a measure of the extent of the need, and perhaps more significantly, the success of relatively uncomplicated interventions.

As Patron of the Saint Lucia Blind Welfare Association, I make a special appeal to all to support the work of the Association. From today until the next World Sight Day which will fall on the second Thursday of October next year, let us each commit ourselves to assisting the Association in securing for its clients, the right to sight, the right to livelihood, the right to a safe and secure environment and the right to equal and inclusive services. The Association itself is com-



Many senior citizens benefitted from the Miracle Programme

mitted to preservation and restoration of eyesight and quality services to those persons whose sight cannot be restored. We can help. When the Association comes knocking, give a favourable response. Better yet, don't wait for the call. We know their needs. Make the call, make the first move, and offer help. You will be happy you did. Thank you."



The headquarters of the SLBWA in Castries

FILM FESTIVAL

CREOLE HERITAGE

Governor General of Saint Lucia Her Excellency Dame Pearllette Louisy officially declared open the Creole film festival at the Alliance Franciase in Castries on Wednesday October 26th 2005. In her brief remarks to the audience Dame Pearllette reflected on the struggles of the individuals and organisation to achieve some societal recognition of the language in all spheres of public life. She welcomed the film festival as another opportunity for the promotion of the Creole language and culture. Also addressing the official launch was the French Ambassador to Saint Lucia His Excellency Bernard Vanzo, Director of the Folk Research centre Mr. Kennedy Boots Samuel and Miss. Lindy Ann Alexander a member of the nation Creole language committee and main coordinator of the festival. The launch programme included the screening of the trailers of the films from Saint Lucia, Martinique, Guadeloupe and Haiti. Director of the Saint Lucian film “Ribbons of Blue” Mathurine Emmanuel made a passionate plea for support for the film industry in Saint Lucia.



Ms Lindy Ann Alexander

Also in attendance at the ceremony were His Excellency Mr. Anthony Severin, Saint Lucia’s Ambassador to CARICOM, Msgr. Dr. Patrick Anthony founding member of the Folk Research Centre, members of the FRC, cultural workers, students and media workers and representatives of the sponsors.



H.E. Dame Pearllette Louisy



Ms Mathurine Emmanuel



One section of the audience



Robert Lee and daughter
- filmmaker of the future



French film director



Other participants

NOMINATIONS FOR NATIONAL AWARDS 2006

The National Awards Committee invites nominations for National Awards to be announced on our Twenty-Sixth Anniversary of Independence on 22nd February, 2006. The Society of Honour known as the Order of Saint Lucia was established as from 13th December, 1986.

The grades are as follows: (1) The Grand Cross; (2) The Saint Lucia Cross; (3) The Medal of Honour in classes of Gold and Silver; (4) The Medal of Merit in classes of Gold and Silver; (5) The Les Pitons Medal in classes of Gold, Silver, and Bronze; (6) The National Service Cross; (7) The National Service Medal.

GRAND CROSS: - The Grand Cross is for award only to a person appointed to the office of the Governor-General.

NATIONAL SERVICE CROSS: - Nominations for an award of the National Service Cross can only be

made by the Chairman, Public Service Commission as this award is intended for Gazetted Officers of a certain rank in the Royal Saint Lucia Police Force, the Saint Lucia Fire Service and the Saint Lucia Prison Service.

NATIONAL SERVICE MEDAL: - Nominations for the National Service Medal can only be made by the officers in charge of the Royal Saint Lucia Police Force, the Saint Lucia Fire Service and the Saint Lucia Prison Service.

The general public should therefore be concerned with nominations for the following four (4) grades: (a) The Saint Lucia Cross; (b) The Medal of Honour; (c) The Medal of Merit; and (d) The Les Pitons Medal.

SAINT LUCIA CROSS: - The Saint Lucia Cross is to be awarded to persons who have rendered distinguished and outstanding service of national importance to this country.

MEDAL OF HONOUR (SLMH): - The Medal of Honour is to be awarded

in any two (2) classes (Gold or Silver) to persons rendering eminent service of national importance or performing an outstanding brave or humane act to a national of Saint Lucia or of another country.

MEDAL OF MERIT (SLMM): - The Medal of Merit is to be awarded in any two (2) classes (Gold or Silver) to persons contributing long and meritorious service in the Arts, Science, Literature and other such fields.

THE LES PITONS MEDAL (SLPM): - The Les Pitons Medal is to be awarded in any of three (3) classes (Gold, Silver, or Bronze) for long and meritorious service to Saint Lucia, tending to promote loyal public service, national welfare or inculcating and strengthening community spirit.

Members of the public, organisations, statutory authorities and other public or private institutions are requested to submit nominations for awards to the National Awards Committee for its consideration. Your

nomination should be submitted to: The Secretary, National Awards Committee, C/O Prime Minister’s Office, Greaham Louisy Administrative Building, The Waterfront, CASTRIES.

Your nomination should state the name, age, occupation and nationality of the persons being nominated and for which grade and class of the Order. You should also give reasons why you think the person should be honoured with a National Award together with his or her Curriculum Vitae, and a summary of the activities which he or she has/had been involved, preferably in chronological order.

Nomination Forms can be obtained at the Prime Minister’s Office, Government Information Service, Central Library, Post Office.

Such nominations should reach the Secretary on or before Friday, 30th December, 2005.

WOULELABA – CRICKET HERITAGE

The day of the historic finals of the national Woulelaba competition ended before any team could be declared a winner. A huge crowd gathered at the Piaye playing field to witness the encounter between the two strongest teams of the competition on Sunday 23rd October 2005. Piaye batted first and posted a score of 250 for six wickets and “declared”. MonSizo took to the crease but only after scoring sixteen runs without any loss the umpires called an end to the game due to fading light. The organising committee for the competition subsequently

held a meeting and has proposed to the teams that the final be replayed in Piaye on November 6th.

It was a fun filled day which included cheer leaders from Mon Sizo and a team of Kwéyòl commentators who provided live and colourful description of the event. Among the patrons was Hon. Kenny Anthony Prime Minister who spearheaded this cultural revival with a charge to the Folk Research Centre to organise the competition. Fourteen community teams took part in the preliminary rounds. The competition was sponsored by Saint Lucia Distillers producers of Bounty Rum.

THE CROWDS



The pavillion



Cheerleaders



Spectators of all ages

THE CRICKET



Piaye Mon Sizo team captains



Umpires!



Match action



The cricket committee

THE COMMENTARIES



Dr. Anthony, Dr. St. Aimee and Dr. Mondesir



Walaba commentators



Dr. Kenny Anthony with FRC chairman Victor Poyotte and Mr. Bernard Thomas of St. Lucia Distillers



THIS WEEK ON NTN

Sat. Oct. 29th - Fri. Nov. 6th, 2005

- The GIS discusses the Youth Enterprise Development Fund - Sat. Oct. 29th – 8:00 p.m.
- Junior La Wen Kweyol 2001 - Sun. Oct. 30th, 7:30 p.m.
- Lesson in Kweyol - Mon. Oct. 31st, 6:15 p.m.
- The CSME – It’s Implications for People and Communities – Tues. Nov. 1st, 8:00 p.m. Part 1
- The Road Ahead – Road Development in St. Lucia - Wed. Nov. 2nd, 8:00 p.m.
- The GIS discusses the Health Ministry’s moves to alleviate the AIDS pandemic in St. Lucia. – Thurs. Nov. 3rd, 8:00 p.m.
- Chrystalites Dance Inc. Graduation Ceremony 2005 – Fri. Nov. 4th. 8:00 p.m.

Remember to tune in for:

- 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)

For the complete programme guide, log on to our website at www.stlucia.gov.lc and then click on the NTN icon.

www.stlucia.gov.lc