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Front Page: L-R: Dr. Rosina Wittshire – UN System Resident Coordinator and Resident Representative UNDP, Felix St. Hill, DPS Ministry of the Public Service, Labour & Cooperatives, Matthew Roberts, Resident Tutor UWIDEC



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GOVERNMENT TO HOST NATIONAL CRIME SYMPOSIUM TODAY

The Government of Saint Lucia is set and ready to host a major National Symposium on Crime.

According to Prime Minister Dr Kenny D. Anthony, the symposium "is aimed at developing a comprehensive strategic response to the prevention and abatement of crime and it will bring together various institutions and agencies involved in the national crime fight."

The Prime Minister, who announced the Government's initiative in this regard just recently, says the symposium will take place on October 21- today - at the NIC Conference Centre on the Waterfront in Castries and will seek to involve a wide cross-section of participants.

According to Dr Anthony, "It will not only address the concerns of the citizenry about crime, but the symposium will also seek to engage stakeholders in discussion and review of strategies and their implementation at all levels of the community."

To this end, government officials like the Prime Minister, the Minister of Home Affairs and Internal Security and the Heads of the various Security Services will be invited to participate

in the symposium, but significant inputs will also be made to reflect the perspectives of the General Public and the Private Sector.

Minister of Home Affairs and Internal Security Senator Calixte George says special background papers for the symposium are being prepared by the Executive Director of the National Crime Commission, Mr Linwall James, as well as by Sharon Trezelle, a sociologist at the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College.

Perspectives on the Crime Situation in Saint Lucia will be provided by representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and the Saint Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association (SLHTA), while Perspectives of the Citizenry will also be provided by an ordinary citizen.

The need for Developing a Tourism Security Strategy for the industry will be addressed by Lt. Col. Bruce Barclay, Chairman of the Port Security Corporation of Jamaica, while Saint Lucian consultant, Cletus Springer, will lead participants in identifying, outlining and recommending future policies on crime prevention and abatement.

Preparations for the symposium are being coordinated by the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security.



The scourge of illegal guns will be on the time table



Hundreds of new police officers have joined the ranks of the Royal St. Lucia Police Force in the last decade

Caribbean Women Win Big at CMEx in Saint Lucia

Three women journalists walked away with honours from the Ninth Caribbean Media Exchange on Sustainable Tourism (CMEx) held in Rodney Bay, St. Lucia this weekend.

From Guyana, Miranda La Rose, for the third time in the five year-history of CMEx, was honoured for her work in Starbrook News on the relationship between Cricket World Cup, the expansion of eco-tourism at Kaieteur National Park, and the involvement of the indigenous peoples of the region in preserving the environment.

Barbadian Marsha Branch, managing director of Avant-Garde Media, won for her contribution to the BBC Caribbean Service on the effect of hotel development on the environment.

Kristy Ramnarine of the Trinidad Guardian excelled for her examination of the importance of tourism to Tobago – and the vital importance of the impact, not just of crime, but of perceptions of crime on the industry.

At the ceremony held at Sandals Grande St. Lucian, in front of a packed and distinguished audience of media, industry and government professionals, chairman of the judges panel, Ian Williams, described their work as being in the best traditions of a profession increasingly under siege from media moguls and trivialization and also in the best traditions of CMEx, whose purpose is to foster insightful journalism in the field of sustainable tourism.

Counterpart International, producers of CMEx, also bestowed honours on St. Lucia's Minister of Tourism Philip J. Pierre;



Guyanese Miranda La Rose (right) receives her award from chairman of the judges panel, Ian Williams



Marsha Branch of Barbados in winners' row



Trinidadian Kristy Ramnarine was a double winner at CMEx

Allen Chastanet, Managing Director of Coco Resorts; Ignacio Perez, Regional Director of the Eastern Caribbean for Sandals Resorts International; Berthia Parle, General Manager of Bay Gardens Resorts; and Chairman of Almond Resorts, Ralph Taylor, for their continued commitment to sustainable tourism development.

The highly coveted Counterpart International Emerald Award for high-end resorts combining a commitment to luxury and to the use of tourism to improve the destination, its people and the environment, went to Nick and Karolin Troubetzkoy for their new Jade Mountain at Anse Chastanet in St. Lucia.

Counterpart president, Lelei LeLaulu, said the resort had vaulted to the top of the world's most exclusive properties for its use of recycled material, water, and its dedication to conserving the environment, going so far as to send resort managers to the rainforests of Guyana to select the trees for use. Top marks also went to the resort's treatment of staff and a very low turnover. On top of all this, said LeLaulu, was "a design of extraordinary vision and boldness."

Kristy Ramnarine also captured the Talent competition a day earlier at Almond Morgan Bay with a catchy rendition of an original calypso called "Left to Right", while "No-Talent" honours went to the humorous duo of Ernie Seon of St. Lucia and Vincentian Don Bobb who sang a "re-mix" of Harry Belafonte's Banana Boat Song (Day-O).

CMEx St. Lucia, produced by Counterpart International.

VDA WORLD CAMPUS CARIBBEAN PILOT PROGRAMME LAUNCHED IN SAINT LUCIA

ADDRESS BY DEPUTY PERMANENT SECRETARY IN THE MINISTRY OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOUR & COOPERATIVES

The Government of Saint Lucia is the largest single employer and the facilitator of economic activity in the country. It is faced with the monumental task of promoting rapid social and economic change in the context of scarce resources, a shortage of skills, rising social expectations and a highly competitive and demanding international environment.

Government recognizes that very little can be achieved without a well-trained and highly motivated public service. For this reason, the development of its human resources is a matter of high priority. The public officer of today needs to acquire new knowledge and skills to cope with the new demands on the service.

Traditional methods and outdated systems must give way to modern techniques and appropriate technology if efficiency is to be achieved.

Distance education, or distance learning, is a mode of education that focuses on the pedagogy, technology, and instructional systems design that are effectively incorporated in delivering education to students who are not physically "on site" to receive their education. Instead, teachers and students may communicate at times of their own choice (asynchronously) by exchanging printed or electronic media, or through technology that allows them to communicate in real time (synchronously).

Earning a degree online can be an enjoyable and rewarding experience. Some people thrive on the independence and freedom offered through such classes.

Distance learning can be traced as far back as the 1840's when Isaac Pitman taught shorthand in Great Britain via correspondence. Since then, we have seen the growth of many universities and similar institutions around the world offering correspondence courses at all levels.

When someone completes coursework away from an actual school campus, it is generally called distance learning. This is an umbrella term for many types of learning, including online classes and classes available through the mail. Many distance learning programmes are connected to traditional schools, others exist independently.

Distance learning allows students to learn from the privacy and convenience of their own homes. Many people who are balancing job and family with school enjoy the freedom of being able to schedule their classes around their lives. Most online programmes allow people to work at their own pace, which means that students may take longer to complete assignments if they need extra time or can speed through material that is easy for them.

We now see the further development of online studies or the "electronic classroom". The electronic classroom or virtual learning environment may be both on campus as well as off campus. We are pleased to see today MIT-Harvard introducing the virtual development academy (VDA) to the Caribbean region through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The virtual development academy is an interactive online training system, which allows UNDP global access to high quality training from development experts from around the world.



Felix C. St. Hill

The VDA has positioned itself as a high-quality distribution system for self-paced and instructor-led online programmes. VDA now proposes to offer this training to

governments of the Caribbean region. St. Lucia has agreed to pilot this programme by offering Harvard's advanced negotiations course to fifty (50) government officers in the first instance.

Training and development is the field concerned with workplace learning to improve performance. Such training can be generally categorized as on-the-job or off-the-job. On-the-job training on the one hand, describes training that is given in a normal working situation, using the actual tools, equipment, documents or materials that they will use when fully trained.

Off-the-job training on the other hand takes place away from the normal work situation, which means that the employee is not regarded as a productive worker while the training is taking place.

This methodology being introduced by UNDP presents a hybrid which was not captured in the previous definition of on-the-job and off-the-job training. This new methodology can be viewed as both on-the-job and off-the-job for the following reasons:

You the participants will remain in your normal working situations using your normal tools, equipment and materials while you participate in the programme. The beauty of the programme however, is that even while you will be learning and developing your skills in negotiations, you will still be regarded as productive workers, putting those skills into practice while you are learning

This training initiative is a product of our public sector reform programme.

The basic philosophy guiding public sector reform is that the state will continue to play a major role in the management of the affairs of the country and will continue to provide the enabling environment for private sector development and the socio-economic development of the country.

In the quest for a reformed, more efficient, more responsible public service, it is necessary also to provide highly motivated, well trained personnel to give effect to government's policies and programmes.

Therefore, one of the main aspects of the public sector reform programme is the focus on human resource development. Public officers must therefore be equipped with the requisite technical, interpersonal and conceptual skills required to give effect to the change programmes.

Human resource development also requires that employees have the information pertaining to their job, performance expectations and standards.

The UNDP has had a very long history and association with the government and people of Saint Lucia. Many professionals have benefitted from the myriad of training and development options available through this organisation. In recent times, the UNDP has undertaken a strategic shift in the delivery of its programmes in order to serve a wider cross section of the public. The advent of new technologies have created opportunities for and removed barriers to development which is especially significant for this country. Our limited financial and technical resources have always been a threat, especially to our human resource development initiatives. The public sector reform unit, through its various environmental audits has recognised the global shifts taking place and is positioned to maximise on the opportunities which present themselves, such as this training programme. Such partnerships will redound to the benefit of the professionals, the public sector and the country.

Within the ministry of labour relations, public service and co-operatives, the training and development function is the responsibility of the training division whose core objective is to foster an efficient, streamlined and motivated public service for interpreting and implementing government policies and programmes.

A human resource capacity development project agreement between the government of Saint Lucia and UNDP sought to develop and increase the relevant competencies in the public service, as well as to define the long term skills-base necessary for the improved allocation of future training resources. These objectives are expected to be accomplished through short-term training, training needs analyses and a national human resources database.

This course in advanced negotiation and consensus building is a short-term training programme which will develop the competencies of public officers in a critical area that has been identified for enhancement within the public sector.

This e-learning initiative will certainly enhance the country's ability to adapt education and training systems to the knowledge economy and digital culture.



Virtual learning will bring literal benefits to many



L-R Mexican Ambassador to Saint Lucia H.E. Sergio Saadedra and Kelvin Greene – Resident British Commissioner among the attentive audience

NTN TURNS 5

The National Television Network was conceptualized 5 years ago on October 14, at a time when there was a clarion call for local television to reflect the local population.

At that time statistics indicated that nearly 100 percent of information and entertainment emanating from local TV stations were canned – that is ready made programmes downloaded from North American satellites. Arguably, the only local programmes at that time, were news casts from the indigenous television stations.

Not so any more, since the birth of the National Television Network. NTN was established not only to

highlight government's events and activities but to provide a ready avenue for reflecting the rich and diverse cultural heritage of Saint Lucians, with the secondary mandate of bringing the region and the world to the living rooms of Saint Lucians.

Given that the fundamental definition for communication considers dialogue, NTN has created live programmes that facilitate callers from all walks of life. The call-in programmes are designed to ensure full participation by our bilingual citizenry.

The coming to being of the National Television Network has also allowed for local production houses and individual producers of television programmes to utilise the non-commercial

entity to sell their talents. Non-governmental organizations – NGO's – have also benefited tremendously by channelling their public service announcements via NTN without cost.

Additionally, the TV station has been able to lead the way in carrying several events live. Indeed, members of the public are certain that House of Assembly meetings and the annual National Sports Awards Ceremony, among other events, are bound to reach their homes, barring unusual circumstances.

One of the challenges that the TV station face is the inability to service the entire population. Currently, only persons with access to cable vision can consume the contents of NTN. The financial requirement to meet the

growing demand for national reach is mammoth.

Cognizant of this fact, the National Television Network endeavours to reach the masses by deliberately utilising the services of the other TV stations to show some of its programmes.

We welcome programmes that are in keeping with our mission to offer alternative television.

We take this opportunity to thank all St. Lucians for making us the formidable TV station that we have become in just 5 years.

NTN can be seen on Cable Vision Channel 2. We broadcast – as the saying goes – 24/7.



Mr. Embert Charles
Director of Information Services



Lucius Doxerie – Information Officer with responsibility for managing NTN



DPS in the Office of the Prime Minister **Mrs. Glenda Polius** says of NTN "This is a unique undertaking, not mimicked anywhere else in the English speaking Caribbean."



Veteran technician **Norman Charlemagne** (currently on retirement from) about to cut the ribbon to unveil GIS' latest set



was established, thinks that the TV station has done much to bring the workings of government to the people of Saint Lucia



Information Staff **Julita Peter** and **Primus Hutchinson** led the charge during NTN's live commemoration of its 5th year of operation



GIS/NTN Staff: To ensure continuous programming of the National Television Network, all hands are required

PM Unveils Plan to Train Single Parent Mothers

Prime Minister Dr Kenny D. Anthony has announced a brand new initiative to be undertaken in the third term of an SLP-led Government to assist the island's unemployed and unskilled single mothers.

Speaking at a recent Labour Party public meeting in Micoud, the Prime Minister, who is also Leader of the Saint Lucia Labour Party (SLP), indicated it was his Party's intention to introduce the plan to assist the large numbers of unemployed single mothers in Saint Lucia who are in need of help to learn a trade, get a job and earn an income.

Dr Anthony said "the next Labour Administration will introduce a programme to train them."

"And apart from paying them an allowance, the Government will also ensure that their children are taken care of while they learn their new skills," he added.

The Prime Minister's announcement was greeted with much applause by those gathered, many of whom were young, single parents.

He has since explained further that "this plan is already on the drawing board" and assured that "it will be implemented in the best possible way to

ensure that it meets the needs of those who need it most."

Dr Anthony said this programme "will benefit young persons in a big way, as a significant number of the single parents are young persons."

The announcement of the programme to support single mothers through training is expected to be well subscribed, according to local sociologists.

A social analyst (formerly attached to the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College) said: "This matter of single parenting is a serious social and sociological problem.

"It is a phenomenon that has not been adequately looked at, but there are many more single parents than we may realize."

He added: "The other sociological factor is that not too many of us realize that there are also single parent fathers, many of them fathers whose child or children's mother, or wife, would have left them on his account."

"What happens in many of these cases," he continued, "is that the single parent fathers would leave the child or children in the care of his sister or mother while seeking a job."

He argued that "single parenthood is not restricted to one gender" and advised

that "when the Government starts this programme, it takes a gender-neutral approach and defines it as a programme to assist single parents – both single parent fathers and single parent mothers."

Dr Anthony said the new programme "will complement others introduced over the past nine years by the first two Labour administrations."

The earlier initiatives that also aim at and attract and assist young people include the National Skills Development Programme (NDSC) and the Youth Enterprise

Development Programme (YEDP), both of which are aimed at training young persons and preparing them for the job market.

The Small Enterprise Development Unit (SEDU) was also created to train new small business persons in how to manage and market their businesses, while the Belfund was established to provide low cost starting capital for micro business projects mainly undertaken by young persons.

Now, the Guyana-based Commonwealth Youth Programme's Caribbean Centre (CYPCC) is getting ready to train 100 Saint Lucian "Youth at Risk" and prepare them for the challenges of entrepreneurial life.



Hon. Kenny Anthony

The Prime Minister said the new programme for single mothers "will also provide new avenues for new opportunities and release the assisted persons from the double burden of unemployment and single-parenthood."

SCHOOLS ANTI-LITTER MARCH SIGNIFIES START OF NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Two recently hosted anti-litter school marches in Soufriere and Castries have emphasised the need for more grown-ups to appreciate environmental cleanliness.

Directed by the Saint Lucia Solid Waste Management Authority, the activity centred around school children walking through public areas carrying anti-litter placards.

Information and Education Manager Emlyn Jean said the schools have given steady support over the years.

"The marches mark the beginning of clean-up activities - an attempt to get students involved in activities where they encourage others to keep their communities clean. This year, for the first time, we actually went to two communities. The march was usually held in the Castries area, but then we

decided to take it to the south as well."

25 schools in Castries participated in the anti-litter march which started at the Vigie Multi-purpose Court. The schools culminated their advocacy on



Garbage collection bins at strategic locations throughout the country help alleviate the litter problem

the Derek Walcott Square with a short ceremony, which included several dramatic presentations, capturing the theme "For health, for preservation, let's clean up the nation."

Ms. Jean said the most impressive schools will be rewarded based on the adjudication of the panel of judges who was on hand for the event on Friday, 13th October.



Water Project Contractor invites Skilled Tradesmen to Apply for Jobs

The contractor working on the Northern Water Supply Infrastructure Improvement Project is inviting several categories of skilled Saint Lucian tradesmen to apply for employment. All they need is experience and flexibility, but must work according to schedule and be willing to meet strict deadlines.

The invitation for applications appeared in a local newspaper, The Star. It comes from General Earth Movers – UEM Inc, which is contracted to carry out major works on the US \$8 million project financed by the Government of Saint Lucia and the World Bank.

The number and categories of tradesmen invited to apply are: five carpenters, five steel bar benders, two pipe-

line fitters, two civil supervisors, five tradesmen, two masons, two excavator operators, three back hoe operators, five fitters and five welders.

According to the company, interested persons should have a minimum of five years of relevant experience, must be flexible to work during weekends and be willing and able to work towards a strict deadline for

completion of the project.

The deadline for applications is October 20. The Water Supply Infrastructure Improvement Project is aimed at increasing the supply of water from the Roseau Dam to the North of the island to meet the increased demand for water supply for residents in and between Castries and Gros Islet.

EXCERPTS FROM "BIODIVERSITY, BIOSAFETY AND FOOD SECURITY OF THE REGION AS IT LOOKS TO CSME."

BY PROFESSOR LEONARD O'GARRO, PH.D UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME.
FOR: COMMEMORATION OF WORLD FOOD DAY IN SAINT LUCIA OCTOBER 18, 2006

Let me begin by thanking the National Biosafety Project of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Saint Lucia National Trust for the opportunity to present your 2006 World Food Day Lecture, which will also inaugurate the monthly Public Lecture Series to be hosted by the Trust.

I have been asked to talk to you on the topic: Biodiversity, Biosafety and Food Security of the Region as it looks towards CSME.

I will approach the topic as follows: First I will provide an overview of biodiversity and establish its role in providing ecosystem services, many of which are also of value to mankind. I will then emphasize the value of the food services provided by biodiversity in wild and managed ecosystems. Following this I will review the biodiversity concerns impacting food security and the driving forces generating them. Finally I will review responses to these concerns and put forward proposals addressing a number of shortcomings in this regard.

(1) Definition of Biodiversity - Biodiversity refers to variability in the many living things and living sections of plant earth. With the help of the non-living environment such as light, temperature and moisture, biodiversity is responsible for creating and maintaining all living sections of the earth. These living sections are generally referred to as ecosystems and they may include forests, grassland, deserts, etc.

An ecosystem is therefore built and maintained by living species interacting with each other and the environment. The nature or type of species and their variability, abundance, distribution, function and relationship with each other and the environment determine the type of ecosystem.

(2) Relationship Between Biodiversity and Primary Food Production - Within the ecosystem there are several ongoing processes which generate outputs. These outputs and processes sustain or maintain ecosystems. Many also sustain mankind. Examples of common ecosystem outputs which benefit mankind are food, fibre and oxygen. Ecosystems also provide services of a non-material nature to humans and these include aesthetic, spiritual and/or recreational elements. All of these outputs and the ecosystem maintenance functions of biodiversity are interdependent.

Naturally occurring ecosystems can be important sources of food. A good example is the marine ecosystems which currently supplies over 100 million tons of sea food annually. This amount translates to about 6 percent of all protein consumed by humans.

Other naturally occurring ecosystems can be wild food sources. These ecosystems will be the source of a wide range of edible plant and animal species. Ecosystems of this type and the food sources are important to people whose livelihoods are set in these environments...

(3) Primary Food Production and Biodiversity Concerns - There are concerns about biodiversity with implications for the food service it provides. The main concerns arise from practices associated with domesticating ecosystems mainly for food production and from the emergence of modern biotechnology.

In the global context, it is claimed that nearly all land suitable for intensive agriculture is currently in use.

Notwithstanding the success of cultivated systems in food production, they often operate at the expense of naturally occurring biodiversity. This happens mainly through the conversion of naturally occur-

ring ecosystems to cultivated systems...

Cultivated systems can also impact negatively on crop biodiversity by generally focusing on the use of relatively few species, often in response to market forces. Because of this focus, biodiversity not selected for cultivation can be lost if it is not targeted for conservation.

How relevant is this discussion on food and biodiversity to the Caribbean? There is relevance for several reasons. First, given the scale of conversion of natural habitats to cultivated systems and urban developments, the historical and widespread dependence on monoculture agriculture, erosion of biodiversity in the Caribbean has and continues to be a matter for serious concern. In the Windward Islands in particular, the rate of deforestation has caused consternation. In Haiti, deforestation has been catastrophic...

Island systems are unique with respect to their biodiversity and the fragility of their ecosystems.

Because of their isolation, islands often produce highly adaptive species. Isolation also means that there is little or no dispersal of species. For this reason island ecosystems tend to contain species of narrow genetic diversity...

Island ecosystems are fragile. There are two main reasons for this. First, the entire land mass and the marine ecosystems are in close proximity to each other. Because of this, the effect of natural or man-made disturbances on land can impact coastal marine biodiversity quickly. Another reason for the fragility is that small islands possess limited capacity to buffer natural hazards or man-made disturbances...

(4) Primary Food Production and Response to Biodiversity Concerns - Two main strategies have emerged to minimize the adverse impacts of cultivated systems on biodiversity. In one strategy the rate of converting natural habitats to farms can be reduced by intensifying production. With this strategy damage to the environment and hence biodiversity caused by the intensification process itself can be limited by efficient handling and use of agricultural inputs such as fertilizers, and chemical plant protectants and herbicides.

The other main strategy is to use more environmentally friendly cultivation practices. The practices of integrated crop management and organic agriculture are part of this strategy...

Appropriate policy support and education will be required to promote biodiversity conservation through the use of wildlife corridors.

Farmers could also be encouraged to conserve indigenous agrobiodiversity, which in most cases will be marginal crops...

A higher strategic value must also be given to endemic agrobiodiversity.

I can also share with you another strategy which I hope will be implemented in Saint Lucia to promote conservation of the island's forest in the face of encroachments by agriculture. The Government of Saint Lucia has sought to reduce dependence on monoculture agriculture by promoting agricultural diversification. It has also expressed consternation at the rates at which natural forests, some of which are privately owned, are cleared in response to the diversification thrust. Indiscriminate deforestation is common cause of soil erosion, reduced fresh water reserves and loss of biological diversity.

Notwithstanding the rapid encroachment of agriculture into zones of forest, strategies were sought to make the encroachment

of agriculture ecologically acceptable. One strategy proposed is to culture agronomically important endemic forest species in native forest. This strategy on the basis of selecting species depending on the native forest environment for culture will eliminate the need to clear forests, and may contribute to agricultural diversification, both of which are objectives of the Government, as described before. The strategy requires that changes arising from the encroachment of agriculture into native forest be detected and monitored for the purpose of conservation management of the vulnerable areas of biodiversity, water catchments and soil fertility and structure.

(5) Biotechnology: Basis and Role in Primary Food Production - I will now discuss the potential impact of modern biotechnology on biodiversity with links to food security. The potential benefits of modern biotechnology are mainly linked to gene transfer by genetic engineering. With genetic engineering, the hereditary material or DNA of one organism can be altered to contain genes from different organisms in precise ways without regard for dissimilarity of the organisms involved. This ability to engineer hereditary material has given rise to life forms called GMOs, living modified organisms (LMOs) or transgenic organisms...

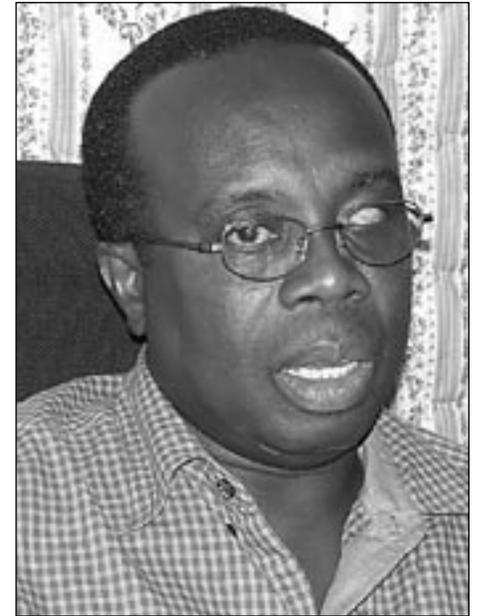
A foremost application of biotechnology based on genetic engineering is to crop improvement...

(6) Biodiversity Concerns about Biotechnology - I now turn to the biodiversity concerns about modern biotechnology. Genetic engineering eliminates all natural barriers to exchange of genetic information between all forms of life. Eliminating these barriers creates possibilities for unlimited combinations of genetic material in GMO development. However, inherent in the use of the technique in this way is a degree of unpredictability relative to intended outcomes. For this reason and in the absence of historical data on GMO use, there is consensus on the need for caution to minimize potential adverse impacts. With trade in GMOs and products derived from them, risks of adverse nature may therefore be anticipated.

In the case of the GMOs used for food or feed, there are also public and animal health concerns.

The following are the main concerns: (a) persistence and uptake of GMO-derived DNA and proteins in the mammalian gastro-intestinal tract; (b) presence of toxicants, allergens, antinutrients and potential carcinogens associated with transgenes; (c) presence of unwanted and potentially harmful substances in food and feed through hybridization of GMOs producing pharmaceuticals and closely related domesticated species or unintended mixture of these GMOs and conventional crops.

(7) Relevance of Biotechnology Concerns to Biodiversity - What is the relevance of these potential threats to Saint Lucia and the rest of the Caribbean? The following observations are helpful in providing and answer: (1) The small island states in the Caribbean possess fragile ecosystems that are highly vulnerable to natural disasters and external threats by invasive biological agents including plants, animal and microbes. These islands are also characterized by a tight cluster of small farms lacking significant physical barriers between them to isolate crops from invasive biological agents or "gene flow". (2) Several Caribbean countries notably Suriname, Belize and Guyana are mega-rich with respect to biodiversity, which they are bound



Professor Leonard O'Garro

by international conventions to conserve. They also possess indigenous human settlements whose livelihoods are set in an environment sustained by the rich biodiversity; (3) Most Caribbean countries are also heavily dependent on food imports and agricultural inputs including seeds and microbial biological agents, all of which have become targets for the application of modern biotechnology.

On the basis of the observations above, it can be concluded that GMOs could be considered great potential threat to biodiversity with implications for rural development and sustainable livelihoods in the Caribbean. There are also potential risks to human health through food consumption...

Parties to the Biosafety Protocol are required to be proactive in the face of potential threats linked to GMOs in commercial use.

In conducting risk assessment on GMOs and their products, it should be recognized that the technologies giving rise to them are new. For this reason the effects of GMOs and their products on health and the environment are not yet well understood. In many instances the risks are not yet assessed.

(8) Implementing the Biosafety Protocol: Challenges and Solutions - Capacity to comply with the Biosafety Protocol in the areas of risk assessment and risk management is seriously lacking in CARICOM. Because of the importance of biosafety and the acute lack of capacity in CARICOM in these areas, it is important that action be taken to adequately address biosafety concerns associated with modern biotechnology. This is because an effective biosafety capacity in each CARICOM country is required to give government, policy makers, the general public and international biotechnology industry confidence in each country's ability to deal effectively with the increasing number of confronting biotechnology related issues requiring biosafety response.

It is expected that the advent of the RCA will lead to the operation of standardized efficient biosafety regimes in each CARICOM country.

(9) Biosafety Protocol: Limitations and Solutions Proactive action through the case by case approach has limitations and represents minimal obligations under the Biosafety protocol. Countries are accordingly encouraged in their self-interest to elaborate more comprehensive levels of safeguards against the potential adverse effects of GMOs intended for the market...

The full text of the address by Professor Leonard O'Garro, Ph.D can be read on the GIS' website: www.stlucia.gov.lc.

Saint Lucia Chairs Council of Ministers of ECTEL

Saint Lucia has been elected to Chair of the Council of Ministers of the ECTEL, the OECS telecommunications regulatory body.

Minister for Communications Works Transport and Public Utilities, Honourable Felix Finisterre, was elected at the 14th Council of Ministers Meeting of the Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (ECTEL), which was held in St. Vincent and the Grenadines earlier this month.

Addressing his colleague Ministers and telecommunications experts of the grouping, Mr Finisterre outlined a number of major achievements made in the region.

Among the new regulations are mea-



Hon. Felix Finisterre

sures regarding regional and national numbering plans, new regulations for interconnection and numbering fees, revision of new licensing evaluation criteria, approval of a new template for the issuance of international simple voice resale licenses and consideration of the fourth draft legislation on the licensing of broadcast stations.

The Council also approved the Work Plan and Budget for the operations of ECTEL for 2006-2007.

Mr Finisterre reported a favourable balance sheet in the operations of the organisation, expressing his pleasure about a doubling of the Authority's surplus at the end of the financial year.

He said: "This is a good signal of our achievement -- seeing a government body fully self-reliant and capable of

realizing a surplus. That is not usual in these spheres."

The Council meeting also addressed ECTEL's reporting obligations to the World Bank.

Mr Finisterre says ECTEL is preparing to give the Bank an update on the Universal Service Fund -- which it funds -- as well as arrangements on what telecommunications operators are doing and how ECTEL is fostering an environment which would promote greater savings and greater competitiveness among service providers.

The meeting also reviewed a report on the installation of a new regional submarine cable and its impact on provision of high speed broad band internet service to ECTEL member states.

LABORIE CREDIT UNION: THIRTY YEARS OLD



Members participate fully in the Union's development

Laborie Credit Union celebrates 30 years of providing financial services to the community of Laborie and its environs. The credit union started business in August 1976 after a number of consultations to discuss ways and means of improving the welfare of the community. The idea of the credit union was born out of the recognition that Laborians needed to mobilize their resources on a self-help basis to realize improvements in the quality of life of the people.

Credit Union business was first conducted only on Saturday mornings at the shop of Mrs. Vida Darcheville and later at the office of the Laborie Village Council. By 1979, the Co-operative found space at the Community Centre where business was conducted until 1992. With the increase in demand, business hours progressively increased to daily openings.

The operations of the Co-operative were

initially conducted by voluntary workers on a shift basis. The first paid employee, a teller, was appointed in 1980, while the first full time manager was appointed in 1988. In 1992, the Co-operative moved to its present location on Allan Louisy Street and in October 1999 a branch was opened at Augier. The Credit Union now employs a full complement of workers with various duties and responsibilities for the day to day running of the business. Those employees are the only paid officers of the Co-operative. The services of the Board of Directors, Credit and Supervisory Committees are voluntary.

Over the years the Credit Union has developed an organizational culture which is responsible for the success that the Co-operative has achieved. This culture unites and involves the Credit Union members in an economic and social community. This culture also helped create an environment in which volunteers and employees are motivated to give of their best. In the delivery

of products and services, the organisation has always adhered to prudent management and systems of good practices.

Laborie Credit Union is indeed thankful for the confidence and loyalty that its members continue to display through their business transactions, mass attendance at every AGM and the suggestions that are made to the Board and management. As the Co-operative starts another 30 year journey the vision is for a credit union that continues to make membership meaningful by being innovative, competitive and focused on member development.

On October 19th, every year, the Credit Union join millions around the world in celebrating International Credit Union Day. The celebration focuses on actuating the co-operative difference. It is this difference which has enabled organizations with humble beginnings, like the Laborie Credit Union, to have created such an impact on the lives of many persons in the southwestern region of St. Lucia



THIS WEEK ON NTN

Sat. Oct. 21st to Fri. Oct. 27th 2006
NTN – PROVIDING INFORMATION YOU NEED

Minister for Communications, Works, Transport & Public Utilities provides an update on road construction activities – Sat. Oct. 21st, 9:30 a.m.

Masters of Invention: The remarkable contribution of blacks - Sun. Oct. 22nd, 12:00 noon

Emergency Management: "Preparing for the Worst" - Mon. Oct. 23rd 8:00 p.m.

Upgrading the Judicial System to better serve the public – Tues. Oct. 24th, 8:00 p.m.

A Smoother Ride: Improving the Road Infrastructure - Wed. Oct. 25th 2nd, 9:00 p.m.

How healthy is the water that we drink? Get the answer and much more information about water quality – Thurs. Oct. 26th, 8:00 p.m.

Sports Talk: GM of Rodney Bay Marina discusses ongoing preparations for the ARC – Fri. Oct. 27th, 6:30 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

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Contact us at: The Department of Information Services, Graham Louisy Administrative Building, The Waterfront, Castries, St. Lucia, West Indies
Tel: (758) 468 2116; Fax (758) 453 1614; E-mail: gis@candw.lc; <http://stlucia.gov.lc>