



THRONE SPEECH

by



**Her Excellency
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GCSL, GCMG, D.ST. J, PH.D, LL.D (HON.)**

GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF SAINT LUCIA

**On the occasion of the Formal Opening of the
Fourth Session of the Ninth Parliament of Saint Lucia**

Friday, April 24, 2009

**MADAM PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE SENATE,
MADAM SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY,
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.**

The opening of this session of Parliament comes shortly after the celebration of a significant landmark for us as a nation.

Three decades ago Saint Lucia sought — and attained — its independence from colonial rule, gaining its freedom to chart a future anchored in the economic, social and cultural aspirations and interests of its own people — interests which, while they may coincide with those of others, would not be directed by them.

Since then, we have been strategically planning our own escape route away from the economic and social deprivation synonymous with the “bygone canefield era” — a route pointing towards a horizon of development that seeks to provide for the economic and social well being of all, and not of just a few of the people of this nation.

Although the road to development has not always been smooth, there is no doubt that we have managed to achieve notable progress in our advancement towards that goal of social and economic independence. Certainly during these first three decades we have witnessed our nation transform itself from a predominantly agrarian economy, where our rural landscape was dominated by large absentee landowners interspersed with poor local peasants, to the emergence of rural entrepreneurs, in control of their own “Model Farms.” Indeed we have advanced

from being “hewers of wood and drawers of water” to being shapers of our own destiny.

With time, our economy transformed from a single - crop agricultural base to one which promoted a tripod of agriculture, manufacturing and tourism, and ultimately to the present, where the role of the services sector is highlighted within a modern diversified economy.

In the area of social development, we have made major advances as is recorded in all the human development indices published by international agencies. Special mention must be made of progress in areas such as education, health, the field of sports, and in the overall quality of life of the people of this nation.

However the progress which we have been able to register over the thirty (30) year period in creating the platform from which sustainable growth can be pursued is now threatened by the financial meltdown engulfing the economies of the world. This has precipitated a domino effect of credit squeeze followed by a global economic downturn, and serious loss of jobs. No country has been spared and the most vulnerable are the most affected.

The repercussions on our own economy in terms of postponed or cancelled investments and reduced hotel occupancy can pose serious challenges for the construction and tourism sectors. The decline in the value of the pound sterling will simultaneously adversely affect income from the sale of bananas.

The road ahead remains long and arduous. Trade liberalisation and globalisation have led to an ever greater exposure of our already exposed markets, and the

consequent need to wean ourselves from an environment of protectionism to one rife with competition among global players.

MADAM PRESIDENT

MADAM SPEAKER

We observed the 30th anniversary of our independence under the theme: “**A journey to be proud of.....A future to look forward to.**” However, that future is under serious threat from international events over which we have little or no control.

The global economic and financial crisis is affecting one and all at both the national and individual levels. Nationally, there is the threat of lower revenue to the State from tourism, agriculture, and border taxes; while individually, we face danger from a reduction or total loss of remittances from friends and family overseas, from job insecurity, and from increased prices of certain imported consumer goods.

It should however be recalled that our history, from the struggles of the native peoples to the resistance of the slaves, and throughout the many battles for this “Helen of the West” has made us a strong and resilient nation. Saint Lucia was built by the bravery and persistence of many who coped with unforgiving situations for the prospect of a more promising future. We must, once again, summon the courage shown by our ancestors to meet the challenges of today. Determination, resolve and sacrifice are the hallmark of centuries—past, present, and future.

As a small island developing state there is little we can do at the global level to solve the current problems. Regionally however, we have attempted to pool our resources with those of our neighbours in an effort to derive strength from numbers and more effectively utilise our diplomatic capital. Nevertheless we still remain very vulnerable to the vagaries of international capital markets and subject to conditions which we are able to do little to influence.

Notwithstanding the constraints from which we inherently suffer, we can nonetheless challenge ourselves individually and collectively to change our situations, not only to cope with the present crisis, but to shape and mould a nation of confident, caring and responsible citizens.

As a consequence, during this fourth session of the ninth Parliament of Saint Lucia, Government will focus on the following priorities:

- Stabilising the economy;
- Protecting existing jobs and creating new job opportunities;
- Continuing our investments in social infrastructure, particularly in education and health;
- Providing social safety nets particularly for more vulnerable groups;
- Investing in our youth,
- Preserving law and order, and
- Fostering a social partnership among all segments of our population in order to confront the development challenges facing our country.

MADAM PRESIDENT

MADAM SPEAKER

Stabilising our economy by maintaining and creating jobs will require that government continue to pursue policies that boost investor confidence, whilst facilitating the more effective and efficient implementation of its own Public Sector Investment programme.

The current international crisis has unfortunately had an adverse impact on investor confidence and some of the private sector investment projects which had been previously negotiated by my Government and which, under normal circumstances would have already commenced implementation, have been unavoidably delayed. We are therefore required to harness the creative potential of our people both those at home and those living overseas in finding alternatives to cushion the effects of this delay in the implementation of our major projects.

In the tourism industry, my Government has endeavoured to sustain the level of resources necessary to facilitate marketing efforts, including the maintenance of airlift and more efficient utilisation of our existing hotels, in an effort to secure jobs. The resources at our disposal are lean and thus narrow our options. Consequently, bail outs are out of the question.

It is however imperative that strategies are developed to cushion the effects of adverse developments on the economy of Saint Lucia and the social consequences arising from job losses

The economic circumstances facing our country place the greatest challenge on at-risk groups in our society. Within the last year, my government spent millions of dollars subsidising the prices of basic commodities in an effort to contain increases in the cost of living and more specifically to cushion the effect of price rises on low - income groups.

My Government is convinced that it took the correct decision at the time to contain the prices of these commodities. During this session of Parliament, we will explore the possibility of adopting a more targeted approach in extending support to at risk groups, to ensure that support reaches those who need it most. We will also examine other safety nets to maximise such support for those requiring it most.

My Government will heighten its concentration on immediate priorities, while waging a war on waste. That means helping to stabilise the economy, minimising the loss of jobs, promoting efficiency in the State apparatus and providing opportunities in agriculture to encourage domestic food production.

The downturn in the banana industry over the years and my Government's recent efforts to reverse the trend leaves room for greater effort to be exerted in production for domestic and regional use. Our adverse trade balance is due, in large measure, to our high level of food imports. My Government is committed to exploring greater and more efficient production of food for the domestic market, including the hotel sector.

In this context, it is to be noted that after years of advocating large scale food production as the answer for promoting food production efficiency (which can be accomplished in developed countries only with massive subsidies), international organisations including the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United

Nations have come around to recognising the role of small scale farming both as a profitable activity, and as a means of alleviating environmental risks.

Even in highly developed countries, the continuous need for investment in education appropriate to the needs of today's knowledge-based economy is seen as a priority. This applies even more so to us, where physical resources are few, but human resources are plentiful, and waiting to be harnessed.

Today, our youth have a more global perspective. They are in touch with the latest technologies like the Wii, the iPhone and the iPod, but they still need our guidance and care to take an interest in their own society.

My Government therefore remains committed and steadfast in its resolve towards:

- universal access to early childhood education,
- reconceptualising and transforming primary and secondary education,
- enhancing the National Skills Development Programme; and
- upgrading the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College into a full-fledged University College to cater to the educational, social and economic needs of our nation and the sub-region.

In direct recognition of the threats posed to the moral and social fabric of our society, Government will continue to place considerable effort to ensuring that the capabilities of students are developed through co-curricular activities, sports, health and wellness programmes and civic responsibility. This is to ensure that students foster desirable attitudes towards their peers and those in authority. Thus

the reintroduction of uniformed groups throughout the school system will continue to be pursued with greater fervour.

My Government also proposes to pursue the adoption of a Language Policy to create the environment that will facilitate the development of languages as we seek to provide greater opportunities for our people. The initiative to conclude a “Linguistic Pact” with the International Francophonie Organisation is one such step; other initiatives in the Spanish language will be pursued.

The creative industries are now recognised as a major source of economic activity. In many cultural fields, such as music, art, theatre, and dance, the potential exists for us to earn significant foreign exchange to supplement our economies. It is the intention of my Government therefore to develop policies to harness the creative potential of our citizens in that regard, giving priority to our youth.

Our Government has fully committed itself to the strengthening of the bonds that tie us together as people of Saint Lucia and from Saint Lucia. In this regard, much emphasis will be placed on encouraging Saint Lucians living overseas to invest in their homeland. We recognise that individuals and small groups have been making their contributions to Saint Lucia and to their families. We applaud these efforts, especially when times have been difficult for our country. We must now move some steps further to the creation of more consolidated groups that can invest in the economical, social and political spheres. We believe that with proper organisation, the current contributions can grow in size and quality.

Madanm Pwézidan, Madanm Speaker,
Médam é Mésyé

Nou ka ouvè sèsyon Paleman sala tout swit apwé gwan sélébwasyon twantye nm lannivèsè lendé pandans péyi-a. Diwan sé sélébwasyon sala, nou té ni lokasyon pou gadé dèyè nou épi douvan nou, pou wéfléchi asou lawout-la nou pwan jisk isia, osi byen asou chimen-an ki ka ouvè douvan nou-an. Pou li mouman, nou ka touvé kò-nou adan an katchimen. E sé fo nou mandé kò-nou yonn, dé kèstyon. Es nou pawé fè menm sakwifis-la, épi twavay èvèk menm wézolisyon-an ki mété nou ko nou yé jòdi-a? Eben ès nou simyé abandonné tout pwogwé-a nou ja fè-a paski bagay paka maché mannyè nou vlé-a?

Médam é mésyé, sé fo nou aksèpté ki bagay difisil tout oliwon latè-a sé jou sala. Epi i pa ni anchay nou sa fè kon yon ti péyi pou fè'y pli ézé. Chimen-an douvan nou-an mòné épi apik, èk i kay pwan chèk tan avan nou sa wivé asou plato-a, Gouvèdman sav ki tout moun entjèt sé jou sala, mé i ka éséyé pwan tout démach i pé pou wè ki nou pa dézèspéwé, pou wè ki péyi-a vini about twakaskan mondyal sala pli vit ki posib. Sitwasyon ékonomik latè-a witàdé sèwèzman sé go pwojé-a Gouvèdman té pwomèt-la, mé i ka pwan démach pou wè ki twop moun pa pèd twavay-yo, épi pou mennen twavay nèf an péyi-a. I ka fè sa'y pé pou kontiné pwojé an lendikasyon, kilti, santé, agrikilti; pwojé pou jennès péyi-a, épi pou dèt pami nou ki pa ni mwayen pou endé kò yo. Konsa i ka kwiyé asou nou tout pou mété lanmen pou endé sitwasyon-a.

Nou ka pwan lokasyon sala pou aplodi épi wimèsyé sé St. Lisyen-an ki ka wété lòt péyi-a ki ka endé nou konbat sé difikilté-a péyi-a ka èkspéwiansé an sé tan wèd

sala. Nou ka kwiyé asou Bondyé pou kontiné bay yo lafòs èk kouway. Nou ka wimèsyé osi Gouvèdman sé péyi Européen-an pou lasistans-la yo ban nou-an pou bati gwan lopital nèf-la. Nou vlè di mèsì osi a tout Gouvèdman ètwanjè ki ka ban nou lanmen menm si pèyi-yo èpi lèkonomi-yo aféktè kon toulèzòt

MADAM PRESIDENT

MADAM SPEAKER

While considerable progress has been made in decreasing infant mortality, and eliminating malaria and bilharzia, serious new challenges have been posed to the health sector particularly by HIV/AIDS, hypertension and diabetes, the “life style related” diseases. This is not simply a humanitarian consideration, but an issue related to productivity and therefore to economic prosperity. We recognise the need for strategies and interventions to combat these and other health problems as an essential element of our Government’s development intentions and priorities during the life of this Parliament.

Now is a very appropriate time to express our gratitude to the member governments of the European Union, represented locally by Her Excellency the Resident Ambassador of France and the Resident British Commissioner, for their unwavering support for the financing of the new General Hospital, construction of which has already commenced. When completed it will be a significant addition to our stock of medical facilities, and will contribute to our effort to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Health as the UN begins its focus on Global Health, this year. In addition, it should further contribute to Saint Lucia’s attraction as a destination for world class medical facilities.

During the last few months, my Government received the initial report of the National Consultative Council in which recommendations have been made for addressing a number of policy issues. The process of national dialogue has widened considerably and in the preparation of the National Budget Proposal which will be presented to Parliament later today, there has been an unprecedented level of consultation with all sectors of the economy including the trade unions, private business interests and a number of non-state actors.

The present economic conditions which we face require us to further expand and consolidate this consultative process. My Government has, on previous occasions, articulated the need for a permanent tripartite mechanism that will transcend partisan political lines and include representatives of workers, government and employers, in a kind of social partnership that will discuss and arrive at solutions to national social and economic issues.

Such issues might include productivity and competitiveness and may eventually lead to the evolution of a Competitiveness Council. My Government will give priority attention to expediting this initiative within the life of this session of Parliament.

Through working together, understanding our responsibilities and adopting a “give and take” approach, we can rise to the occasion. Indeed the present world economic crisis presents a unique opportunity for us to come together to harness our collective resources, change our traditional way of doing things, show more care and concern, and look within ourselves for solutions.

MADAM PRESIDENT

MADAM SPEAKER

One area where the effects of the international crisis are particularly evident is in our energy sector. You will recall the turmoil in world markets last year caused by the vagaries of energy prices which seemed to escalate almost at the whims and fancies of energy speculators and petroleum producing countries. The deleterious effects of these circumstances are still being felt today.

My Government remains cognizant of this peculiarity and will take the necessary pre-emptive steps during this fiscal year to mitigate the effects of any such future occurrence. In this regard, we will establish the relevant mechanism which will be charged with the principal responsibilities for developing firm government policies and strategies to promote the continual improvement of energy performance, energy efficiency and energy conservation.

This new mechanism will be mandated to address all energy issues as they relate to:

- . The Service Sector, especially the Tourism Industry
- . The Manufacturing Sector
- . Domestic Households, particularly families considered to be at risk
- . The Electric Power Utility Company

The mechanism will also address the outstanding matter of the formulation of the necessary legislative framework to provide for regulation of the energy sector.

It is my Government's intention that this initiative will help create the relevant platform which will make it more conducive for entrepreneurs to explore and exploit alternative indigenous energy resources, as well as make it more economically attractive for the private sector to use energy more efficiently to reduce national energy consumption and dependence on imported fossil fuel.

In the meantime, mindful of the potential negative effects arising from uncertainty in prices of petroleum products to consumers, particularly as it relates to prices of fuel at the pump, my Government proposes to adopt a more transparent and predictable mechanism for determining these prices.

MADAM PRESIDENT

MADAM SPEAKER

Saint Lucians need to feel safe in their homes and communities at all times. In times of uncertainty, disruptive elements may seize the opportunity to disturb the lives of our law-abiding citizens. My Government has a fundamental duty to you, our citizens, to provide for your safety. This is why measures aimed at keeping Saint Lucians safe has been deliberately included in this Throne Speech that sets out the broad goals and directions of the Government and its strategy to accomplish those goals.

The rule of law in our country is not an option; it is a requirement for all. That is why the Legislative Programme of the Government of Saint Lucia, for the ensuing Parliamentary Session, will include the consolidation of laws and regulations to address the following:

- 1. Search and detention by the police;**
- 2. Witness Protection;**
- 3. Anti-money laundering and Anti-terrorism;**
- 4. Financial sector stability;**
- 5. The ratification of regional and international treaties and conventions, including those relating to extradition;**
- 6. Accreditation of educational institutions and programmes;**
- 7. Implementation of acts passed but not yet in force;**
- 8. Law Revision and Reform;**
- 9. Constitutional Reform.**

1. Police Powers:

In its fight against crime, my Government proposes in this Parliamentary Session to develop laws, regulations and a Code of Practice for Police Officers with respect to powers of stop and search, use of force, apprehension, detention, investigations, identifications, interviewing detainees and obtaining evidence. Such legislation will include guidelines relating to the use of less lethal weapons such as tasers and incapacitant sprays, the taking and use of fingerprints and body samples, as well as blood testing and the use of breathalyzers.

The necessary legislative regime will be instituted under the Evidence Act 2002 so that local DNA testing can commence later this year.

2. Witness Care and Witness Protection:

While it works to increase police powers, my Government will ensure that legislation provides for adequate orientation, care and protection to witnesses, whether for the prosecution, or for the defence. Consequently a careful review of the Justice Protection Act 2001 will be undertaken and its commencement ensured.

In this connection the Evidence Act 2002 will be examined to provide for the use of video-links so that vulnerable persons, including children, can give evidence without having to appear before a Court.

3. Anti-money laundering and Anti-terrorism:

My Government has recognized the ills associated with drug trafficking and terrorist acts including human trafficking, and has consequently agreed with 27 other Caribbean Countries making up the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF) to strengthen its legislative regime to combat money laundering and terrorism. Under these arrangements a number of enactments, including for example, the Money Laundering (Prevention) Act will be strengthened to ensure that persons engaging in transactions involving property which are the proceeds of crime are properly prosecuted.

4. Financial Sector Stability:

Madam President, Madam Speaker, there are a number of factors which impact negatively on the stability of our financial sector. These include firstly, the increasing risk of the financial sector being infiltrated by the proceeds of money

laundering. Secondly, the concern expressed by metropolitan countries, particularly members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), that the off-shore banking sector in our states may provide scope for illicit financial transactions and for tax havens. In this regard, we note that the final communiqué of the recent meeting of the G-20 in London makes particular reference to offshore financial centres. Thirdly, there is the disequilibrium which the current world economic recession has caused in the banking system and the investment climate of our countries.

For these reasons my Government must expedite the implementation of the decision of the Monetary Council of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank to have enacted a suite of laws to harmonize and consolidate the financial sector. The establishment of an autonomous Single Regulatory Unit to monitor the financial sector will therefore receive priority attention. Other Acts include: the Money Services Business Bill which seeks to regulate services such as cheque cashing and currency exchange; the Payment Systems Bill, which will regulate and codify procedures involving the exchange of payment in return for goods, services and real and financial assets; the Insurance Bill; the Cooperative Societies Bill; and a Bill related to Offshore Finance Companies.

Parallel to this is the need to address issues of information and communications at a time when the use of electronic commerce is on the rise. Accordingly, the Government proposes to pass the Electronic Bill, the Electronic Transactions Bill, the Computer Misuse Act, the Data Protection and Privacy Bill, and the Freedom of Information Bill.

5. Treaties, Conventions and Extraditions:

Recognizing the vulnerability of our small State, my Government plans to work collaboratively with sub-regional, regional and international States and with their umbrella organizations such as the OECS Secretariat, the CARICOM Secretariat, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Organisation of American States (OAS) and the United Nations Organization.

In the area of crime and security my Government hopes to sign and ratify the CARICOM Maritime and Airspace Security Cooperation Agreement as well as the CARICOM Arrest Warrant Treaty in order to facilitate the apprehension of offenders beyond our borders.

My Government also intends to increase the number of countries with which we have extradition arrangements, mutual legal assistance arrangements, and prisoner exchange agreements.

In the area of trade, sovereign legislation will be passed to ratify the provisions of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) which was signed last year, between the Members of the Caribbean Forum (CARIFORUM) and the European Union. Other Bills being prepared for enactment include the Competition Bill, the Consumer Protection Bill, and the Food Safety Bill.

My Government recognizes that it has inextricable links with the other OECS countries through numerous areas of functional cooperation, and will therefore be prepared to embrace the Draft OECS Economic Union Treaty and enact it into national legislation, whenever this becomes feasible, and after appropriate consultations with our citizens.

6. Accreditation:

My Government also intends, during this Session, to introduce the Legislative Framework to facilitate the establishment of a National Accreditation Council. Towards this end, the Accreditation Act to provide for the process and mechanism of accrediting institutions and programmes of study and for related matters will be enacted.

7. Implementations of Acts passed but not yet in force:

At the very commencement of this Parliamentary Session my Government proposes to pass a new Civil Status Act to modernize the administration of our Civil Status Registry.. Services will be decentralized to all parts of the island. The new system will be fully computerized and provision will be made for in-house rectification of errors on Birth Certificates and on other vital records.

A number of Acts that have been passed but not yet implemented will become operational in this Parliamentary Session. For example, the Rules and Regulations to commence the Small Claims Court Act and the Legal Aid Act will be enacted early in this Parliamentary Session. The Shop (Hours) Act, the Fiscal Incentives Act and the Private Security Act will also be reviewed.

In the area of communications and public utilities it is proposed that the following Acts be reviewed: the Engineers' Registration Act to guide the operations of the Engineers' Registration Board; the Electricity Supply Act to provide for alternative energy generation; the review and consolidation of the many regulations that have been made under the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act to ensure that they are

updated and easily referenced; and the Works and Roads Act to protect the country's physical infrastructure.

Further, the necessary Regulations will be passed to give effect to the Patents Act 2001 to make us more compatible with the World Trade Organization's Trade and Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement, to propel Saint Lucia into the modern era of registration of patents and industrial designs and so enjoy the economic benefits that will inevitably accrue.

8. Law Revision and Law Reform:

Our existing laws must be constantly updated and new laws enriched in keeping with societal changes. For this purpose legislation will be passed during the Parliamentary Session for the establishment of a Law Reform and Revision Commission. Among the legislation to be reviewed by the Law Reform and Revision Commission will be the Criminal Code, the Labour Code and a suite of Bills relating to Family Law, including Child Care and Adoption, Domestic Violence, Juvenile Justice and amendments to the Children and Young Persons Act 1972.

The need for reform of local government has been acknowledged throughout the Commonwealth; in the 1991 Harare Declaration and at subsequent Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings. It is increasingly being recognized that Local Government authorities have a role in delivering sustainable communities and a better quality of life for the people who live within their jurisdictions. In this Parliamentary Session my Government will therefore need to create an enabling

legal environment to sustain the effective operations of democratic local government.

Constitutional Reform Commission:

The Constitutional Reform Commission was established by Statutory Instrument in July 2004 to “*review and reform the Constitution of Saint Lucia in order to encourage effective governance, to ensure that the institutions of State remain strong and responsive and that the rights and freedoms guaranteed to all persons are respected.*”

The Commission has been engaging in dialogue with the populace at large and has embarked on a series of consultations in Saint Lucia and the Diaspora with individuals, groups and organizations who have been submitting proposals for appropriate changes to the Constitution. During this Parliamentary Session my Government looks forward with great anticipation to the submission of the Commission’s Reports to Parliament for further action.

Madanm Pwézidan, Madanm Speaker

An menm tan Gouvèdman ka fè mannè v pou stabilizé lékonomi péyi-a, i ka pwan démach pou asiwé ki pèp péyi-a pé viv lavi-yo an siwité. Tout moun sipozé obéyi lalwa péyi-a. Sa ki desidé kasé lwa péyi-a kay ni pou péyé pou li. Sé pou wézon sala Gouvèdman ka détayé chak lanné sé lwa-a i ni lantansyon pasé an péyi-a. An sèsyon Paleman sala Gouvèdman kay twavay asou wèg pou gidé manyè polis pé awété moun; ki manyè yo pé twété moun lè yo awété yo; ki dégwé fòs ki aksètab, ében ki dégwé la lwa kay konsidéwé kon bwitalité; ki manyè yo pé pòté

plent kont moun. En menm tan-an, la kay ni lwa pou potéjé témwen- ni témwen a déchaj é témwen a chaj - sa vlé di témwen asou tou lé dé koté. La kay ni lwa pou gidé majèstwa épi jij asou kalité jijman yo pé pononsé asou moun ki ka twafiké an dwòg, ében an lòt aktivité tèroris, pa èkzanmp.

Péyi-a ni pou pwan pokosyon épi sé wèg-la i ka mété an plas-la pou gidé mannyè bank épi lot établisman finans ka fè biznis, pou potéjé lajan ében lentéwé klian-yo, épi pou anpéché kalité sé twakasan-an nou wè ki ka pwan kou tout oliwon latè-a sé jou sala. Sé pou nou asiwé ki nou pa mété chat véyé bé, paski chandilyé kay kouté pasé lètèman. Gouvèdman ni lantansyon kolabowé épi sé lòt péyi Kawaib-la pou wéglé épi wanfòse lendustwi finans péyi-a, paski sé asou lendustwi sala nou vlé dépann pou divèsifyé lékonomi péyi-a. Sitou kon nou ja tann sé gwan péyi-a di yo ka véyé opwé mannyè nou ka kondwi zafè nou an sé létablisman sala.

Nou tout sav mannyè i fasil pou vwayajé sé jou sala. I fasil pou mwen épi'w, mé i fasil osi pou sé moun-lan ki ka konmèt kwim-la. Sé tann an moun konmèt an kwim an péyi-a jòdi-a, épi tan pou denmen, i ja pwan lavòl; i ja kité péyi-a. Gouvèdman ka twavay épi sé lézòt péyi CARICOM-lan, épi menm avèk lòt péyi an dèyò Kawaib-la pou fè awanjman pou awété jan péyi yonnalòt, pou boukanté pwisonnyé, épi pou witounen moun ki kasé lwa an péyi yonnalòt pou yo wéponn tèt yo kote yo fè kwim-lan.

Pwogwam législatif péyi-a byen chajé, mé sé ofisyé-a ki ni wèsponsabilité-a pou twavay asou sé lwa sala, kay fè tout sa yo pé pou antanmé otan di yo ki posib. Adan di yo sé lwa nèf, mé i ni plizyè ki ja pasé, mé swé nou pòkò enplimanté yo, ében nou ni yonn dé chanjman pou fè pou mòdenizé yo.

MADAM PRESIDENT

MADAM SPEAKER

Whether we are in a crisis situation or not,, we must still feed ourselves and our families, educate our children, remain healthy, and care for the less fortunate among us. The state must provide infrastructure and conditions for growth and development and meet its social responsibilities. But each and every one of us has his or her obligations to discharge in the current difficult local and global environment.

Can we make changes in our lifestyles to allow us to eat healthier local foods? Can we produce more of what we consume? Can we make the sacrifices of being more selective in our expenditure on consumer items whether it be in respect of what we wear or our form of transport?

Can we not be more productive in our work place by adopting better work habits such as improving our punctuality, or not watching the clock, and by making suggestions in the work place to improve conditions and enhance productivity?

Can we not get more involved in community work and related activities? Can we - especially young mothers and fathers - not care more for and about our children's welfare? Can we not visit with the sick and the elderly more frequently? Can we not care more for our aged parents and grandparents.

Can we not turn into a national pastime the cultivation of backyard kitchen and flower gardens to keep the young gainfully active while at the same time providing healthy foods for ourselves that will lead to a healthier life style? Of course we

can; but it will require a change of mindset and a greater sense of personal responsibility.

My Government recognises that we are the guardians of the people. As a people we are the guardians of our island. Therefore, together we are our own guardians and keepers. Do we then not have a responsibility to take good care of ourselves and our country? To this end, my Government will be as vigilant about environmental protection as it is about economic growth. We expect the citizenry to be equally responsible and cooperative. We cannot carry out our collective responsibilities if we only look out for “self”. We must be more caring, more concerned, more involved and more innovative. In fact we need to be a different and transformed people to cope with these challenging times.

Madanm Pwézidan, Madanm Speaker,

Ki bagay bèl, ki bakay pa bèl an péyi-a, nou ni pou swen kò nou épi fanmi nou; nou ni pou voyé ich-nou lékòl; nou ni pou pwan pokosyon épi santé-nou; nou ni pou otjipé sa ki pa sa otjipé kò-yo, Gouvèdman ni pou potjiwé sa péyi-a bizwen, pou asiwe ki péyi-a fè pwogwé. Mé nou chak ni wèspansabilité-nou pou fè bagay maché.

Es nou sa chanjé mannyè nou ka viv épi manjé diféwanman? Es nou pa sa podwi sa nou ka sèvi? Es nou sa fè pli sakwifis épi mennajé lajan-nou pli mèyè? Es nou pa sa mété an timiyèt pli éfo an twavay-nou? Es nou pa sa fè tan pou vizité lé malad épi sé gwan moun an konmin-nou pli souvan? Es nou pa sa otjipé pawan-nou ében gwanpawan-nou pli mèyè? Epi sé timanmay-la? Es nou pa sa swen yo ében doloté yo ében wèspèkté yo pli pasé nou ka fè-a? Es nou pa sa tjenn péyi-a

pli pwòp pasé i yé-a? Es nou pa sa potéjé lanviwonman-nou? Mé byen si, mé sè èk fwè. Nou sa fè tout sa, é menm plis. Mé sé pou nou chanjé mantalite-nou.

Nou ni pou bati péyi-a, pa démoli'y ében hédi'y desann. Pa di ou pa mélé épi sa ki ka fèt oliwon'w, sa ki ka fèt an péyi'w, paski i pa ni djè moun pami nou ki kay di i pa enmen Sent Lisi, péyi natal-yo-a. Sé la nou fèt; épi kon moun té ka di an tan avan, sé la lonbwi-nou téwé. Nou tout sa di épi Lonnowab Derek Walcott

“Mwen sé jan Sent Lisi. Sé la mwen fèt”.

Si nou pa pawé pou lité kont tout difikilté pou sové'y, si nou tounen do nou asou'y an tan kawenm sala, sé bal fini. Mé sè èk fwè, nou ni yon wèsponsabilité byen sèwyé pou jennéwasyon-an ki ka vini-an. Nou ni pou kité Sent Lisi bay yo adan an pli mèyè kondisyon pasé nou touvé'y. Sé sa nou ka kwiyé dévlopman soutnab. Pa dézapwenté sé jennès-la. Pa gaspiyé dwa nésans-yo.

Madam President, Madam Speaker

Almost five hundred years ago, the British took control of our island then waged war with France fourteen times over it. Because it switched so often between the British and the French, it became known as the “Helen of the West Indies” as it was likened to the mythical Helen of Troy – the face that launched a thousand ships.

I know all Saint Lucians appreciate that this land — our land — is worth fighting for. In this time of economic conflict, where battles rage between the nations that have, and those that have not; between multinational corporations with tremendous

power and peasant farmers with little influence, this government— your government, pledges to work together in a spirit of solidarity to emerge from these battles, a better, stronger, safer and more resilient Saint Lucia.

With this commitment, I am pleased Madam President, Madam Speaker, to formally declare open the Fourth Session of the Ninth Parliament of Saint Lucia.