

# NATIONWIDE

**No.36.** Friday February 13 2004

*A publication of the Department of Information Services*



## THE BEST OF ST. LUCIA

**For four days, manufacturing's most innovative will have a chance to prove their boast, to sponsors and the buying public at a premier event showcasing truly quality goods and services all made in St. Lucia with pride.**

Chamber President, Miss Techla Deterville said the chamber would continue such initiatives which cause growth and improvement in the economy. She said the close collaboration of persons and agencies from all areas of the economy is a signal of St. Lucia's maturity, which gives every confidence of the potential for the development of the island for the next 25 years.

This pride was testified to, when Chairman of the Exhibition Committee, Lokesh Singh addressed the official opening of the Exhibition Wednesday. He said it was a feat for the manufactures who had demonstrated not only the quality they could put on show, but had done so "with a creative flair never before exhibited."

The Bank of St. Lucia is a lead sponsor of the Trade and Services Exhibition. Group Managing Director, Mr Marius St. Rose commended the chamber for the initiative, indicating that manufacturers as the lead exhibitors in the first-time event had demonstrated the willingness to move the economy forward through their own industry.

The exhibition is part of a wider plan by the St. Lucia Chamber of Commerce, Investment and Consumer Affairs, organisers of the event to promote exports and raise awareness of what is produced locally.

St. Rose said for their part, the bank had been innovative, introducing a range of financing instruments which have largely

*cont'd on page 8*



**Minister of Commerce, Investment and Consumer Affairs, Hon. Phillip J. Pierre**



**Patrons view the booths at the Trade and Services Exhibition, at the Free Zone in Vieux-Fort. This is one of the main activities in observance of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Saint Lucia's Independence.**

## EDITORIAL

### A PROUD NATION

Whatever is said of St. Lucians, we are a proud people, believing is what is justly ours that is good and we support and revel in it.

St. Lucian's rally around this up-coming 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence, marking the country's development progress is a fitting example of our pride in a nation that has toiled and persevered in the face of all adversities.

We have seen the efforts being made by nearly all communities on the island to celebrate this landmark event on February 22, when on that day in 1979, we took on the mantle of responsibility for the development and progress of our nation.

Since then, we have progressed as a people and a nation, making our electoral process free of fear and free from fear, electing our representatives with pride and purpose. We have seen our education system churn out graduate after graduate, thus arming ourselves with the development tools, which have charted the successful future we now envisaged.

We have seen progress in several areas, not least in poverty reduction and improved standard of living for our people, even as we continue to face challenges.

We have seen improvements in our physical infrastructure, not least in the area of road development and health care services. And we now see in the horizon, the construction of a new hospital, which will meet our needs for at least the next 25 years.

We have witnessed the advent of liberalization of our telecommunications sector and the benefits that has brought to the country, making St. Lucia the leading E-government Readiness state in the Caribbean.

We are a much talked-about tourist destination, where visitors roam around freely and without fear and even as globalisation remains a challenge, which is currently threatening our banana industry we are resolved to do what is necessary to retain the industry.

So, as we celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> birthday of nationhood, feel justly proud that whatever can be said of our people and country, we have made a lot of progress and we are the envy of many, who are far more endowed than us. There will always be challenges, most of them unforeseen. We just have to face them as they come.



**"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





# Government, OPEC, UNFPA Collaborate to Fight HIV/AIDS

The Government of St. Lucia is providing counterpart funding amounting to US\$210,000 to complement US\$300,000, which is being provided by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) through the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), in the fight against the deadly AIDS disease.

This initiative came on the heels of Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony's expressed intension to focus on the health needs of the nation and is consistent with the framework of priority actions of the proposed National HIV/AIDS Strategic Action Plan.

It will also contribute to the realization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in St. Lucia, which include a decrease in maternal mortality, a reduction in poverty and gender inequalities, prevention of the spread of HIV/AIDS and increased focused attention to the needs of adolescents and young people.

## Prevention

Confronted with the worrying reality of the high vulnerability of St. Lucian youth to HIV/AIDS, the OPEC funds will allow the UNFPA to provide St. Lucia with technical assistance, training, capacity building and the purchase of health care commodities towards prevention of the deadly disease. The Government's funds will be in the form of man-hours and facilities of the Ministry of Health.

Minister of Health, Human Services and Family Affairs, Damian Greaves, who welcomed the injection of US\$300,000 (EC\$810,000) into the country's sexual and reproductive health programme, said at the signing on February 12, that UNFPA would work with a number of partners inclusive of non-government organizations (NGOs) and government to ensure that the programme achieves its objectives.

## Collaboration with NGOs

Minister Greaves stressed that "critical to the success of this program, is the collaboration of the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, St. Lucia Planned Parenthood, St. Lucia Red Cross, National Youth Council, the Poverty Reduction Fund and the James Beigrave Micro-enterprise Development Fund."

Signing on behalf of the St. Lucia Government at the launch of the new HIV/AIDS project in Castries, Minister Greaves joined UNFPA's representative, Ms Hetty

Sarjeant, who signed on behalf of the organisation.

Ms. Sarjeant informed that the St. Lucia Government project, along with UNFPA and OPEC would build upon existing alliances and seek, through financial, social and political commitment to strengthen domestic partnerships within St. Lucia to halt the spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, adding that the programme was targeted towards "youth living in difficult circumstances, including mobile and migrant youth."

The UNFPA Caribbean office located in Jamaica, currently serves 21 English and Dutch Speaking countries. The overall objective of the 2002-2006 UNFPA Caribbean programme in the region, is to contribute to the reduction of poverty and improvement in the quality of life of populations in member countries, by promoting Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and by integrating population-related factors into development strategies and plans.



Mr. Nehum Jn. Babtiste  
Director AIDS/HIV programme

## PUBLIC NOTICE - MAD COW DISEASE

Due to the discovery of a case of Mad Cow Disease in the USA, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of St. Lucia has instituted the following measures:

1. The importation into St. Lucia of cattle, beef and beef products from the states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Alaska, Guam, Nevada, California and Hawaii is prohibited until further notice.

2. Importation from other states will be allowed in accordance with specified conditions.

Importers of beef and beef products have been informed of the conditions under which these products can be imported from the USA. These conditions are in accordance with the internationally accepted standards of the Organization Internationale des Epizooties [OIE], which is the World Animal Health Organization.

The general public is reminded that beef and beef products will not be allowed entry without relevant documentation. In addition, casual travellers are encouraged not to bring in beef from the US.

For the importation of any other products containing ingredients derived from cattle, please contact the Veterinary and Livestock Services Division.

The situation in the US is being closely monitored and the general public shall be informed of any changes in importation policy.

**Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.**



Selling fish in Castries  
Promoting local produce



# St. Lucia and the Caribbean E-government Ready

Minister of Communications, Works, Transport and Public Utilities, Felix Finisterre has said that St. Lucia and its Caribbean counterparts are well on their way to providing the much needed environment that would make their services more accessible, responsive and cost efficient. He made the disclosure on Tuesday, February 10 at a three-day regional workshop on E-Government and Sectoral Development at the Cara Suites Hotel in Castries.

E-Government is a concept aimed at encouraging governments to use less ink and paper and more electronic information technology in their day-to-day affairs and in this context, St. Lucia is leading other Caribbean islands.

This was revealed at a World Summit on the Information Society held in Geneva, Switzerland in December 2003. St. Lucia out-ranked the rest of the Caribbean placing first, ahead of the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and the Bahamas, Trinidad & Tobago, St. Kitts and Nevis, Barbados, Cuba, Antigua & Barbuda, Grenada and St. Vincent & The Grenadines in that order.

## St. Lucia Ranked High

The ranking was based on a global study by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the indicators used in the ranking took into account, the progress made as a result of the liberalization of telecommunications, especially the wide use and availability of cell phones.

With some 50 percent of the population having access to cell phones and other forms of modern telecommunications, the ability of persons to use the technology as well as the kind of infrastructure that exists here contributed to the island's ranked readiness for e-government



**Minister of Communications, Works, Transport and Public Utilities, Felix Finisterre**

On hearing the news, Deputy Director of Public Sector Reform in the office of the Prime Minister, Dr. Cletus Bertin put St. Lucia's landmark achievement in perspective: "St. Lucia's cell phone penetration is significant to the ranking, as it indicates we are a society that is receptive to and can be ready for the transition to e-government. Besides the enabling environment government has created to foster access to and use of the latest information technology, government has also taken steps to ensure e-government becomes a major plank in its efforts to reform the Public Service".

Rather than boasting of St. Lucia's achievement at the current workshop, Minister Finisterre focused instead, on the feat achieved by the wider Caribbean region.

He told the regional grouping in his address, that new information and telecommunication technologies (ITCs) were facilitating the acquisition and



*Dr. Cletus Bertin, among the participants at the conference.*

**Governments around the world are investing substantial resources in deploying e-government infrastructure and services. The investments are being made with the presumption that these will lead to greater efficiencies and effectiveness in delivering government applications and services to the public, as well as enhancing the conduct of government administration. Some countries, notably those from the OECD, have reported moderate success with e-government initiatives.**

adoption of information, thereby offering developing states unprecedented opportunities to enhance their education systems, improve policy formulation and execution, while expanding the possibilities for social change.

He stated that the Caribbean had proven itself ready to reap the benefits of eGovernment Readiness by placing second only to North America, while outperforming regions, such as South and Eastern Asia, South-Central Asia, Western Asia, South and Central America, and Europe. "The development of St. Lucia as a service-based or information and knowledge-based economy therefore, aims at exploiting digital technologies to stimulate the achievement of the country's development objectives," Minister Finisterre said.

Noting that the establishment of a knowledge-based society "was the platform on which the region must foster, accelerate and sustain long-term social, cultural and economic development", he admitted however, that much work still needed to be done to realize the goal of shaping a new economy, predicated fully on information and communication technologies.

Government, the Communications Minister pointed out, was seeking to create an enabling environment to attract local and foreign investors through appropriate policies, legislation and improved public sector efficiency.

That note struck a cord with officials of the Commonwealth Secretariat, who are sponsors of the three-day event. "E-government without the culture change becomes expensive government and I think we have to focus not so much on the technology, but on the re-engineering of processes, of regulations, of information and data sharing, and those are always the tough issues," said Henry Alamango of the Commonwealth Network for Information Technology for Development (COMNET-IT)



**Deputy Director of Public Sector Reform Dr. Cletus Bertin**



*Participants came from Caribbean and Commonwealth countries.*



# FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH.

The following is the final part of an address delivered by Prime Minister of St. Lucia Dr. Kenny Anthony at the thirty-eighth meeting of the OECS Heads of Government. The meeting was held in Castries St. Lucia January 22 - 23, 2004.

"The further irony is that the OECS as currently constituted has attained a higher level of integration than CARICOM. The OECS has a common judiciary, a common currency and central bank, a common directorate of civil aviation, joint diplomatic arrangements in Canada, common procurement of pharmaceuticals and many other areas of close cooperation.

These are the assets which the OECS takes into any arrangements with CARICOM. The OECS must therefore set out a clear and unequivocal position with respect to CARICOM as a whole and some of the participating states of CARICOM like Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados, with which we have significant reciprocal interests.

## Security and Immigration

It is important for instance, that we have conversations with Trinidad and Tobago on matters concerning Oil, Air Transportation, Trade in Manufacturers and Agricultural Products, Banking and Finance, Education and Training.

Similarly with Barbados we need to discuss Trade in Manufacturing and Agricultural Products, Finance, Education and Training, and Air Transportation. With both countries, matters of Security and Immigration are of vital importance.

With respect to the FTAA, COTONOU and the WTO our special circumstances need to be forcefully communicated through the Regional Negotiating Machinery (RNM).

To get to these positions requires deep thought and introspection by the political leaders of the OECS and purposeful discussions with our people. We will have to devise a structured and deliberate way of plotting our future which is appropriately sequenced bearing in mind our own circumstances.

Each island has its own distinctive features which we should treat as significant assets. These distinctive features we must seek to bring to levels of excellence which our own citizens can enjoy and which we can share with other members of the OECS, the region and the world. For instance, if there are aspects of St Lucian culture of which we are justly proud we should not be opposed to sharing them with our fellow citizens of the OECS.

[saintluciasilver.org](http://saintluciasilver.org)

continued  
from the last issue  
of **NATIONWIDE**



**Dr. Kenny Anthony**

## Constitutional Issues

There is the urgent need to translate these sentiments into constitutional and political constructs which will strengthen them and make them more meaningful and valuable to us as a people.

To extend this thought further, unless there is law and order, peace and justice and economic progress it is unlikely that a broad range of our citizens in each island will be able to enjoy the patrimony of the land. The administration of justice and the preservation of law and order are critical matters for this to be so. There are



Prime Minister Kenny Anthony in conversation with ECCB Governor Sir Dwight Venner at a recent CARICOM meeting.

**We now have a Common Currency, an Inter-bank Market for liquid funds, a Regional Government Securities Market, a Securities Market and a Secondary Mortgage Market.**

proposals before us for the consolidation of the justice system by incorporating the magistracy and for strengthening law and order by re-configuring the Police and Prison Services. Sober and constructive thought needs to be given to these proposals to consider whether they are that important to our existence to utilize our political capital to seek constitutional amendments for their implementation.

## Freedom of Movement.

Another area of significance is the freedom of movement of capital and labour which are fundamental to the deepening of the integration process.

The movement of labour has been a contentious area in a region where unemployment has been high and resources scarce. The labour market, however, needs to be more flexible to allow for increased production and productivity.

Our experience has been in the region that people only move when there are economic prospects in the destination they are headed to. Immigrants, if the truth is told, work very hard and contribute in great measure to the local economy.

There needs to be some regulation of the labour markets but this can be done only if the labour market information systems are accurate and timely.

We have already made considerable progress in this area through reciprocal arrangements in Social Security Schemes, and a first phase involving relaxed immigration procedures. Further progress needs to be made through the identification of specific skill requirements in each country and training schemes throughout the OECS, to facilitate the

manpower requirements for our economic transformation.

In the area of capital movements we have made significant strides and are not subject to some of the constraints faced by the rest of CARICOM. We now have a Common Currency, an Inter-bank Market for liquid funds, a Regional Government Securities Market, a Securities Market and a Secondary Mortgage Market.

These are vital platforms on which the free flow of capital can be built and so we need to remove the other impediments such as Alien Landholding Restrictions among OECS States.



**Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony  
of St. Lucia**

The freedom of movement of capital will facilitate the increased mobilization of savings and their more efficient allocation. It will give the citizens of the OECS greater choices with respect to savings instruments and a more appropriate means of financing for their investments.

## Finance and the Economies

The possibility of the establishment of OECS wide firms will increase substantially under such a regime. Already there is significant cross border investments in government securities and equities.

The Monetary Council has proposed that the Eastern Caribbean Securities Exchange is the logical precursor of a wider regional stock exchange. It is in fact a

*cont'd on page 5*



# FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH.

from page 4

regional exchange having the technology to support cross border exchanges. We are now in the process of preparing the necessary legislation to expand its operations.

The OECS countries form part of an archipelago of islands and for integration to be successful a realistic Air Transportation policy needs to be conceived to address this most critical and complex of issues.

The OECS countries need to address the need for a coherent Social Policy which takes into consideration both country and OECS circumstances. We have achieved fairly decent social indicators but their maintenance and improvement are quite a challenge given the current fiscal and debt profiles in some of our countries. Education, Health, Social Protection and Pensions are areas which are vital but costly.

The scourge of HIV/AIDS by and of itself can place our entire social and economic structures at extreme risk.

## Courage to Treat Challenges

In the final analysis we will have to think deeply about the costs and benefits of how we are to proceed in an environment which is not only uncertain but fraught with dangers.

We have to balance our country and individual sovereignty as well as our distinctive differences against the need to present a collective political and economic posture to treat with third parties both in

the region and beyond. The people of the region in general and the people of the OECS, in particular, have been very creative in their responses to difficult circumstances over a long history of slavery, colonialism and a host of natural disasters and external economic shocks.

The very creation of the OECS was in response to constitutional, political and economic challenges. We are now once again faced with tremendous challenges which require a substantial effort and creative responses from our politicians, our civil servants, our private sector, our trade unions, our youths, civil society and the public at large.

There is an **urgency** to our current discussions which must not be lost on us or our people. The pace of change and the fundamental and structural nature of our problems do not provide much breathing space or degrees of freedom for continued procrastination.

The issues before us must all be squarely faced and we must devise the necessary societal consensus within our individual countries and across the OECS to be able to address our domestic issues successfully, and having done that to treat with third parties to our advantage.

We must have the courage to treat with our challenges definitively. To quote Lloyd George:

*"Don't be afraid to take big steps  
You can't cross a chasm  
in two small jumps."*



Prime Minister Dr. Denzil Douglas of St. Kitts and Nevis chaired the OECS summit. .

## FIGHTING FOR OUR BANANAS

**Popular opinion has it that the banana war between Europe, Latin America and the producers of the Caribbean ended in 2001. Then, Europe and the US agreed a new regime that met the criteria that had been set by the World Trade Organisation (WTO). As a result, a sense prevails internationally that the problem has been resolved and it is now up to the Caribbean to make viable what is left of its industry.**

**Nothing could be further from the truth.**

**Prime Ministers Dr. Kenny Anthony of St. Lucia, Roosevelt Skerrit of Dominica and Ralph Gonzalves of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, spent one week in Europe (February 8<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> 2004), in an attempt to have the European Commission (EC) understand that the region's remaining banana producers are on the verge of disaster.**

**In 1999, the Caribbean banana industry came to accept that a WTO ruling on the organisation of the European banana market would lead to a decline of the industry and huge losses in employment. However, at that time few believed that the industry would be face a further crisis in relation to the EU market well before the 2006 deadline by which time the EU has to establish a single tariff for almost all bananas entering the EU.**

**The fate of the Caribbean industry now rests on a decision** that the EC will take on February 11 when its banana management committee meets to agree how the market will work after the EU is enlarged on May 1.

Then the EU will announce new arrangements for the import of bananas into the ten accession states. Up to now these nations have imported bananas free of duty and at very low prices. But all that is due to change. From May 1 these countries will be subject to the EC common tariff and to a related import regime that is governed by quotas based on historic levels of consumption.

After May 1, analysts expect that the application of the tariff will cause prices in the new member states to rise and consumption to fall. The quota allocated on the basis of recent imports will, they suggest, then exceed the volume of bananas those countries can absorb. As a consequence, the surplus will circulate freely in other EU member states causing already very low prices there to collapse and higher cost producers such as the Caribbean, to be forced out of the European market.

According to the Caribbean Banana Exporters Association (CBEA) vulnerable small growers in the Caribbean are already struggling to survive at the low prices that now prevail on the European market and the Caribbean as a result, would be particularly vulnerable to any further price erosion.

Over the last ten years changes to the EU banana regime have resulted in a dramatic decline in the region's production. Since 1992 - a year before the introduction of the EU's single banana market - exports from the Windward Islands have fallen from 274,000 to 99,000 tonnes while those from Jamaica have declined from 77,000 to 40,000 tonnes. Suriname's banana trade has collapsed altogether.

The result has been a severe loss in foreign exchange earnings for already hard-pressed small economies. Industry figures record that in the Windward Islands the value of total exports has fallen from US\$147m to US\$45m and in Jamaica from US\$40m to US\$23m.

The CBEA suggest that the root of the problem is the deal reached between the EU and the USA in April 2001, following the long dispute in the WTO over the EU banana import regime. This provided for a transitional regime that retains up to 2006 a system of tariff quotas, which limit the total volumes of bananas imported into the EU and thus provides a degree of market stability.

But even if the EC were to agree on May 1 to a scheme that enables a viable return for Caribbean producers, the outlook is far from certain. The current regime ends in 2005. From 2006 on there will be no quotas, only a flat-rate tariff, with duty-free entry for fruit produced in the African, Caribbean and Pacific group of states (ACP). Critically the amount of the tariff, which has yet to be negotiated, will determine whether the industry in the region has any possibility of surviving at all in the EU market.

There is now the real danger that parts of the Eastern Caribbean could become the proof that trade liberalisation brings no benefit whatsoever to very small agriculture-dependent states possessing a fledgling service sector but no significant manufacturing base. So much so that there is real concern in a number of EU capitals that some of the economies of the Eastern Caribbean could become unviable and social instability may become endemic.

If anyone needs evidence of the impact of the induced collapse of the Caribbean banana industry, one only has to look at what has happened in Dominica, a country in which forty per cent of the population depend on primary agriculture. There, export earnings from bananas have declined from EC\$42m in 1997 to EC\$20m in 2001. Over this same period, the number of active banana growers has declined by about forty per cent. The country is struggling. It is heavily indebted. An IMF programme is being put in place. Big cuts in the public expenditure are planned and government is under extreme pressure. With virtually nothing to replace agriculture, little in the way of investment and a natural environment that will support only specialist tourism, Dominica will always remain disadvantaged. Despite this it continues to be subject to a global philosophy that suggests that whatever benefits the US or Europe should be good for small, impoverished island states.

Last year, the Prime Minister of St Vincent, Ralph Gonzalves wrote to the EC President, Romani Prodi. His letter was direct. WTO procedures should not be applied in such a manner as to deprive the most vulnerable ACP suppliers of their only export market. The trade effect of EU enlargement should be neutral; economic adjustment was a long-term process; and development and social stability should outweigh any desire to obtain bananas at the cheapest possible price. **Next week the Prime Ministers of St Lucia, St Vincent and Dominica will hope to hear answers from the Ministers, EC Commissioners and senior officials they meet to these and other difficult questions.**

*Written by David Jessop, Director of the Caribbean Council*



# LAND AND THE ENVIRONMENT

**The way we use and manage the land is determined, to a large extent, by environmental factors. The main characteristics of land in Saint Lucia are a rugged terrain and a limited land space. In several parts of the island, the agricultural potential is limited, because of risks of erosion, low fertility, stoniness and acidity of soils, and dangers of land slippage. In many areas, steep slopes and drainage patterns also render access and infrastructural development difficult.**

In Saint Lucia, as in most tropical islands, the natural ecosystems are fragile and small. This means that activities occurring in one area can have negative environmental impacts on the ecosystems around it.

This is particularly true for environmental changes occurring in upper watersheds, which can impact negatively on all

But these changes have to be made carefully, otherwise we run the risk of losing all our good agricultural lands, of allowing our soils to erode and become unproductive, of destroying the beauty of our landscapes, and of reducing the overall quality of the environment in which we live.

## Water Conservation

One key issue is water conservation. Water is one of the country's most precious natural resources, and there is a strong relationship between water and land management. As a result of deforestation and the removal of vegetation cover, the productivity of our watersheds has been reduced.

At the same time, population growth and the concentration of settlements and tourism development in the north of the island have resulted in a high demand for water for domestic, industrial and

**More than 90% of Saint Lucia's terrestrial areas occur on slopes of more than five degrees. Two thirds of Saint Lucia's best agricultural lands are located in four valleys: Canelles, Cul de Sac, Mabouya and Roseau.**

ecosystems in the lower parts of the watersheds and in the coastal zones. At the same time, geographic and environmental factors increase Saint Lucia's predisposition to risks associated with the impacts of natural disasters.

Saint Lucia's terrestrial and marine areas support a rich biological diversity, with over 1,300 known species of plants, over 150 species of birds and approximately 250 reef fish species.

We also have several different ecosystems, with tropical rain forests, dry forests and scrubs, mangroves and other coastal woodlands, reefs and seagrass beds.

Most natural habitats have been transformed as a result of the expansion of human activities, and there remain only small areas where natural ecosystems have not been disturbed. Some of these are home to endangered and locally important species, including some that exist nowhere else in the world

## Land degradation, the main issues

Many of our development practices result in the degradation and destruction of land, with negative impacts on people and on the environment.

Changes in land use are of course unavoidable, in order for us to establish and expand towns and villages, in order to build roads, schools and sporting facilities, and in order to develop our agriculture, our tourism and our manufacturing industry.

commercial uses, while transformations in the agricultural production systems and the need to increase yields have augmented demands for water for irrigation.

Inappropriate land uses and land use practices, and incidences of abuse of agrochemical pollutants, are responsible for water pollution and contamination. Urban development and changes in land



*Proper drainage on the rise to reduce pollution..*



*Land used for port development.*

use have provoked changes in drainage patterns and increased risks of flooding. All these factors contribute to increases in the costs of water collection and distribution.

## Impact of Pollution

There is a direct link between land use and the conditions of coastal resources, including ecosystem health, coastal water quality and habitat productivity.

Sedimentation impacts negatively on tourism and fisheries through the destruction of reef habitats and the reduction of water quality. Pollution coming from human settlements, agriculture and

**Pollution coming from human settlements, agriculture and industry also affects water quality, posing a threat to human health and tourism development. Everything we do on the land will eventually impact on the resources of the coast.**

industry also affects water quality, posing a threat to human health and tourism development. Everything we do on the land will eventually impact on the resources of the coast.

There is also a direct link between land use and management on the one hand, and the dangers of natural disasters on the other. In some areas, inappropriate land uses have increased vulnerability to disasters, and especially to the impacts of flooding and landslides.

In the past, disaster planning has focused more on post-disaster mitigation than on prevention and minimisation of impacts. There is now a need for closer linkages between disaster management and the national land policy framework, and for the use of specific disaster management tools, such as hazard mapping.

*cont'd on page 7*



# ST. LUCIA HOSTS REGIONAL ENERGY CONFERENCE

**Physical Development and Environment Minister Honourable Ferguson John has reiterated the need to consider energy options in light of the many challenges in achieving meaningful changes in the structure of the energy sector. He was addressing the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Task Force on Regional Energy Policy on February 5, 2004 at the Bay Gardens Hotel.**

The two-day meeting brought together experts from public and private sector agencies from the region, to discuss several issues pertinent to energy use in the region, and also to review a study on the rationalization of the regional energy sector.

Minister John stressed that energy drove development and without it society as we know it today would collapse. "We need energy to survive at both the national and regional level.

However, given that oil reserves are limited and are very likely to be revised downwards, and the cost to our economy

is growing and becoming unbearable, one of the real questions the regional policy must address is the extent to which we should and indeed could continue to depend on fossil fuels to drive our economies," he said.

Pointing out that whilst it had been accepted that the use of fossil fuel was the main contributor to climate change, he noted that countries still continued to use it at their own detriment. He argued that the region's almost total dependence on imported oil, coupled with the lack of control on levels and cost of supplies represented a further call on regional governments to explore technological options to address the extent of the dependence on fossil fuel.

In 2002 CARICOM countries expended over 2 billion dollars on energy use. Mr. John has called for the regional energy policy to address the introduction of new and renewal sources of energy in the energy mix, as a means of addressing cost, competitiveness, governance, and environmental questions.

The Task force on Regional Energy Policy has been urged to identify the challenges now confronting the energy sector, with the aim of finding responses to addressing them. The Physical Development and Environment Minister said that there must be consistency between regional and national policies, "failing of which is the creation of a recipe for confusion."

The February meeting also reviewed the Heads of Governments' response to the second Interim Task Force report, an update on data collection efforts, and processing of Venezuelan crude for CARICOM consumption.



*Physical Development and Environment Minister Honourable Ferguson John*

**In 2002 CARICOM countries expended over 2 billion dollars on energy use. The Task force on Regional Energy Policy has been urged to identify the challenges now confronting the energy sector, with the aim of finding responses to addressing them.**

## LAND AND THE ENVIRONMENT

from page 6

**Land conservation, what can we do?**

There are many things that could and should be done to conserve land resources and to ensure that environmental considerations are included in decisions that affect land management and development.

Government, for example, has already put in place a number of planning instruments and regulations, including the conduct of Environmental Impact Assessments and the establishment and management of protected areas such as Forest Reserves, Marine Reserves and Wildlife Sanctuaries. Initiatives such as the establishment of the Pitons Management Area or the inclusion of green spaces in land subdivisions precisely aim at conserving some of our most precious land resources.

### Responsibilities of Stakeholders

This new National Land Policy will identify a number of other measures that will help in these efforts.

But land conservation is not only the responsibility of the Government, and we all have a role to play in making sure that this most precious and fragile resource is not wasted.

Farmers, for example, should use good farming practices that prevent soil erosion and loss of fertility. Land developers should reduce the environmental impacts of their

**Land conservation is not only the responsibility of the Government. We all have a role to play in making sure that this most precious and fragile resource is not wasted.**

activities, particularly those coming from the removal of vegetation cover. Planners and investors must ensure that environmental considerations are taken into account when designing and implementing development projects.

At this crucial moment in our development, it is only through our collective involvement and through a change in our attitudes and habits that we will be able to maintain and enhance this most vital resource: our land.



*Appropriate treatment of liquid waste is being implemented by public and private sector agencies including WASCO.*

Ideas, views, questions and information related to land policy should be sent to: [landpolicy@planning.gov.lc](mailto:landpolicy@planning.gov.lc) or

**National Land Policy  
Sustainable Development Section  
Ministry of Physical development,  
Environment and Housing  
Graeham Louisy Administrative  
Building  
Waterfront  
Castries**



# Saint Lucia Independence Silver Anniversary Celebrations

## St. Lucian Communities Rally around Independence.

**In the run-up to St. Lucia's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence, communities around the island are gearing to celebrate with a number of activities, starting Sunday, February 15 to Independence Day on February 22<sup>nd</sup>.**

Member of the organising committee for Micoud North, Gregor Biscette, says the celebration opens with an ecumenical service and will include debates and lectures.

Mr. Biscette says besides the observance, the programme is aimed at reuniting residents for the purpose of advancing the development agenda of Micoud North. He says it is for this reason that the activities are being held in all of the communities comprising Micoud North.

### Micoud

"Getting people out of their immediate environment to attend an event somewhere else", he said, "will begin the process of rebuilding a fractured community spirit".

A lecture and debates are expected to be major events during the celebration, in addition to a cultural explosion on Saturday, February 21 at the Patience Multi Purpose Court at 7:00 p.m. and a marathon hosted by the Mon-Repos Youth and Sports Council on February 22, starting at 9:00 in the morning.

### THE BEST OF ST. LUCIA from page 1

remained undersubscribed. He said the bank was disappointed at the lack of enthusiasm for the \$15 million equity fund set up by the Government of St. Lucia, European Investment Bank, National Insurance Corporation and Bank of St. Lucia, which could create liquidity for local businesses.

He said the fund was not being accessed, because businesses are unwilling to relinquish some of the ownership of their company, and where there was a willingness to participate, the proposals were weak and not well thought out.

The exhibition is seen as a sort of litmus test for what has happened in the last 25 years in manufacturing in St. Lucia.

In South Castries, the communities of Faux a Chaud, Ciceron, Goodlands, Ti-Colon/Bas St. Joseph and Marigot have put together their own programme to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Saint Lucia's Independence.

### South Castries

The activities, which are to begin in the weeks leading up to independence will focus on community building initiatives, with Faux a Chaud residents embarking on an intensive campaign to give their community a facelift, while in Ciceron, a dormant youth and sporting group, the Seagulls will be given new life.

Community Development Officer for Castries South, Miss Margaret Lubrin says all of the communities have been able to make a contribution to mark this milestone in St. Lucia's development.

Marigot residents will put together an independence committee, which will go on to serve in other capacities, including efforts to address disaster mitigation issues in the community.

Castries South has teamed up with a number of agencies, including the St. Lucia Solid Waste Management Authority, the Ministries of Health and Communication, and the National Conservation Authority (NCA) to execute its independence programmes.

Minister of Commerce, Honourable Phillip J Pierre says the island has moved from the days of assembling goods for the overseas market, to a point where goods from St. Lucia are recognized internationally, making made-in-St. Lucia goods a proud brand. He said the made-in-Saint Lucia label "gives customers the assurance that they are buying a quality product."



A taste of the "Best of St. Lucia"

And not to be outdone, Anse-La-Raye and Canaries each have a packed programme of activities to mark the landmark occasion.

### Anse La Raye and Canaries

Canaries expects to raise some \$900 to be given out in prizes. The competition is to comprise general knowledge questions based on the island's history, sports, culture, current affairs and government.

The activities are also expected to include a panel discussion on the role of community-based organisations in the development of Canaries, and a fun sports day, which should involve greasy pig, greasy pole, blind fold, veteran race, bicycle, canoe and swimming races and bun eating competitions. "It's going to be fun, fun, fun", said member of the organising committee, John Victorin.



### NATIONAL SYMBOLS



The National Bird -  
Amazona Versicolor



The Coat of Arms



### THIS WEEK ON NTN

Highlights: Week of Feb. 16- 22, 2004

**Special hour-long interviews:**  
**Dr. Kenny D. Anthony**  
 Saturday Feb. 21 - 8:00 p.m..  
**Sir John G. M. Compton**  
 Sunday Feb. 22 at 6.00 p.m.  
**Rt. Hon. Allan Louisy**  
 Sunday Feb. 22 - 7.00 p.m.

### Tune in Weekly For:

**Regional News & Sports with GIS News Breaks and Kweyol News** daily from 6:30 pm  
**Issues & Answers** (Discussion Programme) Mondays at 8:00pm  
**Interview/Tuesdays** at 6:15pm  
**Konsit Kweyol/Tuesdays** at 6:15pm (Kweyol Discussion)  
**Your Right to Know/Thursdays** at 6:15pm  
**Take 2/Fridays** at 6:15pm (Week in Review - English)  
**Weflechi/Fridays** at 6:40pm (Week in Review—Kweyol)  
**KiddiCrew.com/Saturdays** at 9:30 am

For the complete programme guide, log on to our website at [www.stlucia.gov.lc](http://www.stlucia.gov.lc) and then click on the NTN icon.

[www.stlucia.gov.lc](http://www.stlucia.gov.lc)

Saint Lucia NATIONWIDE is published every fortnight by the Department of Information Services.

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