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GUARDING THE LIVELIHOOD OF BANANA FARMERS

HON. IGNATIUS JEAN SPEAKS TO REGIONAL EXPERTS

Hon Ignatius Jean, Minister for Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries recently addressed a meeting of the Inter American Institute for Co-operation in Agriculture Ministers' Meeting in Guayacil, Ecuador. The following is the full text of his presentation

"The banana dispute of the last decade was an unwelcome irritant in relations between Latin America and the Caribbean. Both sides sought to advance their individual agendas but without being sufficiently sensitive to the concerns of the other. In the current search for a new EU banana regime, we again find ourselves on opposing sides. But in reality we share the same nightmare, that the single tariff would damage our vital banana export trade.

I firmly believe however that the time has now come to look beyond this distracting conflict and recognize the underlying commonality of our interests and needs in this hemisphere. Our region must cooperate and Member-nations must be mutually supportive in order to progress. This entails working together rather than against each other if we are to succeed in achieving a bet-

ter life for those who produce bananas. Today I urge that we extend the hand of friendship and cooperation and once and for all put behind us any lingering suspicion or animosity. The occasion of the review of the EU banana import regime provides the opportunity for us to make real progress in intra-regional cooperation.

There is no doubt that banana ex-ports to Europe, our only market are absolutely vital for the economic well being of our small island countries, the Windward Islands as well as for other banana producing countries that are members of the Caribbean Community. For decades banana production has been the backbone of our economies. The current tariff quota regime ensures a reasonable degree of market stability and a price that is more profitable than in other markets. This is what has guaranteed a secure livelihood for our farmers and the regular income that has brought stability and permitted our economies to thrive. We therefore, as do our Latin American counterparts, need the European import regime to permit the continuation of our banana exports on a reliable and remunerative basis. What would be the use of a new



Hon. Ignatius Jean
Minister for Agriculture, Forestry
and Fisheries

system if it is detrimental to banana export industries of the supplying countries and consequently the future of our farmers and economies? This would be an outcome where none of us would be winners.

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Work on the upgrade of Port Castries to meet international standards



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Every Friday at 6.15 p.m. on **NTN**, Cablevision Channel 2.

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A fresh news package
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UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE (UHC)

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Background

1. What is Universal Health Care (UHC)? A. Universal Health Care (UHC) is a health programme that will provide all residents with equal access to quality health services defined in a published package of services and benefits. It is also a supplemental system of financing.
2. Why is UHC being offered now? A. It is important for you to have access to quality health care regardless of your financial status such as where you live or how much income that you earn.
- It is also necessary for us to improve the quality of health care at our hospitals and other health care institutions.
3. Why should I be interested in



Hon. Damian Greaves
Minister for Health, Human Services,
Family Affairs and Gender Relations

UHC? A. You should be interested in UHC because it will provide essential health benefits once you are registered. It also aims to achieve the principle of solidarity. This means that the high income earners will support the low income earners, the healthy will support the sick and the young will support senior members of our community.

4. How will UHC work? A. The process of providing you with quality health care under this new system is an easy one. To access the health benefits offered you must first be registered with UHC. When you do so, you will be given a UHC registration card with your photograph and registration number. You will receive information on place and time of registration at a later date.

You will be registered at a general hospital depending on your permanent home address or where you work. This hospital which is your registered provider will be responsible for your hospital services. However, if you have an emergency you can access the closest emergency room. This way, if you fall sick or need urgent medical attention getting treatment will be convenient by saving you time.

Drugs included in the published UHC package are provided at all participating pharmacies and you have access to this medication under UHC coverage.

Criteria for qualifying

5. Who may qualify? A. To qualify for services under UHC you must be a St. Lucian or non-national residing in the country for at least six (6) months of the year in which you are seeking coverage.
6. Who may not qualify? A. The following persons may not qualify to receive services offered by UHC: (a) A Saint Lucian who permanently resides overseas; (b) Visitors to Saint Lucia such as tourists and diplomats.

Services offered

7. What services will I benefit from? A. Through UHC you will benefit from the following services: hospital services, pharmaceutical services, mental health services, limited overseas care, blood bank services, ambulance services and drug rehabilitation services.
- These services are further divided into out patient and hospital services. The primary out patient services you will benefit from are: Specialist consultations by referral, Physiotherapy, Medication and Emergency Consultations.
- Hospital services that will be offered include: Obstetrics, Gynecology, Internal medicine, Pediatrics, Surgery, Orthopedics, Ophthalmology, Dermatology, Outpatient surgery, Urology, Dentistry and Neurology.
8. Which institutions will provide service? A. The two general hospitals, the Victoria Hospital and the St. Jude's Hospital will be the main service providers. However, private health care institutions may be entitled to become providers of services under UHC by meeting certain criteria and becoming registered.
9. What may I do if I am dissatisfied with the service? A. You will have the right to make a complaint if you are dissatisfied with the service provided to



One of the private health care facilities on the island

you. There will be a chain of command for making your complaint orally or in writing. It starts with your service provider. The court is the last place that you can address your complaint if you have gone through the other options in that order: 1st - The service provider (hospital); 2nd - The Universal Health Care Office; 3rd - The Ministry of Health; 4th - The Court.

10. Will there be penalties for per-

covered under UHC. The objective of UHC is to provide the best health care possible for all beneficiaries.

13. How much coverage will I receive? A. You will receive limited coverage in the areas included in the list of the services that UHC will offer. Please refer to the list.

14. Will I be covered for visits to private doctors? A. No. You will not be refunded for visits to your private



Pharmaceuticals - part of the programme

sons who abuse the UHC system? A. Yes. There will be penalties under the law to deal with persons or providers who abuse the system. Examples of abuse are: (a) Unauthorized access to the system such as hospital records; (b) Access to pharmaceuticals that have not been prescribed by a doctor and that you do not need; (c) Wrong billing; (d) Inappropriate referrals by health care workers; (e) Breach of Confidentiality; (f) Non-adherence to standards.

Coverage

11. What types of illnesses will UHC cover? A. Various illnesses that are common in Saint Lucia, such as those associated with Diabetes and Hypertension will be covered under UHC. You can refer to the list of services, common illnesses, essential pharmaceuticals and essential overseas care for more information.
12. What types of illnesses will not be covered? A. Illnesses that are not included on the list of services will not be

doctor. If you have private medical insurance you can settle payment of your doctor's fees with that insurance company. However, if you fill your prescription at a pharmacy registered with UHC you will receive free medication if your medication is included on the list of pharmaceutical covered by UHC.

15. What will not be covered by UHC? A. The following will not be covered by UHC: (a) Visits to your private doctor; (b) Outpatient lab tests and x-rays; (c) Visits to a hospital that is not your provider.

16. Isn't health coverage included in my National Insurance Corporation (NIC) contributions? A. No. The 5% deduction from your salary for National Insurance covers your pension, invalidity and sickness benefits. The NIC in-patient hospital benefit was a special arrangement with the government.

Visit us at <http://www.stluciauhc.org/>
Continued in the next week's issue



Public health care facility

GOVERNOR GENERAL'S RESPONSE

The following statement has been released by the Office of the Governor General in response to a release from the United Workers Party entitled 'The Governor General's Salary – Some are more equal than others'.

“Section 7 of The Governor General's Emoluments and Pensions Act No. 4 of 1968 makes the following provisions for pension benefits for retired Governor Generals: Two-fifths of annual salary if he/she has held office for five (5) consecutive years or moree; A pension in proportion to the period served of the five-year period if he/she held office for less than five (5) consecutive years.

Accordingly, of the three retired Governor Generals – Mr. Boswell Williams, Sir Stanislaus James and Sir George Mallet, only Sir Stanislaus qualified for receipt of 2/5 of his an-

nual salary as pension. If his salary was indeed \$ 4,000.00 a month, he was entitled on retirement to a monthly pension of \$ 1,600.00. The monthly pensions of the other two would be considerably less. The Principal Act however, allows a Governor General to continue receiving any other pensions in respect of previous service in the Permanent Civil Service, during the time that he/she holds the office of Governor General and after retirement, and provides for the payment of a gratuity immediately upon retirement: that amount was increased from 12.5 % to 25% of aggregate salary by an amendment to the Act in 1990 (Section 6, Act 13 of 1990).

The amendment to the Act which was recently passed in the House of Assembly pertains to retired Governor Generals only. The Living Allowance

of \$ 2,000.00 a month is to be paid to the three retired Governor Generals – Mr. Boswell Williams, Sir Stanislaus James and Sir George Mallet – not to the serving Governor General. The monthly pension is to be increased from 2/5 to 2/3 of their highest monthly salary with effect from January 1, 2005. The level of gratuity payable remains the same – 25% of aggregate salary received during their term of office.

Assuming that the salary of the current Governor General remains unchanged, she would have to remain in office for 35 years, i.e. until. 2032 to qualify for a gratuity of \$ 840,000 as claimed in the statement released by the United Workers Party.

The terms and conditions of service of Governor Generals provide for payment of a tax-free salary, for a fully-served official residence, and for official



**Governor General
Dame Pearlette Louisy**

vehicles of which there are two. The Governor General is however responsible for his/her own living expenses : the food he/she eats, the clothes he/she wears, his/her medical expenses, insurance coverage – medical or otherwise, private entertainment and contributions and donations to deserving causes. Where an Official Residence is not provided, as has been the case, a housing allowance is paid, which allowance is taken into account in the computation of total salary earnings for retirement benefits (Amendment Section 2 Act 13 of 1990)

While there was an increase in the Governor General's salary upon her appointment, a review of the salaries paid to Governor Generals across the CARICOM region would determine whether the current salary level in Saint Lucia could be considered “outrageous”. Based on 2002 figures, the salary paid in Saint Lucia represents the third lowest among the ten jurisdictions – The OECS, Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica and Belize –, 35% below the regional average, 40% below the median country, Grenada and 23% below the sub-regional average of the six OECS countries.”



Government House in Castries

New Mexican Ambassador Meets GG and Acting PM

Diplomatic relations and co-operation between St. Lucia and Mexico are expected to strengthen, as a result of the deepening of diplomatic relations between the Governments of the island and the major Latin American country. Mexico's new Ambassador to St. Lucia, His Excellency Sergio Melendez, presented his credentials to Governor General Dame Pearlette Louisy at Government House, Thursday 8th September.

Ambassador Melendez reiterated his country's commitment to developing stronger ties with St. Lucia. He explained that in its search for a higher role in international affairs, Mexico recently took a decision to establish an Embassy in the sub-region to be accredited to serving the member-states of the OECS. Following his meeting with the Governor General, Ambassador Melendez paid a courtesy call on Acting Prime Minister Philip J. Pierre, during which he again reiterated Mexico's interest in deepening existing relations with St. Lucia.

St. Lucia established diplomatic relations with Mexico immediately following Independence in 1979 and the two countries have maintained bilateral relations and cooperation, especially



H.E. Dame Pearlette Louisy greets the new Mexican Ambassador

in the areas of livestock development and tropical agriculture. Mexico has also been assisting in educational and diplomatic training for St. Lucians. In May of this year, 22 St. Lucians left for Mexico City to study various subjects.

Technical assistance is also being received by St. Lucians through a series of short training courses for Spanish

language teachers and diplomatic staff. Acting Prime Minister Pierre said after meeting Ambassador Melendez that St. Lucia welcomes the move by Mexico to take diplomatic relations and cooperation to a higher level. He said St. Lucia would reciprocate both at a bilateral level and through multilateral cooperation with Caricom.

Dame Eugenia Charles

The Government and people of Saint Lucia express condolences and sympathies with the Government and people of Dominica over the death of the late former Prime Minister, Dame Eugenia Charles. Dame Eugenia was a candid and forthright woman of strong character and integrity who was respected by all including her political opponents.

Serving as Prime Minister for three consecutive terms from 1980 to 1995, Dame Eugenia presided over the island's immediate post-independence development. A leading political figure of the Caribbean, she will be remembered, not only for her role in the US invasion of Grenada during the Reagan Administration, but also for her firm defence of the political principles in which she believed.

Dame Eugenia was a major contributor to the pride of Caribbean women and during her reign she inspired many young women to take the political road. The people of Dominica, St. Lucia and the Caribbean have lost a formidable political figure, who served with distinction and dignity, and who departed from the political field with grace and humility. She will always be remembered as we share in the grief of her loss.

PROTECTING OUR CITIZENS AND VISITORS

REMARKS BY THE HON. CALIXTE GEORGE, MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS AND INTERNAL SECURITY AT THE SOD-TURNING CEREMONY OF THE MICOUD FIRE AND POLICE STATIONS ON FRIDAY, 9TH SEPTEMBER, 2005

Once again the Government of Saint Lucia is keeping to its promise of providing a reasonable working environment for the men and women who are devoted to providing Law Enforcement and Security Services and the protection of our lives and property. The high risk nature of the operations of both Policemen and Firemen dictates that they are provided with requisite comfortable accommodation commensurate with their mandate.

Upon assuming office within the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security, I engaged the attention of various stakeholders towards the identification of some of the needs and constraints as well as recommendations to guide the way forward. The absence of a Police presence in certain strategic locations as well as the need to upgrade accommodation in other areas was highlighted. I did promise action with respect to recommendations made. When promises are made by me, I do my best to deliver.

It is within this context that there has been continuous dialogue between my Ministry and officials of NIPRO on the matter of providing modern infrastructural facilities for both the Police and Fire Services. The Sod Turning Ceremony being witnessed today therefore is as a result of the tireless efforts by my staff and that of NIPRO. The Ministry of Physical Development has offered substantial technical expertise to my Ministry through the Services of



Hon. Calixte George
Minister for Home Affairs and Internal Security

copy a total area of 4933 square feet (2508 sq. ft./ground floor area and 2425 sq. ft. /first floor area).

The Micoud Fire Station will be larger in area with a total of 5184 sq. ft. (ground floor/2704 sq. ft. and first floor 2480 sq. ft.)

The property will be properly landscaped. The project also includes provision of furniture and furnishings for twenty-two (22) Fire Officers and twenty-two (22) Police Officers.

The officers who will occupy these buildings we hope will appreciate the



Police Stations being built islandwide

I look forward to the implementation of continuous community intervention programmes; in particular Community Policing and Fire Prevention and safety programmes. There ought to exist this inextricable linkage between officers and various communities. Community Policing has become an important strategy in the fight against crime at

der rate is difficult to comprehend. The driving forces behind such murders are complex and involve several factors – social, economic, educational, political, environmental, etc. etc.

While we cannot prevent murders, we strive to reduce the frequency of their occurrence and the probability of their likelihood by taking certain

least reduce the incidence of crimes.

The establishment of Community Partnerships is applicable not only to Police Officers but to Fire Officers as well. Much must be done to achieve a certain level of public trust and confidence. In fact it must be mutual.

As I have indicated in the past, the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal



Government officials at the ground breaking ceremony

the Project Coordinator, Ms Jennifer Auguste. We do appreciate her astute competent technical guidance on all the BOLT Projects and this project in particular.

Two (2-storey) buildings will be constructed on this site on adjacent lots and will house the offices and dormitories for the Micoud Police and Micoud Fire Officers. The land is owned by Government.

The Micoud Police Station will oc-

substantive investment made by Government in providing these structures. The nonchalant attitude with respect to what is perceived to be “Bagay Gouv-edman” is rampant in this country. I therefore urge the management of both departments to ensure that mechanisms are adopted in ensuring that this attitude will not be tolerated. The officers must therefore, play a positive role towards the daily upkeep and maintenance of these facilities.

the local level. This necessitates the engagement of Communities Island wide in developing strategies to reduce opportunities for crime at the ground level. This also implies the establishment of close partnerships with existing community groups.

As we develop, the nature and frequency of crimes change. In recent times the number of senseless inexplicable murders is on the rise. The issue of the causes of the increase of the mur-

preventative measures such as providing an effective Police presence in the Community.

What we are witnessing today is a step in that direction. It is only by such partnerships that we can hope to lessen the incident of major crimes such as murder, rape and other crimes against persons. The fight against these major crimes is difficult and I can assure you – the citizens of Saint Lucia that this Ministry will make every effort to at



Recent police constables strengthening the force

Security is continuously striving for excellence. This can be achieved only if we work together as a Team towards the achievement of that goal. The proximity of the two stations to each other should encourage collaboration between the two services and give rise to synergies for the greater good of the community. It is with some anxiety therefore that I wait the unfolding of this new relationship.

I thank you.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY



INCENTIVES TO MODERNIZE
AND
REFURBISH BUSINESS PLACES

ATTENTION BUSINESS OWNERS!

- Do you own a building in central Castries, Gros Islet, Anse La Raye, Canaries, Soufriere, Choiseul, Laborie, Vieux Fort, Micoud, Dennery or Babonneau?
- Can your building do with a facelift?
- Would you like to renovate your building in preparation for the World Cup 2007?
- Would you like to benefit from concessions to renovate your business?

At the behest of the private sector, Government has agreed to reintroduce the Incentives for the modernization and refurbishment of business places in all key towns and villages in Saint Lucia.

How does this benefit you?

You will receive waivers of duties and taxes on all building materials utilized in repairing, rehabilitating and renovating of your place of business (specific conditions apply).

Duration?

This incentive came into effect on May 1, 2005, and will end on January 31, 2007.

What is the application process?

1. Obtain an Application Form from the Office of Private Sector Relations, located in the Office of the Prime Minister, 5th Floor, Greaham Louisy Administrative Building, The Waterfront, Castries, or download from our website: www.opsr.org.lc.
2. Submit your application accompanied by a Bill of Quantities -prepared by a certified quantity surveyor - in the specified format (specimen included in the application form).
3. Your application will be submitted to Cabinet for consideration, following which you will be informed of the outcome.

THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY IS URGED TO MOVE QUICKLY TO CAPITALIZE ON THESE CONCESSIONS

For more information and for other EU funded business development assistance, contact the Office of Private Sector Relations, Greaham Louisy Administrative Building, The Waterfront, Castries, Saint Lucia
Tel (758) 468-2145/2108 - Fax (758) 452-4606 - Email info.opsr@candw.lc - Website www.opsr.org.lc

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS – STILL A PRIORITY

PRIME MINISTER DR. KENNY D. ANTHONY

We must all accept the need for greater vigilance and caution during the upcoming season. Our fishermen and coast dwellers must pay serious attention to the advisories which are issued by the disaster and emergency agencies.

The Government of Saint Lucia through the Saint Lucia Met Services maintains a Weather Information Service at telephone 454-3452. There is now no excuse for any of us not to know the status of the weather for a particular day or when a hurricane is approaching.

Home owners and indeed all families, must take the necessary steps to ensure that their homes and families are adequately protected from hurricanes and their after-effects.

Insure your properties

Credit Unions in Saint Lucia use the group insurance methodology that allows members to access coverage at a reasonable rate. The Civil Service Co-operative Credit Union, for example, offers House and Household Contents coverage to its members. But the traditional house insurance is not the only risk we need to consider. Recently there have been a number of landslides, throughout the island. Subsidence insurance, as well as fire, flood and earthquake are some of the packages which are available. Again, I want to challenge you to strive for a 60% figure of insurance coverage for this year, no matter how painful the financial cost.

Insurance not only applies to our homes but to our businesses too. Business persons need to ask the following questions. Does the business have: (a) business interruption Insurance coverage? (b) rent insurance coverage? and (c) a continuity of operations plan?

As you know, this is a technological age. Businesses should therefore determine whether they have backup files and data saved away from their businesses.



Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony

Vexed issue of trees

Another issue which we must address is the trimming of trees. For many, this is a vexed issue. How often have neighbors quarreled with each other over trees that separate boundaries or grow in each other's back yard? I urge you to put your differences aside and trim your trees to avoid injury and damage.

The laws of Saint Lucia provide an avenue for addressing the nuisance of trees. However, we are all aware of the burden that the judicial system labours under and it may be months before your case comes before the courts. Neighbours must work together to remove the hazard of dangerous trees and branches. So, the solution does not lie in the court. If you are reluctant to cut or trim your trees, then, think again!

Disposal of waste

This brings me to a related issue, the disposal of our waste. Having cut a tree, a river is not the place to dispose of the waste. Poor garbage disposal in our water ways comes back to haunt us

with the intensity of floods. The topography of Saint Lucia, the combination of hills and valleys will always lead to flooding. We can lessen the effects of flooding by disposing of our garbage in the manner prescribed by the Solid Waste Management Authority.

The combination of poor garbage disposal with flood conditions brought on by hurricanes can lead to the outbreak of diseases. A good example is leptospirosis. This disease is carried by rats and can be lethal.

We must take control of how we deal with our garbage. The cycle of life is described as such because all that we do is linked. So it is in Disaster Management: Hurricanes bring rain that can cause floods. Poor garbage disposal can worsen those floods. Floods can sweep persons and buildings away and do untold damage.

The value of disaster planning

You may have noted this Government's heavy emphasis on disaster mitigation and disaster planning. Ev-

ery so often, you hear of a Resolution in Parliament to raise money for flood control and disaster mitigation. All of this is done as part of a broader planning process.

Proper planning includes things like being aware of the emergency shelters in your neighbourhood. Many persons query the adequacy of these shelters for the Hurricane Season; this is why they are Emergency Shelters and not Hurricane Shelters. Disaster Preparedness, as I indicated earlier, is a personal precaution. For that reason, the Government of Saint Lucia, through the NEMO Secretariat, advises that persons take steps to make their homes their emergency shelters. If this is not possible then we should make advance arrangements to be with family or friends. As recently as Hurricane Ivan, I announced in my address to the Nation the exact shelters that would be opened. The 2005 List is available from NEMO and on the Government of Saint Lucia website.



A timely reminder of the impact of storms



Flood mitigation works will prevent destruction

140 Eye Surgeries on Saint Lucian Patients in Cuba almost complete

The majority of Saint Lucian patients now in Cuba for eye surgeries under the Cuban Eye Care programme are said to have received their treatment. Word of this has come from Saint Lucian officials monitoring the ‘Miracle Plan Project’ in Havana.

Head of Mission of Saint Lucia’s Embassy in Cuba Mr. Peter Lansiquot says despite language and cultural barriers, the patients are extremely cheerful. He says the experience will serve well in handling future groups under the programme.

“There have been a few delays because the Cuban doctors in many instances needed to check out other



Hon. Jon Odlum Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Health, Human Services, Family Affairs and Gender Relations

medical conditions before they could actually perform the surgical interventions to the eyes. This is particularly the case with people with diabetic and hypertensive conditions,” Mr. Lansiquot said.

The 140 Saint Lucian eye patients are in the company of Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Health Honourable John Odlum and Ms. Eve Felicien, a young St. Lucian doctor. Mr Odlum says he is very pleased with the way the programme has progressed, but says the experience has been quite challenging.

“We’ve been having meetings with them daily. They are in two different hospitals and we travel to both of

them daily and have discussions with the— find out how they’re feeling, what they’re missing and what have you—And I must report, it has been very cordial to date. I spoke to my Ministry not to long off over the weekend and advised them, that I need help with about two students to come up and help with translation and treatment of the people,” Mr. Odlum said.

Some of the eye patients now in Cuba may have to return to the Spanish speaking Caribbean nation for more treatment because of complications with their present conditions. When this group returns to St. Lucia, another batch of patients will be flown to Cuba for more eye surgeries.

The Miracle Plan Is Improving Sight

The Miracle Plan Project (Plan Milagro) continues to record great success in Havana, Cuba. To date nearly 60,000 patients have received eye surgery and most of them have already returned to their homes and loved ones in several Caribbean islands and Venezuela. The first Saint Lucian contingent of returning patients will be in Saint Lucia during the course of next week.

Reports from Havana indicate that the Cuban authorities have expressed great pleasure with the behaviour of the Saint Lucian patients in particular. It is believed that the constant and active visits by the official Saint Lucia delegation in Cuba, under the leadership of Parliamentary Secretary Jon Odlum, has been the main factor contributing to such fine behaviour by the Saint Lucians. The delegation has been encouraging the participants to bear patience with their new surroundings and any

little inconveniences that might arise.

Besides the generally smooth progress of the Project, a few concerns have arisen concerning some level of impatience on the part of some of the companions.

Some companions have been expressing concern about the date of their return to Saint Lucia. The Saint Lucia delegation in Havana wishes to inform all future participants in the Miracle Plan Project, companions in particular, that they must ensure that they can remain in Cuba for a minimum of two weeks and a maximum of one month. In cases where a patient presents other medical complications, a companion whose presence is absolutely needed by a patient, should be willing to spend more time with the patient.

In the meantime the Saint Lucia delegation in Cuba is making arrangements for the reception of the next group of Saint Lucian patients.



The Miracle Plan team members

Negotiating Team Appointed

The Cabinet of Ministers has appointed a new Government Negotiating Team for Negotiations on Working Conditions for the 2004/2005 to 2006/2007 triennium. The team is chaired by Mr. Victor Poyotte, a management consultant and former Secretary to Cabinet in Saint Lucia.

The other members of the team are human resources management consultant Mr. Henry Phillips, Mr. Ivor Daniel of the Ministry of Finance and Mr. Mark Louis Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Labour Relations, Public Service and Cooperatives.

The decision to reactivate the Government Negotiating Team was taken earlier this year.



Government is the largest single employer in the country

GUARDING THE LIVELIHOOD OF BANANA FARMERS

HON. IGNATIUS JEAN SPEAKS TO REGIONAL EXPERTS

Continued from page 1

The European Union intends to set a high tariff as of 1 January 2006. It is true that we in the Caribbean need a high tariff in order to survive but we understand those who argue that this will not be good for many in Latin America and who fear that a high rate will damage their exports; the Caribbean know that if the tariff is set too low, their trade will be totally destroyed.

Given what I have just said about being sensitive to each other's concerns, I assure you that we would not wish that the price of our security is damage to the trade of some of our neighbours. However their prosperity should not be achieved at the cost of our survival.

Some still cling to the hope that a single tariff can be implemented at a level that will be fair and safeguard market access. It seems to me that in the current circumstances, there is no conceivable tariff level that will not destroy damage or at the very least, make all of us worse off than we are now. This therefore is not the sensible way to proceed.

Europe is currently the only major market still shielded from the global oversupply so that its prices are relatively remunerative and fair. That benefits all of us. We need to reflect carefully on the likely impact of a single tariff on the European market. The

increased competition would result in a massive drop in prices, even if imports do not expand substantially. It is our farmers and economies that would endure massive losses through no fault of their own.

This is why some of us in the Caribbean have been working together to encourage the African and European producers, who currently favour a high tariff, to instead support a satisfactory transitional arrangement in which the market is safeguarded from the threat of over-supply whilst our access and remunerative prices are secured. This would be an achievable objective if we all put aside short-term ambitions to expand exports. I extend the same invitation to Latin American banana producers to also commit to the pursuit of that objective that would safeguard the interests of us all.

At the International Banana Conference held in Brussels in April, a succession of speakers from both Latin American and ACP countries insisted that they wanted a solution that enabled their trade to be maintained without harming the other side. I fully support that view. But I fear that such an outcome will not be achieved by sitting back and waiting to see what emerges from a second Arbitration. The result that we need can only be achieved by actively seeking to find common

ground among all suppliers on an adequate transition period to a single tariff - one that takes account of the interests of all those involved and secures market access and price stability. Taking responsibility for determining our future must be better than the leap in the dark, some might say a game of Russian roulette, which the Arbitration process could constitute.

We can and must work together but success will only be possible if the final arrangement is one that genuinely preserves stability, rather than simply

briefly postpones the looming catastrophe of the 1st January 2006 destabilization of the market and the price collapse.

We as Ministers must display courageous political leadership, vision and a willingness to work together as developing countries of the same region to secure a better future for our farmers that is more ambitious, sustainable and worthwhile, than merely providing the lowest possible priced bananas to the European consumer regardless of the cost to our own countries.



Cul-de-Sac - one of the largest banana producing areas on the West Coast

New Entrepot Day Care Centre Opens Monday

The Ministry of Social Transformation, has announced the opening Culture and Local Government of the new Entrepot Day Care Centre. The centre, which opens Monday, September 19, will be open from 8:00am to 4:00pm daily and will be located below the current Entrepot Human Resource Development Centre.

It will house approximately 40 children from the Castries environs, aged between three months and three years. Fees for the new day care centre will be \$70 per child, per month, comprising \$60

for day care and \$10 for insurance. Meals will be provided. Application forms for registration of students are available from the Ministry of Social Transformation, Culture and Local Government, as well as at the Day care Centre.

Acting Prime Minister Philip J. Pierre, who is also the Parliamentary Representative for Castries East, has welcomed the opening of the new day care centre. He said: "It will provide care and comfort for the young children from the environs, who will be tomorrow's citizens and leaders. By ensuring they are properly taken care

of today, we are in fact enhancing their preparedness for the world of tomorrow and the tasks our country will face in the years ahead."

Mr Pierre also thanked the Ministry and Minister of Social Transformation, Culture and Local Government, as well as the Permanent Secretary, as well as the staff of the day care Unit "for making it possible for our toddlers to learn and grow in a safe and comfortable environment." He said it was "part of the Government's policy of improving the lives of citizens of the inner-city neighbourhoods of Castries and other urban environs."



Entrepot Human Resource Centre



THIS WEEK ON NTN

Sat. Sept. 17th - Fri. September 23rd, 2005

A new voter registration campaign has gotten underway, NTN takes a closer look at the exercise with members of the Electoral Commission - Mon. Sept 19th 8:00 p.m.

• Perspectives of Rastafari in St. Lucia - Mon. September 19th, 6:30 p.m.

• Join NTN for the latest episode in the exciting series Women West Indies - Tues. September 20th, 6:15 p.m.

• It's certainly the region's fastest growing industry & the main stay of the St. Lucian economy, find out about 'Careers in Tourism' - Wed. September 21st, 8:00 p.m.

• The reorganization & upgrading of agricultural sites on the island Thurs. September 22nd, 8:30 p.m.

• Highlights of NIPRO's latest multi million dollar investment - The Micoud Police & Fire Station September 23rd, 9:00p.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.

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