



# NATIONWIDE

A publication of the Department of Information Services



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## ENERGY TASK FORCE ON THE GO!

**T**he recently-appointed Energy Conservation Task Force has held its first meeting.

Appointed by Cabinet, the members of the Task Force met with the Prime Minister last week, during which he promised the Government would make available all the documentation necessary for their work.

The Task Force will, among other things, recommend strategies to ensure that St. Lucia has an adequate supply of energy in the short term and in the long term, as well as make recommendations to ensure that St. Lucia maximises energy efficiency and explores the production of renewable energy.

The Energy Task Force will also act as a body to engage in discussions with the Venezuelan authorities on the PetroCaribe initiative and to recommend measures to maximise potential benefits accruing from this initiative.

Members of the Energy Conservation Task Force are: Mr Sean Matthews (Chairman), Mr Louis Lewis of the Ministry of Finance; Mr Evaristus Jn Marie of the Petroleum Dealers Association; Mr Trevor Louisy of LUCELEC; Mr Michael Sewardor of the Ministry of Communications, Works, Transport and Public Utilities; Mr David Cox of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and Ms Judith Ephraim, the Sustainable Development Officer in the Ministry of Physical Development.

The establishment of the Energy Conservation Task Force is the latest step taken by the Government in its quest to ensure that the country's energy needs are met in years to come.

The Government has already taken several steps to address the country's energy needs, including the allocation of 70 acres of land for the establishment by LUCELEC of a wind farm. The Government has also been engaging LUCELEC in discussions aimed at reducing the electricity bills of consumers.

Another positive step taken by the Government was the announcement by the Prime Minister in his Budget Address earlier this year that it would, for the second time, reduce the Consumption Tax on energy saving devices. Under this programme, as of August 1 this year, for the next two years, up to and including the fiscal year 2007, Government will allow for a deduction on the expenses reasonably incurred by a tax payer in the purchasing and installing of a solar water heating system up to a limit of \$6,500.

One of the major immediate tasks of the Energy Conservation Task Force will be to advise the Government on its approach to the PetroCaribe Agreement, under which the Government of Venezuela has offered to make fuel available at cheaper price and on conditions more favourable than exist with current suppliers.



Renovations to the Court House in Castries as Government continues to upgrade facilities for managing law and order



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# CARICOM - SUPPORTING THE CUBAN PEOPLE

**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. JULIAN R. HUNTE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SAINT LUCIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ON BEHALF OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM) TO THE 60TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 8, 2005 ON AGENDA ITEM 18 (NECESSITY OF ENDING THE ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL EMBARGO IMPOSED BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AGAINST CUBA)**

**M**r. President, The Caribbean Community aligns itself with the Statement made by the Permanent Representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. In light of the importance of this issue to the Caribbean region, I address the Assembly on behalf of the Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Mr. President, The relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter emphasize the importance of the respect for the sovereign equality of states, non-interference in their internal affairs, the self-determination of peoples, the peaceful settlement of disputes, and the maintenance of friendly relations between states. For small states as those in the Caribbean region, these principles are paramount, and along with other important provisions, constitute the rule of law of the international community. These are principles which have been repeatedly reaffirmed, most recently in the 2005 Summit of Heads of State and Government.

It is from this principled perspective that we continue to oppose the imposition of unilateral punitive measures, and in particular, the extra-territorial application of legislation which constitutes a violation of international law. In this vein, freedom of trade and navigation is a critical component of global commerce, and undue restrictions are inconsistent with the promotion of free and fair trade which is essential to the sustainable development of small states as those of the Caribbean Community.

Cuba, as an integral part of the Pan-Caribbean process, is a country with which CARICOM maintains close relations and well established programmes of cooperation at various levels, in trade, and in the fight against HIV/AIDS, among other areas. CARICOM States look forward to further advancing our work programmes for CARICOM-Cuba cooperation.

CARICOM relations with Cuba are in strong recognition of the need and the commitment to pursue the acceleration of the process of integration of



H.E. Ambassador Julian R. Hunte

Cuban people to choose their own government, and for that government to carry out the mandate of the people in a manner beneficial to their social and economic development.

Mr. President, The embargo imposed against Cuba has been with us too long, and serves no other purpose than to preserve a state of tension between two neighboring countries, resulting only in the imposition of significant hardship and suffering of the people of Cuba. It is all the more regrettable that these measures continue to be unilaterally applied, and enhanced, at a critical time when the people of Cuba, the wider Caribbean, and parts of North America have suffered, and continue to suffer, from the devastation caused by the effects of several hurricanes which have struck in recent months.

These disasters have underscored the need for regional and international cooperation and solidarity, and the re-

alization that punitive measures such as the economic embargo are having a detrimental humanitarian effect on the people of Cuba.

Mr. President, The Caribbean Community enjoys friendly relations with the United States. In this spirit, we urge its government to respect the will of the international community to bring an end to the embargo and to engage in constructive dialogue and normalization of relations with Cuba. Such a step would remove a source of tension and conflict, and significantly enhance the prospects for peace, poverty alleviation, development, and co-operation within the hemisphere of the Americas.

Accordingly, CARICOM delegations support the content of the Draft Resolution which is before the General Assembly, and will vote in support of its adoption. Thank you, Mr. President.



CARICOM Prime Ministers and Opposition Leaders have agreed to work together to solve the region's problems



Dr. Anthony and Cuban President Fidel Castro

the Greater Caribbean, with the aim of increasing the international competitiveness and spurring the development of the entire Region.

In this light, the Government of Cuba has continued its assistance to the Caribbean Community through the assignment of medical and other health care personnel who are able to lend important assistance during natural disasters. Further, Cuba continues to provide scholarships to many students in CARICOM countries, thus contributing significantly to the human resource development of the people of our region.

Cuba is an integral part of the Caribbean region, and threatens no one. On the contrary, her commitment to the social and economic development of the Caribbean is unquestionable. CARICOM continues to reiterate unwavering support for the right of the



Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony during his first official tour to Cuba



# GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS POVERTY RESEARCH

**A Country Poverty Assessment exercise currently underway in Saint Lucia is reportedly providing planners with vital insights into the social fabric of the island.**

Deputy Chairman of the National Assessment Team (NAT) Donovan Williams says sixteen communities island-wide have been specially selected to be part of the exercise. The survey touches on four main components namely macro economic analysis, institutional analysis, survey of living

conditions, and participatory poverty assessment. "It is very interesting and revealing to hear firsthand of some of the responses from some of the groups that we have interviewed so far," says Williams.

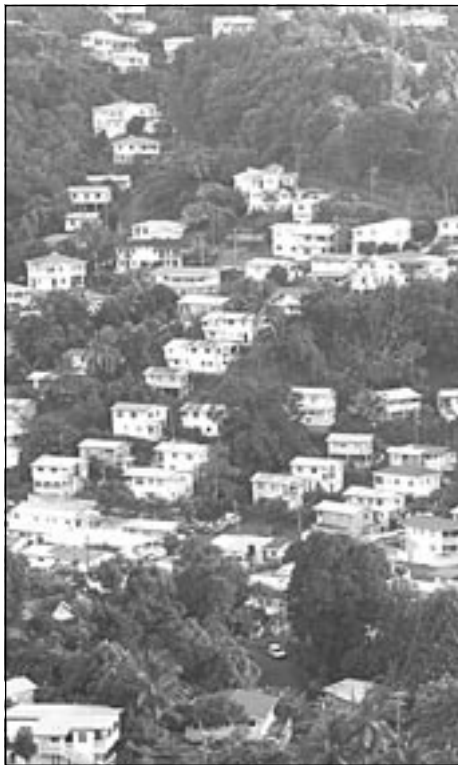
He says he was, "privy to a meeting of children ages 8 – 14 in the Faux A-Choux community and the insights that they provided were quite astounding. You would not believe that persons of that age can perceive some of the issues, problems and solutions to those

issues. I think it's a real exciting exercise in that sense."

The Saint Lucia initiative is being undertaken simultaneously with Antigua/Barbuda. The rest of the region will have similar poverty assessments conducted in their territories next year. Social Transformation Minister Honourable Menissa Rambally says the data gathered will be used to assess the quality of life and living conditions being experienced at the community, family and individual levels, with particular interest on vulnerable groups like women, and children.

According to Ms. Rambally, "the Ministry of Finance will serve as a beneficiary of this information and exercise, so will the Ministries of Education and Health because you can well understand that when you go into a community, the information that we would glean from that community would be wide ranging. Therefore this country poverty assessment is not only useful to the social development landscape of St. Lucia but it's important to every aspect of development taking place within the country because it is going to inform us in a very real way as to what people are experiencing."

The last country poverty assessment was conducted in 1995 and gave rise to the formation of the Poverty Reduction



Survey of rural areas



The survey will target poor urban areas

Fund among other intervention agencies. This current assessment will end by January of 2006 with a draft report scheduled for February 2006. Officials say in the end the hope is to further enhance the types of programmes that must be undertaken by government in order to make meaningful interventions.

The main donor agency involved in funding the poverty assessment is the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), in close collaboration with the National Assessment Team (NAT) appointed by the Ministry of Social Transformation, Culture and Local Government.

## EXPORTING BANANAS TO THE CARIBBEAN



Bananas - still a vibrant sector

tified Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, St. Kitts and Nevis, Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands – where bananas are consumed, but not produced – as possible markets for Windward Islands bananas.

Former Prime Minister Sir John Compton immediately scoffed Mr Chastanet's proposal. In a statement, the UWP Leader described Mr Chastanet's proposal as "illogical, ill-advised and downright dangerous." He said the proposal as one that would "return St. Lucia to the days of the schooner trade of hawking our fruit on the docksides of Barbados, Antigua and the Virgin Islands."

Sir John likened Mr Chastanet's proposal to the proverbial dog and the shadow of its bone, saying it would be foolish for the islands to abandon the European market of 52 million persons, "in favour of 350,000 Caribbean people with lower purchasing power than the United Kingdom."

But a technical paper prepared by an official of the OECS Secretariat for the OECS Heads of Government does not agree with Sir John's prognosis. Instead, it favours the approach advocated by Mr Chastanet. Indeed, when they gathered in Anguilla for their 42nd Summit Meeting, the Heads of Government reviewed the paper on "Developments in the Banana Trade" in member-states, which they also examined "Alternative Markets for Caribbean Bananas."

Like Mr Chastanet, the author of the document noted that in the face of the increasing pressure on regional bananas exports to Europe, "the regional banana market seems to be the logical choice." They also noted that there exists a sizeable market for bananas in

Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts and Nevis, Anguilla and the British Virgin islands.

While the exact size of these markets in the Caribbean has not been quantified, some preliminary estimates place them at about 200,000 to 300,000 metric tons per year – which, the document noted, "is in excess of the combined capacities of all Windward Islands' output."

"Therefore," the document said, "not only is there a market for bananas within the region, there would also appear to be prospects for growth into the years ahead."

The document concluded, however, that "success in developing the regional market will depend on the cooperation on non-banana producing Caricom states."

The paper also concluded that other markets worth pursuing within the region would include the cruise ship sector and the hotel industry in member-states, as several hotels and cruise lines currently import bananas under various arrangements from outside of the region.

After considering the document, the Heads of Government mandated the OECS Secretariat to undertake further work geared at establishing the size of the regional banana market and other non-traditional markets like cruise ships and hotels for the region's banana export.

The Secretariat was also mandated by the OECS Heads of Government to work closely with the stakeholders in member-states to develop a regional marketing and distribution plan.



OECS leaders and officials at a recent meeting in Saint Lucia

**Heads of Government of the OECS are in support of a proposal to develop a Caribbean market for Caribbean bananas and are already taking initial steps in that direction.**

Recently, local entrepreneur Michael Chastanet said it was possible to develop a regional market for bananas produced in St. Lucia and the Windward Islands. He said that with access to the the European Market becoming more and more difficult, the region should look at the possibility of marketing and selling locally-produced bananas within the region. Mr Chastanet iden-



## CONVERSATION WITH THE NATION

**G**reetings, Fellow St. Lucians, I want to add my voice to the discussion on the Interception of Communications Act. I thought I should choose this particular topic because of an encounter with a citizen at a public function. The citizen, a young lady, asked me rather bluntly: "Why does the Government want to hear what I'm saying on my telephone?"

This lady is an honest, law-abiding citizen who goes to church every Sunday, and, as we say, 'she wouldn't mash an ant.' But her concern was sincere. Like most of us, she is anxious for the Government to do whatever it can to fight crime, but she is also eager to guard every right she enjoys.

The question asked of me is also on the minds of many of you. After all, the Interception of Communications Law has been the subject of discussion for the past two weeks. Just about everyone has had their say -- for and against -- the new law. Our democracy is truly alive and well!

### Advanced notice and clear intentions

The Interception of Communications Bill was presented, debated,



Prime Minister Dr. Kenny D. Anthony

amended and unanimously passed by all members present in the House of Assembly on Tuesday, November 1st. But it was not sneaked into the House, as some of the critics would try to have

you believe. Let us trace the history of this law.

At the Annual Conference of the St. Lucia Labour Party on December 5, 2004, I advised the Labour Party faithful as follows: "(We) will introduce legislation to Parliament early next year, jointly with other OECS countries, to empower judges of the Supreme Court to grant authority to the Director of Public Prosecutions to intercept communications of drug dealers, whether by telephone or otherwise. We must fight crime on every front."

This statement was repeated, verbatim, in my New Year's Address to the Nation on January 16, 2005. This is what I said:

"I repeat again, for public information, that we will introduce legislation to parliament early this year, jointly with other OECS countries, to empower judges of the Supreme Court to grant authority to the Director of Public Prosecutions to intercept communication of drug dealers, whether by telephone or otherwise."

During the debate on the Bill on November 1, 2005, I indicated that the Bill was approved by Cabinet in March of this year. Cabinet advised the Attorney General to issue a Note to the Press to alert the media and the public about the decision to enact the Bill.

The Bill was listed on the Order Paper and circulated to Members of Parliament on August 8, 2005 for the sitting of the House of Assembly on August 16, 2005. It received its first reading at the sitting of the House on August 16, 2005. As the Office of the Speaker of Parliament has confirmed, the Interception of Communications Bill was listed on all the Order Papers for all sittings of the House of Assembly from August 16, 2005 to November 1, 2005, when it was finally passed.

So, the Leader of the United Workers Party, Sir John Compton, has once again engaged in his favourite pastime, misleading the public. It was simply untrue to say that Members in the House only saw the Bill on the weekend before it was presented in the House. But more of that later, in the right forum, at the right time.

# Only Criminals Must Fear Interception of Their Communications

So, that takes care of those who claim we did not give sufficient advance notice of the Government's intentions with regard to Interception of Communications Act.

### Prevention as important as solving crime

Let us look at why the new law became necessary, what it says, who it's aimed at and whether there is any need to fear it.

First of all, the new law is another necessary tool, a vital weapon in the continuing war against serious crime in St. Lucia. Let me explain. The fight against crime is being fought on several fronts at the same time. The Police always have to adopt new strategies to fight crime. They cannot simply wait for crimes to be committed and then pursue the criminals. They cannot allow the criminals to always be a step ahead. They have to keep up with the criminals; otherwise crime will always be out of hand. Today, as fast as the criminals adopt new strategies, so too must the Police.



The Bill being debated in Parliament

Nowadays, criminals have become extremely sophisticated in planning and executing criminal acts. They have acquired enough wealth from their criminal acts to afford the most modern communications equipment. They are

up to date with the latest technology. They conduct their business by satellite telephone, internet and wireless radio. They use various types of equipment to transmit and relay messages at home and abroad, to network and communicate with their contacts abroad, to facilitate their illegal transactions. In some cases, they even eavesdrop or intercept Police communications to avoid detection and to remain a step ahead of the law enforcement agencies.

### The law is against criminals, not law abiding citizens

In light of all this, the Police cannot be expected to tackle that sort of crime with their bare hands, or with batons and vehicles alone. They have to be strengthened. They have to be armed with the laws that will allow them to be able to intercept the communications that are vital to defeating criminals at home and abroad.

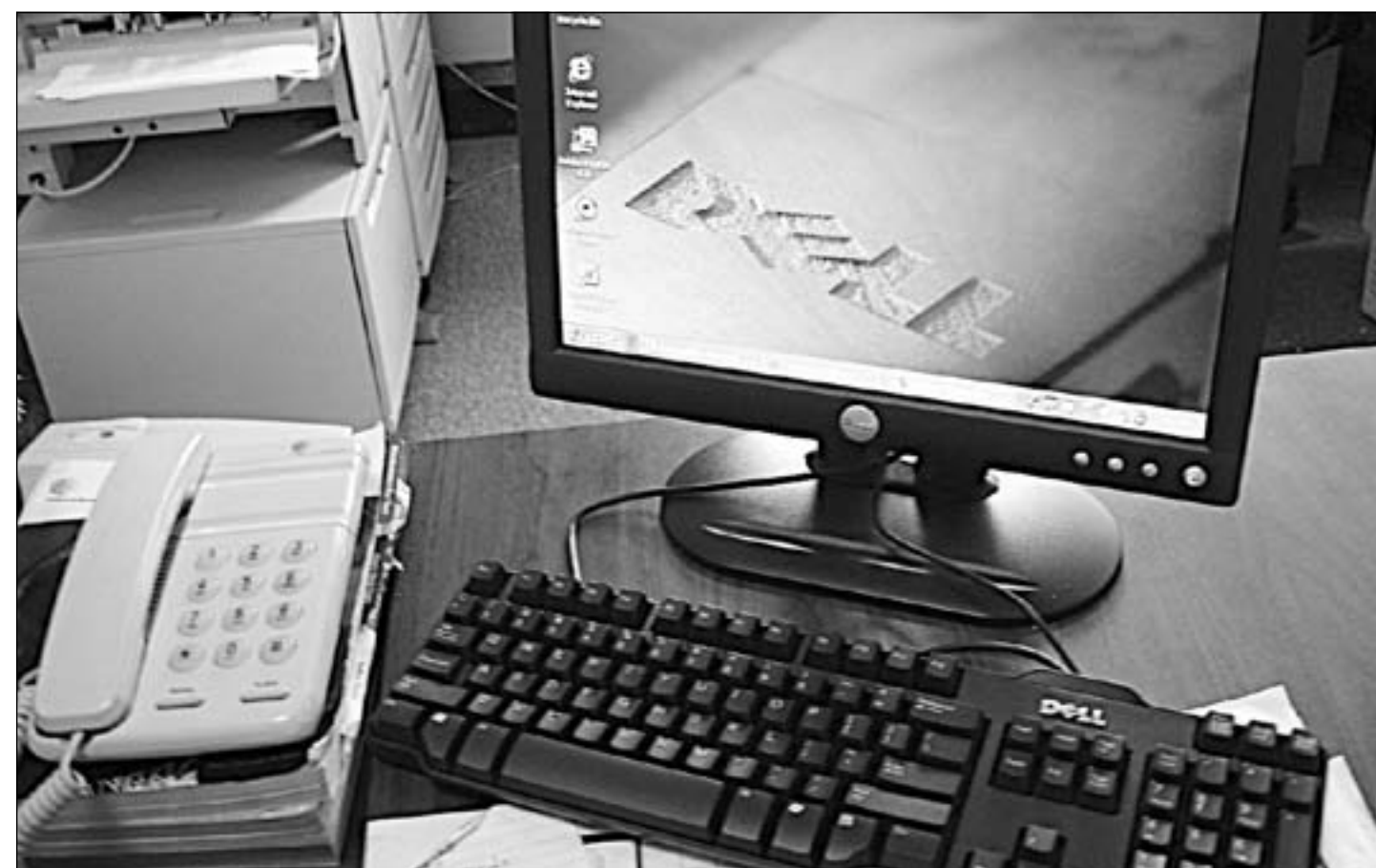
It is against these persons -- and not against innocent and law abiding persons -- that this law is aimed. It is those who engage in such acts of criminality

-- those who engage in drug smuggling and money laundering, those who are tempted to kidnap, those who commit murder, who shoot to kill, who maim and harm others -- it is they who should be concerned about the new law, and not innocent and law abiding citizens who earn an honest living and live in peace with others like most of us do.

### What the law says

So what does the law say? First of all, contrary to what's being said the law does not give the Police the right to listen to anyone and everyone's telephone conversations. We too are concerned about the rights of citizens to be protected from invasion of their privacy. That is why we have taken care to ensure that it is the Judiciary -- which will make the decisions and authorize the Police to tap the telephone of a person suspected of planning and engaging in crime. Incidentally, the application for interception is made to a Judge by the Director of Public Prosecutions or the Attorney General, not the Police.

The Police or the Director of Public Prosecutions cannot simply decide to intercept your communication just like that. If the Director of Public Prosecutions or the Attorney General have reason to want to intercept anyone's communication, they first have to go before



Computer technology used in telephony

a High Court Judge and satisfy that judge that there is good enough reason to want to intercept the communication of a person suspected of engaging or about to engage in some specified form of criminal activity. When that is done, an Interception Direction and

Members in the House of Assembly proposed three amendments, which were entertained and accepted by the Government. A perusal of the record of the Parliamentary Vote on the Bill will indicate that none of the Opposition Members present voted against the Bill

democracies -- for example -- in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and France. Such legislation also exists in Jamaica.

### Adjusting to meet the new challenges

St. Lucia cannot, however, wait on its neighbours. We must act quickly



Saint Lucia boasts modern telecommunications infrastructure

an Entry Warrant has to be issued by the judge to allow for the interception to take place. And where interception takes place and someone feels that his or her rights have been infringed, that person may appeal to a Tribunal set up under the law. This Tribunal is presided over by a Judge appointed by the Chief Justice of the OECS. Further, it is the Chief Justice, not a Minister of Government, who will prescribe a Code of Conduct to guide those who will be implementing authorised interceptions. The Opposition wanted this and the Government agreed.

### Opposition concerns addressed

In fact, two of the four Opposition

when it was presented for its third and final reading.

### We are not alone

Saint Lucia is not the only country which will enact this legislation. It is part of uniform legislation drafted for and to be adopted by all the member-states of the OECS, to strengthen the collective hand of the region's law enforcement agencies in the continuing fight against crime.

But it is not only in the Caribbean that the police have had to be armed with similar legislation to help them keep up with the sophisticated crimes committed today. Similar legislation exists in mature

and effectively. We must fight crime on every front.

We are improving our capabilities at different levels. The new forensic lab will come on stream next year. We have established the Crown Prosecution Service to better prosecute criminals, and fight corrupt behaviour in the prosecution of crimes.

We found the justice system in shambles, but we are revamping the courts. We pioneered the creation of a Criminal Division of the High Court to hear criminal cases year-round. The system is becoming more efficient. Where cases once took years before being heard,

court cases are now being disposed of at a rate of 66%, up from 51% two years ago. We are training and depoliticizing the police force. The entire legislative framework is being revamped to better enable us to fight crime. That is the reason why we introduced a new Firearms Act, a new Evidence Act and a new Criminal Code.

### Safeguards against abuse

Interestingly, most persons agree that the legislation is necessary, even vital in the fight against crime. The real concern is the possibility that the legislation would be abused.

We are satisfied that there are sufficient legislative safeguards to prevent the possibility of abuse of interception of communications. The Opposition Members themselves contributed to the amendments that have strengthened these legislative safeguards. As indicated earlier, it is a judge who has the power to allow an interception. It is the Chief Justice who will prescribe rules under the Act. It is the Chief Justice who will prescribe a Code of Conduct for authorised users. If any citizen feels that he or she was wrongfully targeted, a complaint could be submitted to the Tribunal established by the Act. The finding could be appealed directly to the Court of Appeal. Frankly, what additional safeguards are necessary?

### Conclusion: Law abiding citizens have nothing to fear

As the Attorney General pointed out last week, law-abiding citizens have nothing to fear from the Interception of Communications legislation. The only ones who have to fear its use and effectiveness are those engaging in and planning the execution of serious crimes like robbery, abduction, corruption, fraud, hijacking, murder, drug trafficking and money laundering, trafficking in human bodies and other forms of crime.

I hope I have been able to assure you, like I think I assured the lady the other day, that the purpose of the new law is to help in the fight against serious crime and not intended in any way to infringe on the rights of peaceful and law-abiding citizens.

Until next week, may the Good Lord bless and protect you and keep you from harm.



Mobile telecommunications tower



Fixed and mobile telephones in use today



# Landslip at Barre d’Isle

**M**inister for Communications Works, Transport and Public Utilities, Hon. Felix Finisterre has said that there will be continuous monitoring of the land slippage at the Barre D’Isle, on a section of the main road between Castries and Vieux Fort.

Speaking to news reporters last Wednesday at Barre D’Isle, at the site of a land slippage Hon. Finisterre said “It is very important link road for tourists linking the international airport in the south to our principal hotel belt in the north, our bananas from the IRBD, not to mention the daily commute of

people going about their daily lives Over the period of 11th November 2005 to 15th November 2005, there have been several land slippages in the Barre d’Isle area, along the East Coast Road, due to the persistent, heavy rain showers.

Most of the land slips have been as a result of the failure of cut slopes, resulting in material being deposited on the road carriageway. Fortunately, most have been cleared as soon as they have occurred.

However, on the 14th November 2005, on the eastern side of the Barre d’Isle (approximately 11.2km from the



**Hon. Felix Finisterre**  
**Minister for Communications,**  
**Works, Transport and Public Utilities**

Cul de Sac Junction) a section of the road subsided. Cracks appeared on the road surface. These cracks got progressively worse, resulting in several ‘steps’ in the road surface. These ‘steps’, as of 15th November 2005, were some 2” to 4” inches in depth and covered an area of approximately 100m (300 feet).

A team of Engineers (from Halcrow and the Ministry of Communications, Works and Public Utilities) have been monitoring the situation since 14th November 2005. Programme Manager of the Halcrow Group Mandish Singh said “We are in the process of mobilizing geo-technical investigations so that we can ascertain the depth of the soil mas which has moved and where the rock bed is. From that we can explore solutions and the kind and the kind of solutions we are looking at are feasibility of actually moving the road alignment so that we can move away from the slip area”

As a precaution, the road section within the affected area was reduced to single-lane traffic and there was 24-hour monitoring of the situation and road traffic was being controlled.

On 15th November 2005, a topographical survey was commenced to map and record the extent of the road subsidence. Arrangements were also made to carry out a geo-technical investigation to determine the depth and characteristics of the soil underneath the road, as well as to determine the depth to the bedrock.

Alternative solutions to rectify the land subsidence have already commenced and will be finalized as soon as the topographical and geo-technical information is available.



**The section of the road that was affected**



**Project engineer Mandish Singh**

## PHARMACEUTICALS UNDER UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE

**C**hief Medical Officer-Dr Stephen King said many persons have indicated difficulty in purchasing pharmaceuticals that have been prescribed by their doctors. According to Dr. King, Saint Lucia cannot afford to operate a health system where persons are unable to access drugs especially in the treatment of chronic illnesses.

He said “We want to reduce the drug debt or the drug burden, financial burden in the country; that is one reason for bringing public and private sector on board in that what we want to do reduce the amount of foreign exchange we spend on drugs but also increase the supply of drugs and that;s why we want an efficient national mechanism, a pooled mechanism for purchasing pharmaceuticals and of course making these drugs easily available at no charge out in the communities.”

The OECS Pharmaceuticals Procurement Services-PPS located in Saint Lucia will become the main provider of pharmaceuticals to the universal heath care system. According to Dr. King pharmaceuticals are integral to primary care. The UHC he added will be sustained by a new financial system combined with an existing mechanism through the consoli-



**Dr. Stephen King**  
**Chief Medical Officer**

dated fund. A UHC Impact Assessment Study revealed that St. Lucia spends some 80 million dollars yearly on imported pharmaceuticals.

But even as the UHC is looking to increase the accessibility to prescribed drugs, storage space could pose a major challenge. According to Managing Director of the OECS PPS, Francis Burnett there are plans to restructure the existing central medical stores to accommodate a larger quantum of pharmaceuticals.

## A First Lesson From The Prime Minister

Prime Minister of Saint Lucia Dr. Kenny D. Anthony last week visited the Seventh Day Adventist Academy (SDA) in Castries where addressed the student body on a wide range of issues related to his work as leader of government. Dr. Anthony spoke on issues related to budgeting and financial management and the task of ensuring that all programmes and projects are delivered. He also spoke on matters related to the constitution, ahead of the work on the Constitutional Review Commission. The Commission will facilitate the process of consultations on the examination of all aspects of the Constitutional Order of 1978, and asses the relevance of the provisions against the background of the recent social economic and political history of Saint Lucia.



**Dr. Anthony addressing students**



**Students of the SDA School**

# GOVERNMENT MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR SUPPORT FOR FARMERS

## THE BANANA INDUSTRY TRUST MEASURES ITS SUCCESSES

**T**he Government of Saint Lucia continues to contribute millions of dollars to a carefully planned development programme for the banana industry. In his budget address to the nation earlier this year, Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony stated “While our Government has invested heavily over the past eight years in repositioning the banana industry to allow it to cope with the challenges and vagaries of the new global marketplace, we recognize that there is still some work to be done in the non-banana sub-sectors. This has become even more necessary in the light of new and evolving regimes with our traditional trading partners”.

One of the institutions established to manage financial support for the banana industry is the Banana Industry Trust (BIT). The Banana Industry Trust was established by Cabinet Conclusion No.611 of 10 June 1999. The establishment of the Trust was endorsed by the Delegation of the European Union Commission in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean. Though the objectives of the Trust were many and all relate to the betterment of the Banana Industry, one of the primary objectives was to encourage, assist and support the development of sound farm practice in the production of bananas and in particular to restore confidence in the banana industry.

The Trust was given the mandate to implement the Banana Commercialization with funding provided under the EU Special Framework of Assistance (SFA) 1999 and 2000 Grant Contracts. The funding under the SFA99 was EC\$10.2 million of which EC\$8.8 million has been spent to date. Under SFA2000 \$9.6 million of the EC\$11.5 million allocated has been spent.



**Major investments in the control of diseases**

There were five (5) projects under the SFA99 Grant Contract comprising the following: (1) The installation of 440 acres “Off-Farm” irrigation infrastructure in Cul-de-Sac; (2) The installation of 180 acres “Off-Farm” irrigation infrastructure in Roseau; (3) The installation of 77 acres “Off-Farm” irrigation infrastructure in Canelles; (4)



**Improved reception and packaging facilities**

The construction of a 54,000 m3 Reservoir in Cul-de-Sac; (5) The Drainage of 200 acres of banana lands in the Mabouya Valley.

There were four (4) projects under the SFA2000 Grant Contract comprising the following: The drainage of 500 acres in the Roseau Valley; The installation of 200 acres “Off-Farm” irrigation infrastructure in Roseau – Phase II; The construction of a 75,000 m3 Reservoir in Roseau; The drainage of 200 acres in the Cul-de-Sac Valley.

All the projects under the two (2) phases were put out to Tender both locally and internationally. Of the nine (9) projects, the five (5) construction projects were awarded to local companies and the four (4) irrigation infrastructure projects were awarded to a French company. The SFA99 projects commenced in April 2002 and have all been successfully completed. The first of the SFA2000 projects commenced in August 2003 and all have been completed with the exception of the Roseau Reservoir which completion has been delayed due to the frequent rains in recent months. The project however is substantially completed and all the projects expenditures were kept within the allocated budgets. To date \$8.1 million and \$8.2 million respectively of the SFA99 and SFA2000 Budgets have been spent.

The Trust has also been able, with the support and blessings of the Ministry of Agriculture and the NAOs’ Office, to obtain approval from the European Union to use savings under the SFA99 projects to finance the operations and management of the irrigation systems by the IMU in the three (3) areas until May 2005, as well as to finance additional irrigation and drainage works in the Mabouya Valley, and to enhance the site and provide additional security for the Cul-de-Sac Reservoir facility.

The Trust has successfully managed the \$2.950 million, Input Credit Programme funded by the Government of

St. Lucia, started in 2001 that aimed to provide credit finance to farmers for critical inputs. The funds have been recycled to the farmers on three (3) occasions. All funds extended initially have been fully recovered, and only \$132,047.98 is still outstanding from the last phase of which \$37,203.01 might be considered in arrears. The arrears represent 1.5% of the total disbursements to farmers.

A matter that has absorbed significant attention of the Trust has been the problem of Leafspot infestation over the years and more recently earlier this year, which has dealt telling blows to the industry. From December 2001 Trust funds have been used to assist in tackling various outbreaks of Leafspot on the island. Based on requests from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries, the Banana Industry Trust advanced \$1.1 million to the Ministry, significant resources in support of tackling this problem.

More recently the Trust has been able to make a more successful intervention in the provision of fungicides and pesti-

cides to the industry by providing access to these products through purchasing and making them available through a local distributor. The monies from this initiative have all been recovered.

The Trust, through the intervention of the BERU acquired 500 acres of “On-Farm” irrigation equipment to enable the farmers in the three (3) irrigated areas of Cul-de-Sac, Roseau and Canelles to ensure a proper distribution of water to the farms. Loans will be granted to the farmers repayable over five (5) years so they can purchase the equipment.

Other interventions by the Trust included the installations of “Off-Farm” irrigation infrastructure in Mabouya Valley – 84 acres and Troumassee – 57 acres, in 2000 for a total of \$1.4 million. This gesture proved quite timely as both of these areas were saved from the ravages of the severe drought in 2001. The Trust also provided an advance of \$0.5 million to one of the banana companies to support payment to farmers whose bananas were damaged by high winds in 2003.

*Continued on page 8*



**Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony and WIBDECO officials in London**



# GOVERNMENT MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR SUPPORT FOR FARMERS

## The BANANA INDUSTRY TRUST MEASURES ITS SUCCESSES

Continued from page 7

The Trust is administered by a Board of nine (9) Trustees made up of representatives from the banana companies, the public and private sectors and the Chairman is Mr. Brian Louisy. There is also a Steering Committee responsible for the operations of

the Trust, made up of representatives from the banana companies and an input supplier. The Trust is managed by Mr. Bertram C. Clarke, who is the Executive Officer and is supported by Mrs. Donasha Alcindor-Wells, who is the Administrative Assistant. The office of the Trust is located in

the American Drywall Building, Vide Boutielle, Castries

The Banana Industry Trust has indicated that it will continue to work diligently in fulfilling its mandate as set out in the Trust Deed on the establishment of the Trust.



Promoting the consumption of bananas in Saint Lucia

# GRENADA SAYS THANKS!

The Government of Grenada has thanked Saint Lucia and the other OECS member-states for their financial support in the aftermath of Hurricanes Ivan and Emily. Due to the tremendous financial difficulties which faced the Grenadian government after the destruction of Hurricane Ivan last year and Hurricane Emily earlier this year, five of the island's fellow OECS member-states took on the responsibility of meeting the cost of Grenada's financial contribution to the sub-regional grouping.

Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, Montserrat, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Saint Lucia shared the cost of Grenada's contribution of \$1.4 million. But by far the biggest contribution came from Saint Lucia, which contributed \$1,066,148. The Grenadian government has now expressed its gratitude to its OECS neighbours for their financial support as it continues to make steady progress in rebuilding damaged infrastructure.

In a letter dated November 6, 2005 to Chairman of the OECS Authority, Vincentian Prime Minister Dr Ralph Gonsalves, Grenadian Prime Minister Dr Keith Mitchell said his country was grateful "for the understanding demonstrated toward Grenada during our period of need and, in particular, for the tremendous financial burden which the OECS family, led by Saint Lucia, carried on our behalf in the period following Hurricane Ivan."

The Grenada Prime Minister told his colleagues at the recently-concluded 42nd Meeting of the OECS Authority in Anguilla that his country now "stands ready and prepared to resume our payment of contributions to the OECS Secretariat by 21st November 2005."

# RESPECT OUR CHILDREN

Saint Lucia will on Sunday November 20th observe Universal Children's Day with activities spearheaded by the Division of Family Affairs and Gender Relations.

The Division's Director Ms. Clementia Eugene said the activities will continue for a week, during which time families, public institutions and individuals are expected to recognise and respect that children also have rights.

Ms. Eugene said internationally, the day is devoted to promoting the objectives and ideals of the United Nations Charter and the welfare of the children all over the world.

"St. Lucia signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child on the 30th of September 1990 and ratified it on the 16th of June 1993. And so St. Lucia joins the rest of the world in promoting the rights of children; and that involves an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to ensure the safety and well-being of all children and to implement the rights of the convention."

The Division's director said closely tied into the significance of the observance is the right of children to be free from abuse, violence and any ill treatment.

"Children are important, they are precious jewels of the nation and so we need to treat them with respect, with dignity and with worth. So we make a plea against all cases of injustice against children particularly since the situation seems to be relatively grave in St. Lucia with children that are being abused every day."

Ms. Eugene also announced the formation of the National Action Child Care Protection Committee which is the coming together of all social services which provide services to children. She said as a first plan of action the committee will host a series of radio programming to promote the rights of children.



School children during a visit to the Prime Minister's Official Residence

# THIS WEEK ON NTN

- Sat. Nov. 19th – Fri. Nov. 25th, 2004
- The GIS discusses the Country Poverty Assessment Currently taking place in St. Lucia, Sat. Nov. 19th, 9:15 a.m.
  - Diabetes – It's Impact and Treatment - Sun. Nov. 20th, 10:30 a.m.
  - The GIS discusses access to medicine when the Universal Health Care Programme comes on stream. - Mon. Nov. 21st, 6:15 p.m.
  - Screening for Colorectal Cancer – Tues. Nov. 22nd, 6:15 p.m.
  - Youth Awards 2005 Part 1 – Tues. Nov. 22nd – 8:00 p.m.
  - Youth Awards 2005 Part 11 – Wed. Nov. 23rd – 8:00 p.m.
  - The GIS places the spotlight on the Centre for Adolescent Rehabilitation & Education - CARE – Thurs. Nov. 24th, 9:00 p.m.
  - Testicular & Breast Self-Exam – Fri. Nov. 25th, 8:00 p.m.
- Remember to tune in for:
- GIS News Breaks and Kweyol News daily from 6:30 p.m.
  - Issues & Answers/Mondays at 8:00pm:
  - Interview/Tuesdays at 6:15pm :
  - Konsit Kweyol/Tuesdays at 8:00pm (Kweyol Discussion):
  - Your Right to Know/Thursdays at 6:15 p.m. (Min. of Ed. Prog).
  - Take 2/Fridays at 6:15pm (Week in Review)
  - Weflechi/Fridays at 6:40pm - (Week in Review—Kweyol)

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

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