



# NATIONWIDE

A publication of the Department of Information Services



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

Government Notebook  
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daily  
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# Saint Lucia First In OECS Doing Business Report

**P**rim Minister of Saint Lucia, Honourable Dr. Kenny Anthony, has described the "Doing Business in the OECS 2007 Report" as a "powerful truth for policy makers" in the region. Speaking at the launching of the Report, Dr. Anthony acknowledged Saint Lucia's rank as first in the OECS in the area of overall ease of doing business.

"As I said this report has excited me because finally we have a tool and we are able to make judgements on the way forward."

Dr. Anthony also expressed an intention to review tax levels. The regional

report produced with significant World Bank input finds that Saint Lucia has the lowest tax burden among OECS countries ranking ninth out of 175 economies.

"On the positive side and again I ask for forgiveness if I speak of Saint Lucia here. The report suggests that Saint Lucia has the lowest tax burden in the OECS countries; it is my intention to reduce that tax burden even further."

Dr. Anthony said the report generally confirms that some drastic improvements have to be made particularly in relieving bureaucratic delays.

"I confess that I agree entirely with the report over the planning is-

sues. And the report is correct; it is one huge area where drastic adjustments is required because here in Saint Lucia, you require the approval of so many disparate agencies to be able to go through a planning process and I have to tell you it is one sector of the bureaucracy where the frustration is very, very real."

The publication of the "Doing Business 2007: Organization of Eastern Caribbean States" was made possible by the United States Agency for International Development USAID/Caribbean Regional program under the terms of contract of the Caribbean Open Trade Support Program.



Prime Minister Hon. Kenny Anthony

## CONSUMER PROTECTION BILL COMING

**W**ork has commenced here on the preparation of a Consumer Protection Bill. This disclosure was made Monday by Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Commerce, Investment and Consumer Affairs, Louis Lewis.

Speaking during the opening of a regional workshop at the Bay Gar-

dens Inn, on Investigating Consumer Complaints, Mr Lewis said the Bill will be developed taking a consultative approach and will give due consideration to the concerns of all stakeholders.

"The new bill will institutionalise the role of the Consumer Affairs Department as the premiere agency for receiving consumer complaints. The

intention is for an independent Consumer Protection Board to be established to oversee the investigations of complaints, while provision will be made for the establishment of a Consumer Complaints Tribunal to adjudicate on consumer matters."

Mr Lewis noted that in the past few years the economic welfare of residents within the region has been

challenged by rising prices of imported goods. He added that Saint Lucia's efforts in support of regional consumer initiatives will continue and the island remained committed to Caribbean Single Market and Economy obligations, particularly those related to Consumer Welfare under Chapter Eight of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas.

## Tourism Industry Awardees

**T**ourism Industry Awardees had their night to shine over the weekend when the Saint Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association honoured workers at the 2006 Tourism Industry Awards, held at the Sandals Grande Saint Lucian Hotel.

Recognition and awards were given under five broad categories which included Support Service, Guest Services, Corporate Service, Special Awards and Prestige Awards.

The event saw a turnout of some 400 hundred tourism personnel and special guests among them, pioneering hotelier Chef Harry owner of the Green Parrot Hotel who was inducted into the SLHTA Tourism Industry Hall of Fame. They were congratulated by president of the SLHTA Mr. Allen Chastanet. He reminded them of their critical contribution to the island's economy.

"I think in many ways all of you are winners and on behalf our association I want to thank you for continuing to be the heroes of our industry and at the end of the day, we are the ones earning the foreign exchange

and bringing it to the communities. Now tourism is clearly on the pedestal in this country with far more reach and linkages than anybody wants to give it credit for."

Corporate Sponsor, First Caribbean International, presented the SLHTA with a cheque of \$15,000.00 in support of its mandate. The cheque was presented by Head of Corporate Banking Mrs. Mauricia Thomas Francis.

"Within any industry the most substantial is its workers. This is a case of the whole being no bigger than the sum of its parts. Thus an excellent workforce translates into an efficient functioning industry. The tourism industry of Saint Lucia is privileged to encompass such ambitious individuals."

The awards for overall outstanding performances went to Manager of the year large hotels category : Agatha Duboulay, Sandals Grande; Overall Industry Employee of the year went to Wilson Edward of Sandals Halcyon. Hotelier of the year -Inns and Guest Houses went to Ruth Wiggins of Tropical Breeze and Professional Achievement Award went to Waltrude Patrick, Bay Gardens Hotel.

## More Consumer Protection Needed

**P**resident of the Caribbean Consumer Council, Saint Lucian, Phil Mc Clauren laments the fact that almost one year after the establishment of the Caricom Single Market a number of member states still do not have comprehensive consumer protection to promote consumer interests and welfare.

Speaking at the opening of a three day regional workshop on Investigating Consumer Complaints, Mr Mc Clauren said the same can be said of the non-enactment of competition legislation which is necessary to ensure that markets operate optimally and efficiently.

Mr. Mc Clauren further stated that the contribution of consumers to social and economic development is often overlooked, making the workshop imperative and relevant at this time. "This workshop comes at a time that is critical to the regional consumer movement. Now that we are in the single market, it is important that we can come together as consumer agencies in the CARICOM region to discuss ways and means of putting measures in place to deal with consumer complaints."

Mr. Mc Clauren stressed the need for various agencies to collaborate on resolving complaints on behalf of consumers. "Complaints can be at two levels, at the lo-



Mr. Phil Mc Clauren

cal level, and at the national level and there are also cross border issues because with such an arrangement you have the likelihood there will be an increase in consumer trading across borders and therefore we need to find ways and means of getting all the agencies together so we can jointly protect the welfare of consumers."

He added that there were a number of countries in the region that have done well in terms of the enactment of legislation and establishment of institutional arrangements for advancing consumer welfare.



# 20 INCH WATER PIPELINE ON STREAM

**M**inister for Communications, Works Transport and Public Utilities Honourable, Felix Finisterre, has again denied claims that government has abandoned a 20-inch water pipeline project, which was commissioned just over a year ago. According to the Minister those claims are deliberately being used as propaganda for political mileage.

The Communications Minister added that the 20-inch pipeline to this day remains in use and will never need to be abandoned because of the important role it plays in transmitting water directly to the north of the island. He pointed out that the proof of this lies in the fact that hotels no longer need to truck water and that complaints for water in the north of the island have been minimal. He further explained the rationale for the pipeline.

“The 20-Inch pipe was to ensure that water from the TR Theobalds Plant at Ciceron got to the area of greatest need, that is the hotel and residential belt in the north of the island—the 20-inch pipeline funded by the French Government. It had one or two problems but that pipeline has been commissioned over a year ago and is working. The people up there have been satisfied that there is adequate supply to most communities, except with distribution systems for smaller communities such as Laborne.



Hon. Felix Finisterre

The Minister said that the 16-inch pipelines now being laid on the other side of the Highway should not be confused with the already commissioned 20-inch pipeline project and that the distinction should also be made between a transmission line and a distribution line.

“The 20-inch Pipeline is a transmission line; we are now replacing a distribution line—a 16-inch line, which has been there for years. If we didn’t do that now when we resurfaced the road at some point in the near future, we will have to come back and dig the new highway. It made sense to put a variation on the ongoing roadworks.”

The Minister added that government is also being proactive by allowing the installation of a broadband duct to accept cables of a new broadband company—Southern Caribbean Fibre, which has already been given a licence to operate in St. Lucia. This, he says, is expected to significantly enhance broadband capable technology on the island.



20 Inch Pipes

## Minister Calls For Reduced Mobile Phone Rates

**M**inister of Communications, Works, Public Utilities and Transport, Hon. Felix Finisterre, has written to Saint Lucia’s National Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (NTRC), seeking its support in a move by the Government of St. Lucia to have the island’s telecommunications providers further reduce their mobile termination rates to provide consumers with reduced mobile charges.

The minister, who is responsible for the telecommunications sector, says it was government’s desire “to make telecommunications more affordable.”

“This,” he added, “will better position St. Lucia to be a more internationally competitive jurisdiction in a world economy in which telecommunications is now an essential element in the architecture of development.”

Mr Finisterre said that since the liberalisation of the telecoms industry in Saint Lucia, “consumers as well as businesses have benefited from a more competitive price regime.”

He said he was therefore “convinced that a review of the Mobile Termination Rates would be another vital step to bring greater benefits to the consuming public and the economy in general.”

Since the Government moved to de-monopolize and regulate the telecommunications industry here several years ago, the advent of competition has resulted in lower rates and better quality services, along with an acceleration of personal and household use of telecommunications equipment and facilities.

Most evident has been the high level of cell phone penetration, which has seen every Saint Lucian who so desires having access to a cell phone and many having more



than one. Use of the Internet has also accelerated considerably as the island enters deeper into the world of computers and Information Technology.

Through the National Development Corporation (NDC), the Government has been promoting the island as a favourable destination for offshore data and call centre services. Several such services have been operating here, including call centres and other related services.

The NDC attracted some two years ago, a joint venture call centre operation be-

tween KM2 (an American company doing IT services for Fortune 500 and other mega companies in the USA) and Helen IT (a local company). Their operation, which employs hundreds at the Government-owned IT Park at Union, involved doing call centre services for America Online (AOL).

E-Services, a Caribbean company offering IT-related support services to international clients, has also invested in operations here at Massade, Gros Islet. This operation has so far employed 230 Saint Lucians doing support work for major corporations like Xerox and XM Radio in the USA.

NDC’s Chief Executive Officer, Wayne Vitalis, supports the minister’s contention that reduced rates are good for IT business.

According to Vitalis: “As result of the reduction in telecommunications rates in Saint Lucia and the general liberalization of telecom services, two companies have already brought significant broadband space to Saint Lucia through undersea cables.” These include three sets of undersea fibre optic broadband cables that are at various stages of operation on the island and which are aimed at linking the Caribbean islands from north to south.

He also said that as a result of these developments, “some companies are talking to us (NDC) about bringing multiplicity of services on one line into your home, including Internet, Cable TV and other variations of international digital and Internet telephony.”

The minister is clear about the government’s intention.

Mr Finisterre says the bid to have the local service providers further reduce their termination rates “is aimed at making telecommunications even more affordable for

all Saint Lucians, while at the same time attracting investments in the IT sector because of the competitiveness of our rates.”

The NTRC, the local regulator, is a member of the Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority (ECTEL), which is the umbrella regulatory body for the five independent member-states of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).

ECTEL and the NTRC are part of the new telecommunications structures that have been put in place since Saint Lucia led the way in the sub-region’s bid to liberalize the sector and invite competition.

Liberalization of the telecommunications sector in the Eastern Caribbean has seen the arrival of Irish-based Digicel as a fierce competitor with British-based Cable & Wireless, which enjoyed an over-100 year monopoly in the Caribbean before the competition came. Now, competition reigns not only in the OECS, but also in Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad & Tobago and Guyana.

The bullish Irish telecoms upstart has so offered toe-to-toe competition to the British giant everywhere in the Caribbean by establishing a rival modern network, setting up shop next door everywhere the monopoly operates, offering stiffly competitive rates for cell phones – and even wrenching sponsorship of the West Indies cricket team.

Cable & Wireless has not been asleep, however, with the company shaking up its services and rearranging business to suit competitive times.

The two rivals continue to be locked in fierce battle daily, but it’s not a fight the consumers condemn. To the contrary, they just love it. After all, they benefit.

And if the Government and the NTRC get their way, they stand to benefit even more





Dr. Rosmarie Antoine Anthony

**Interpretation**

26. For the purposes of this Division “day off” means a day on which an employee would not ordinarily be scheduled to work. Duration of working week

27.—(1) Subject to subsections (2) and (3), an employer shall not require any employee to work for more than forty hours during any week, excluding overtime.

(2) Subsection (1) shall not apply to a managerial employee.

(3) Notwithstanding subsection (1), an employee who works in the hospitality industry may be required to work more than forty hours a week provided that the employee shall not work for more than eighty hours during a two week period, excluding overtime.

**Weekly rest**

28. — (1) An employer shall not require an employee to work for more than six consecutive days without a period of rest comprising at least twenty-four consecutive hours which shall be taken on a day agreed upon between that employee and employer.

(2) The Minister may, by Order published in the Gazette, authorize total or partial exceptions, including suspensions or diminutions, from the provisions of subsection (1) after special regard to all appropriate humanitarian, health, safety and economic considerations and after consultation with representative trade union and employers’ organizations.

**Maximum ordinary work day**

29. — (1) Subject to subsection (2), an ordinary work day for all employees shall comprise of no more than eight hours and an employer shall not require any employee to work for more than eight hours on any day, exclusive of the meal interval, as an ordinary work day.

(2) An employer and employee may in a contract of employment agree to

flexible hours of work which do not exceed forty hours per week.

**Split shifts and occasional shifts**

30.— (1) An employer and employee may, in a contract of employment, agree to the working of split shifts by an employee within a twelve hours period.

(2) An employer may require an employee as a shift employee to work occasional shifts of a duration of no more than two consecutive eight hours shifts in an emergency, or in a situation where such work is due to the absence of another employee scheduled to take over the shift.

(3) Where an employee works two consecutive occasional shifts in accordance with subsection (2), he or she shall not be required by the employer to work for another period without a minimum of eight hours rest immediately following the second occasional shift.

**Meal intervals**

31. — (1) An employer shall not require an employee — (a) subject to subsection (2), to work for more than five hours continuously without a meal interval of not less than one hour; or (b) to perform any work during the meal interval, without the consent of that employee.

(2) Where an employee works a split shift or an occasional shift in accordance with section 30, the employee shall be entitled to a meal interval of not less than one hour after each five hours of continuous work, but the second meal interval may, on the mutual agreement of the employee and the employer, be shortened to less than an hour.

(3) Notwithstanding subsection (1) or (2) an employer and an employee may mutually agree to vary the meal interval so that a one hour meal interval is divided into shorter breaks including at least one break of half an hour.

**Overtime**

32.— (1) Work for hours in excess of an ordinary work day or, where applicable, the forty hour work week pursuant to section 29(2) shall be deemed to be overtime and an employer shall not require or authorize an employee to work overtime otherwise than pursuant to an agreement concluded between the employer and the employee.

(2) Subject to subsection (3) and (4), an employer shall pay to an employee who works overtime an amount calculated at a rate of not less than one and one-half times the wage for each hour in respect of the overtime worked, or twice the wage for each hour in respect of the overtime worked on a Sunday, public holiday or, in respect of a shift worker, the worker’s day off.

(3) An employer may, in lieu of overtime pay, grant to an employee employed as a shift-worker in a hospitality industry or in such other industry which requires continuous operation and where that employee has worked over his or her normal shift period because of an emergency or because of the absence of another worker scheduled to take over the shift, a period of rest in addition to that provided under section 28.

(4) An employer and an employee may mutually agree to time off in lieu of payment for overtime worked.

**Prohibition of work on public holidays**

33.— (1) Subject to subsection (2), an employer shall not require any employee to work on a public holiday except with the agreement of the employee and on payment by the employer of overtime pay to the employee at the rate specified in section 32 (2).

(2) The provisions of subsection (1), shall not apply to an employer who — (a) carries on the business of a hotel, hostel, or other hospitality service that lawfully operates on a public holiday; (b) engages in essential work in agri-

culture; (c) carries on work in which continuous shifts are worked; (d) is in an industrial establishment where work is necessary to maintain its operations or to prevent it causing health and safety hazards; (e) carries on emergency work; or (f) carries on protective services.

(3) The Minister may, by Order published in the Gazette, exempt certain industries and enterprises, or certain parts thereof, from the requirements of subsection (1), on such terms and conditions as are appropriate and after consultation with the representative trade union and employers’ organizations concerned.

**Pay for public holidays for daily paid workers**

34. An employee who is paid on a daily basis and who works on the working day before, and the working day after a public holiday, or who would ordinarily have been required to work on a day which is designated a public holiday, shall be paid for that public holiday.

**Employees may opt to perform night work**

35.— (1) An employee whose contract of employment does not as a condition of employment require night work may only be assigned night work where he or she consents to perform such work.

(2) Subject to section 36, where an employee refuses to perform night work which is not specified in his or her contract of employment, his or her employer shall not reduce the employee’s remuneration, dismiss, penalize or discriminate against the employee in any way for refusing such night work.

(3) An employer who contravenes subsection (2) commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding five thousand dollars.

# THE LABOUR CODE

## INTRODUCTION

**T**he St. Lucia Parliament recently passed the long awaited Labour Code with the House of Assembly approving it on Monday November 13th and the Senate on Tuesday November 14th giving its seal of approval on Tuesday. The Labour Code became law after first being introduced four years ago and after extensive consultations between Government and interested public and private sector organizations. The Code collects and consolidates various pieces of legislation into a single document, reforms and modernizes existing labour laws, incorporates into domestic law various ILO conventions which St. Lucia had signed and formulates new laws on some labour issues. Due to the importance of the Code, Nationwide is publishing extracts from it.

## HOURS OF WORK

**Reasonable alternative for discontinuing night work**

36. Where an employee who ordinarily performs night work elects to discontinue the performance of such night work, his

or her employer shall attempt to accommodate the employee by reassigning him or her in the same or similar position for work during the day or, where the same or similar position is not available, to an alternative position, but where such ac-

commodation is not possible or will impose undue economic hardship upon the employer, it shall not be unfair to dismiss him or her under this Code.

**Power to make Regulations**

37. The Minister may, after consultation

with representative trade union and employers’ organizations, make Regulations for the purpose of split shifts or occasional shifts and for designating maximum working hours and conditions for specific categories of employees or industries.



Consultation on the Labour Code



Workers



# New Concept For Community Centres



Hon. Menissa Rambally

**T**he Ministry of Social Transformation is seeking to change the concept and use of community centres. The Ministry hopes

that an initiative which has already begun in the community of La Maz in Choiseul will change the community centre perception to a Community Resource Internet Centre or CORIC.

Minister for Social Transformation, Local Government, Cooperatives and Culture Honourable Menissa Rambally has declared that several communities are earmarked to benefit from the initiative which was piloted in Choiseul nearly two months ago. According to the Minister, the centres will provide an opportunity for small communities to get involved in the information technology process.

"These centres will be equipped with computers, internet access and a range of services to provide training opportunities for these small communities. That is a special initiative that has been established by the Ministry. We hope that in the next few weeks we will see a number of those information centres being set-up at a number of our existing community facilities."

The Minister added that rural communities were particularly being tar-



Gros-Islet Community Centre

geted first because of the wide digital gap with urban communities.

"Government's initiative is to ensure that technology is available through the length and breadth of the island. Our ministry is playing a part to reach out to small communities and these information centres will be used not only by children."

Minister Rambally said that her Ministry intends to continue to collaborate with the private sector to ensure the initiative is sustained and will continue to introduce new types of programmes and activities to these rural communities, so that they can keep in touch with the new technologies that are constantly being introduced.

## YAP Turns Out Its First Graduates

**S**cores of young Saint Lucians graduated on Tuesday as the National Skills Development Centre held its first ever graduation exercise for persons involved in their Youth Apprenticeship Programme (YAP).

The National Skills Development Centre (NSDC) has a mission to tap the assistance of the private and pub-

lic sectors to assist in providing information and training services towards developing a skilled, informed and marketable workforce, which will contribute to the development of Saint Lucia.

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development, Youth and Sports, Esther Brathwaite, who also chairs the Board of the NSDC spoke about the genesis

of the Programme.

"The Youth Apprenticeship Programme is the brainchild of the Government of Saint Lucia. The Honourable Prime Minister, in his Budget Address in 2004, focusing among other areas on investing in the youth, assured the nation that the government of Saint Lucia, through the NSDC, will implement the Youth Apprenticeship

Programme for unemployed young persons interested in acquiring the skills and work experience necessary to improve their value to potential employers."

Miss Brathwaite says the continued collaboration of the private sector in the programme will ensure trainees are exposed to professional work place standards.

Monday's graduation was held under the theme: "Youth Empowerment through Skills Enhancement."

## SALCC Graduates Urged To Keep Studying



**T**he 2006 graduating class of the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College have been encouraged to further their studies as a means of staying above the competition for well paying jobs in St. Lucia and indeed the world.

Secretary to the Cabinet of Ministers,

Dr. James Fletcher, who delivered the feature address at the institution's graduation ceremony Sunday, told graduands, because of global changes, their competition is not just confined to St. Lucia, the OECS or wider region, but the wider global marketplace.

He advised graduands to be world

class, inquisitive, persistent, professional and responsible.

"You, the graduating class of the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College, have the opportunity and the potential to be greater, to be excellent. Your horizons are limitless. You should go out and be the outstanding citizens of St. Lucia. Let us demonstrate unequivocally that the country that produces two Nobel Laureates, the state that presided over the 58th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, the island whose Pitons were designated a World Heritage Site, and the nation that next year will play host to a semi-final in the third largest sporting event in the world, is also capable of developing the best citizens and a very competitive and efficient human resource base."

The island scholars for 2006 are Hecta Cox and Nicole Emmanuel of the Division of Arts, Science and General Studies Cambridge Advance Level Programme. Vernet Eugene was this year's Valedictorian.



Dr. James Fletcher



# DEMOCRACY

**BY CARSON RAGGIE – CHIEF ELECTIONS OFFICER, SAINT LUCIA**

**D**emocracy is a difficult concept to define, and there have been several academic debates in relation to its true meaning. It has been said that there are about two hundred and seventy-five known definitions of democracy. Different conceptions of democracy justify different institutional arrangements and different standards for evaluating their performance - and ultimately differing distributions of authority. Who wins may be determined by the rules and practices in place, and those, in turn, depend at least in part on which understanding of democracy is privileged.

Democracy is also considered to be a work in progress as conditions are forever-changing, based on the democratic values that emerge from different traditions, along with the “political space” and the structure and nature of social and other divisions in the society of each jurisdiction. Accordingly, various interventions must be continuously pursued from time to time to suit the particular environment.

Notwithstanding this, it seeks answers to the following questions: (a) Who are the people? (b) How does participation of these people function? (c) Who should govern? (d) What are the obligations and rights of those who govern and those who are governed? (e) How are those who govern appointed? (f) When can they be removed?

The list of questions is long and the replies are often difficult to formulate. However, democracy is rooted in the participation of people. Elections therefore, are the most visible manifestations of a democracy. Other less visible elements must be present in a society if democracy is to take root. These elements include; an active civil society and a just rule of law and public officials capable of honest and competent governance. All of these are necessary pillars of democracy.

As highlighted in Saint Lucia’s electoral department’s website; “Democracy is based on the right, of citizens to participate in the decision making process, thus establishing the rules by which they agree to live together: Those fundamental rights can only be exercised when citizens engage as actively as possible in public life. The voting process is an essential manifestation of that engagement. True democracy however, is not only dependant on the involvement of the citizens, but to the extent to which they participate in the electoral process.”

What’s the use of having an opinion? and keeping it to yourself when you have a chance to say it loud exercise your freedom, of expression don’t you know, one voice, can make a difference



**Mr. Carson Raggie**

in a crowd. this is your land, where you belong you have a say in everything that’s going on can’t sit by, without saying a word got to get involved and make your voice be heard.

This is the theme which is expected to be performed and presented in audio and video format as an introduction to describe the how, when and where aspects of the voting process. It is hoped that this little preamble will in some way educate the already registered voters in particular young persons.

However, it is important that we rigorously pursue on a permanent basis, the introduction of civic and voter education programs particularly at the school level.

In the area of formal education in Saint Lucia, education administrators have placed greater emphasis on the development of the specific intelligence of its people, while the development of the emotional intelligence receives little attention. Language, Mathematics, Sciences (Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Geography) among others, take priority over Civic Education. This situation does not lend favourably to the well-being of a democratic society.

Notwithstanding this view, The So-

cial Studies Curriculum guide (1999) developed by the Curriculum and Material Development unit of the Ministry of Education reflects the following goals: (1) To prepare each student to be a responsible and participating citizen in the democratic society. (2) To help students acquire and use knowledge to make personal decisions and participate in decisions about their social and physical environment. (3) To help students acquire a variety of academic and social skills in order to facilitate their development as independent members, learners and workers. (4) To help students develop attitudes, values and habits that is consistent with the values of a democratic and humane society.

Despite the foregoing, it is generally felt that not much emphasis is placed on this aspect of education.

As custodians of democracy, the electoral institution has the responsibility to ensure full participation by all. This institution must therefore advocate for the inclusion of well-structured civic education programmes in the schools curricula.

This approach will no doubt serve to inculcate in the minds of these persons the value and importance of their participation in the electoral process. While voter education can assist in informing the population about the how, when and where aspects of voting process; this, of course, will help to reduce the amount of invalid or rejected votes, civic education entails the awareness from the voters’ part, the importance of voting as a right and a responsibility. If the voters are educated they can make an informed choice. If they do not know why voting is important they will not be bothered to go and vote.

In order to achieve this objective, the Electoral Management Body (EMB) should involve other stakeholders such as governmental institutions, civil society and churches in order to carry out a more effective and inclusive voter education. The EMB’s responsibility will be to provide the materials and to share them with the other stakeholders.

In this context, communication is a fundamental ingredient of democracy. The greatest possible dissemination of knowledge and information among the population is the best antidote to all kinds of tyranny. Additionally, it provides the background attitude and knowledge amongst citizens that is appropriate to a peaceful election, acceptance of the results and tolerance of competition and opposition. Therefore, we can never emphasize enough the importance of all civic education which is an education for freedom.

This is the type of society that the electoral department can help to cultivate by the proper implementation of

such programmes. The media therefore has a critical part to play in this process, as it is called to fulfill an extremely important role on the people’s behalf, since they have an obligation to guarantee free, fair and transparent elections.

Notwithstanding the abovementioned strategy geared towards encouraging electoral participation, EMB’s must also take cognizance of certain other factors which affect electoral participation. According to the analysis of a research on participation and turn out at the elections held throughout the world, conducted by the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) in 2004, the following other factors in many ways influenced voter turnout in both developed and developing countries. (a) Socio Political Factors: e.g. Bad governance: scandals, lack of transparency and accountability. Voter distrust of political and electoral processes. Literacy rate, gerrymander. Lack of viable alternative to the incumbent. (b) Mechanical factors: e.g. Access to the voter registration and voting: time and distance, physical access to polling stations, easy access to registration and voting for persons with disabilities. Braille and wheel chair friendly venues. (c) Other factors: e.g. the independence and competence of the EMB. Staff skills and competence, public trust and confidence in political and electoral processes.

Other associated implications considered are: (1) Turn out is lower when the results of elections make little difference to the subsequent form of executive. (2) More people are likely to stay home when they think it is a foregone conclusion. (3) Turn out will continue to fall while people who are more likely to vote (e.g. old people) die off; and people less likely to vote (e.g. young people) replace them. (4) Voter apathy is more pronounced among young voters.

In conclusion, the process of increasing electoral participation requires a two-prong approach:

Systematic reform (1) electoral systems and election procedures and (2) the introduction of vigorous and sustained civic and voter education campaigns to lure voters back to the polls.

Stake holder participation (multi-electoral collaboration) is critical for the success of this two-prong intervention.

Finally, as highlighted earlier, democracy is a work in progress. Our electoral organization will therefore continue to inject appropriate new initiatives towards the enhancement of democracy.



# ICC: ST. LUCIA MOST PREPARED VENUE FOR CRICKET WORLD CUP



Lights at the BCG



Section of a crowd at the BCG

**S**aint Lucia came out with flying colours following a day of intense scrutiny last Thursday by International Cricket Council (ICC) officials of the island's level of preparedness to host matches in next year's Cricket World Cup.

It was Saint Lucia's turn for the ICC's venues tour which comprised all the main stakeholders of the Cricket World Cup including cricket operations, venue development consultants as well as major commercial partners like the Global Cricket Corporation.

Chief Executive Officer of the ICC Cricket World Cup West Indies, Chris Dehring, speaking at the end of an inspection of the Beausejour Cricket Ground and the Gros-Islet Playing Field, one of the practice venues for

the World Cup, said that Saint Lucia remains well organised and their plans almost military in precision.

"It is fair to say that this has probably been the easiest of all ICC venue tours to date because Saint Lucia has had the good fortune and proper planning which created that good fortune to have a venue that is virtually ready, very little to do and we congratulate them. They certainly have been leaders in the region in this regard and there wasn't that many things that needed commenting on. It was certainly important that the stakeholders develop a familiarity with this venue."

Chief Venue Development Officer for the ICC Cricket World Cup West Indies 2007, Don Lockerbie, expressed confidence that Saint Lucia showed off

a venue that was ready to go.

"It has all the parts, it has all the working components, the stadium is already operational, even the improvements have been tested. We don't have any night games, but the fact that you have your lights and the new scoreboard is here, viewboard is here and have been tested, the VOC, our security area had its chances to be tested, new improvements to some of the VIP areas, even the media areas have already been tested and that puts you still in the lead as far as being a venue that's the most prepared for Cricket World Cup,"

The ICC official said he was confident everything in Saint Lucia was on the right track for the 2007 ICC cricket World Cup.



Early work on the Gros-Islet Playing Field a practice venue for CWC 2007

## PRACTICE VENUES CRUCIAL FOR CWC 2007

**T**he International Cricket Council (ICC) has advised host venues for the 2007 Cricket World Cup in the West Indies that practice venues are crucial for the successful staging of the competition. Venue Development Director, Don Lockerbie speaking in Saint

Lucia after a venue inspection tour last Thursday said this cannot be overemphasised.

"When you think about it, this competition here in Saint Lucia will have seven matches but will have something in the neighbourhood of 50 or 60 training sessions in Saint Lucia, that means that Gros-Islet and Mindoo Philip

Park are going to be very very busy cricket centres and therefore those pitches and fields need to be focused on finished, matured and ready to go."

Mr. Lockerbie expressed confidence that Saint Lucia's training venues will be completed in time for the World Cup.



### THIS WEEK ON NTN

Sat. Dec. 2nd to Fri. Dec. 8th 2006  
NTN – PROVIDING

INFORMATION YOU NEED

The GIS speaks with The Minister for Health, Human Services and Family Affairs - Sat. Dec. 2nd, 11:30 a.m.

The GIS discusses child sexual abuse in St. Lucia - Sun. Dec. 3rd, 12:30 p.m.

Upgrading the Health Sector: Better Health for All – Mon. Dec. 4th, 8:30 p.m.

A Decade of Progress - Tues. Dec. 5th, 8:00 p.m.

Roads Development Programme: A Means to An End - Wed. Dec. 6th 8:00 p.m.

Minister for Social Transformation, Local Government & Culture speaks to her ministry's achievements - Thurs. Dec. 7th, 8:00 p.m.

Road Works Ahead: The Modernization of St. Lucia's Roads – Fri. Dec. 8th, 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.

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Contact us at: The Department of Information Services, Greaham 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>