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PM Wishes Cuban Leader Speedy Recovery

Prime Minister Dr Kenny D. Anthony has joined other Caribbean and world leaders in wishing Cuban President Dr. Fidel Castro a speedy and complete recovery from emergency surgery on the eve of his 80th birthday.

Prime Minister Anthony says he is as concerned as all his fellow Caribbean colleague Heads of Government about the news that the Cuban leader had undertaken surgery to stop internal bleeding following a recent trip to Argentina.

Prime Minister Anthony, who met the Cuban leader while in Havana in June, said he was as surprised as the Cuban people and the rest of the world by the sudden news of President Castro's illness.

But, he added, he was "also confident that he is receiving the best medical care in the world, because the quality of health care in Cuba is exceedingly

good and I'm sure he is being given the very best medical care."

The Prime Minister said: "The Cabinet of Ministers, and indeed the people of Saint Lucia, have much admiration for the Cuban President and his personal interest in making humanitarian and social assistance available to Saint Lucia and the rest of the Caribbean, especially in the fields of health and education."

Dr Anthony said he welcomed the news that Dr Castro, who is due to turn 80 on August 13, is recovering and in a stable condition following his emergency operation.

Said the Prime Minister: "On behalf of all Saint Lucians, and especially on behalf of those who have received medical care and those who are currently studying in Cuba, I wish to extend our best wishes for a speedy recovery.

"We pray for President Castro and we wish him God's blessings."



Prime Minister Anthony and President Castro during the PM's recent official visit to Cuba

Minister of Health to Visit Nursing Students in Cuba



Hon. Damian Greaves

Minister of Health, Hon. Damian Greaves, will visit Havana soon to meet with Saint Lucian nursing students in Cuba.

The Minister, whose visit is expected to take place within a fortnight, will take the opportunity while in Cuba to discuss with the the 184 Saint Lucian nursing students issues of concern and to clarify the Government of Saint Lucia's intentions regarding the study programme.

Bearing in mind statements made here in the local media by various personalities relating to the training programme, the Minister will also take the opportunity to discuss with the nursing students any concerns they may have concerning their studies or their welfare in Cuba.

While in Cuba, Mr Greaves will also meet and thank the authorities in Havana for the assistance they continue to extend to Saint Lucia through the training of health professionals, provision of nurses at Victoria Hospital and other forms of direct assistance to the island's health sector.

PM Assures Sunbilt Residents Their Water Woes Will Soon Be Over



Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony

Prime Minister Dr Kenny D. Anthony has assured residents of Sunbilt that their water woes will soon be a thing of the past.

Several weeks ago, the residents of Sunbilt petitioned the Prime Min-

ister with a complaint about lack of water in their pipes.

The residents indicated to the Prime Minister that this was a long-standing complaint going back several years and their situation needed urgent attention.

The Prime Minister explained to the residents that the new WASCO water project being financed by the World Bank to the tune of US \$8 million will resolve their issues once and for all.

Prime Minister Anthony said the project will not only solve water woes for Sunbilt, but also for all other areas in the upper Castries basin that have had similar problems in the past.

Dr Anthony said the contract for the project has already been awarded and the pipes imported for that purpose have already begun to arrive on the island.

The Prime Minister said he fully understood the frustrations of the residents affected, but he "wishes to assure them that by this time next year, their water woes will have disappeared."

Diabetes Project Showing Success

The Universal Health Care Diabetes Pilot Programme which was launched about two months ago is beginning to record some successes, according to Chief Medical Officer Dr. Stephen King. Dr. King said that because of the testing component of the programme, more people were discovering that they were in fact affected by diabetes. However as result of the programme these people were now receiving free medication for the disease so that those who were unable to afford medication prior to the advent of the project were currently receiving treatment for their condition.

Dr. King added that although the programme is generally doing well it is

experiencing a few hurdles. These include the lack of the requisite number of pharmacies, low production of protocol booklets for distribution throughout the island and training for health personnel involved in the programme.

Dr King however is calling on members of the public to present their social security numbers, one of the requirements of the program, when accessing medication . "I know that has been a source great aggravation and frustration at pharmacies, where the pharmacist asks the persons what's your NIC # or where is your ID card and, people say well i do not have it, and so there has been a lot of tension along those lines.

The CMO says while he understands the frustration experienced by health

personnel, no one should be denied medication. Dr. King explained why social security numbers would become absolutely necessary as the programme progresses.

" If we do not do that it means that anybody could go to a pharmacy with a UHC prescription to get medication. So a Vincentian, English man could come here and get their medications. This is St. Lucian money so we want it to be spent by the residents of this country. The residents pay their taxes, we want these monies to go back to the residents; we do not want people from outside to come and access these monies."

The next phase of the Universal Health Care Diabetes Pilot Program will attempt to engage private pharmacies in the distribution of prescribed drugs.



Dr. King

OECS ADOPTS COMMON POLICY ON FUEL PRICES

Member countries of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) have all agreed to adjust prices of petroleum products through the implementation of a full pass-through pricing mechanism. As a result of this newly-adopted policy, increases in the price of fuel will now be passed on directly to consumers. Similarly, decreases in world petroleum prices will also be passed on to the consumer by way of lower prices.

The decision to implement the full pass-through pricing mechanism was taken at the 56th meeting of the Monetary Council of the ECCB, which was held in St. Vincent and the Grenadines on July 21, 2006.

During that meeting, the Monetary Council agreed to implement policy decisions that would minimize the impact of rising oil prices on vulnerable groups and to explore the possibility of establishing a fund that will mitigate or cushion the impact of rising oil prices on OECS economies.

Inevitably, the new common policy will require adjustments to the price of fuel in all OECS countries, particularly in St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, where the retail price of unleaded gasoline and diesel is lowest among all member-countries of the ECCB.

The current price of fuel in various Caribbean countries varies from the highest price being paid in non-independent Montserrat to the lowest being paid in oil-producing Trinidad & Tobago. Prices also vary between the OECS and the other larger Caricom economies, as can be seen in the table below:

The highest price for unleaded gasoline among the member countries of the ECCB countries is in Montserrat, where it stands at EC\$12.84 per gallon. On the other hand, Barbados and

Belize have the highest retail prices for petroleum products in the Caribbean, with one gallon of unleaded gasoline being sold at EC\$14.12 in Barbados and consumers paying EC\$15.34 per

gallon in Belize. Trinidad and Tobago, the only oil exporting country in the Caribbean, records the lowest retail price for petroleum products.



Sir Dwight Venner Governor ECCB



Countries	Unleaded Gas	Diesel	Countries	Unleaded Gas	Diesel
<i>ECCB Member Countries</i>			<i>Other Caribbean Countries</i>		
Antigua	11.89	10.44	Barbados	14.12	9.21
Anguilla	11.99	9.54	Belize*	15.34	11.42
Dominica	11.92	10.81	B.V.I.*	10.07	10.19
Grenada	10.89	10.89	Jamaica	10.06	9.21
Montserrat	12.84	9.60	St. Maarten*	13.50	—
St. Kitts/Nevis	10.50	11.00	Suriname	11.91	11.66
St. Lucia	9.50	8.75	Trinidad/Tobago	5.28	2.95
St. Vincent/Grenadines	9.50	9.25	Turks/ Caicos*	13.09	13.62

OBSERVING THE ANNIVERSARY OF EMANCIPATION FROM SLAVERY

St. Lucia and other West Indian countries which were former colonies of Britian, on Tuesday observed the anniversary of the abolition of slavery in these states on 1st August 1834. It was a national holiday in all Caricom countries and in St. Lucia the main event to commemorate the occasion was a cultural and music festival at the derek walcott Square on Tuesday afternoon organised by the Cultural Development Foundation. The Festival featured music by aristes whose focus was on slavery and the black struggle as well as renditions of steelband music, poetry readings and dance performances. There were a number of messages from national groups, including the local Rastafarian movement and the National Workers Union as well as one from the Minister of Culture Menissa Rambally. Below are the Minister's Adress and scenes from the festival.



This evening we meet in observance of what we now refer to as emancipation.

Our reality is that emancipation conjures in our minds images of freedom and the quest for freedom.

We live in a world where there are two extreme versions of what we call freedom: those who have too much and

those who have little or none at all.

Today we can appreciate the progress we have made even as we reflect on the day to day experiences of those still fighting for their freedom.

We as a people have a responsibility therefore not to abuse our freedom and also to assist however way we can, to ensure that those who do not now have

freedom access it.

That is why as a society we need to recommit to the causes such as the Red Cross, The Salvation Army, and our own local organizations who seek each day to reach out to those in need of support, and in need of access to what most of us take for granted.

We must recognize that even within

a globalized environment we are truly brothers and sisters and by extension we still need to be our brothers keeper.

Today we can think for a moment of those victims of war who do not have the right of the choice of life; they are being killed just for being born where they were. That unfortunately is still the reality of some parts of the world in which we live today.

Fellow St. Lucians we need to be reminded today that emancipation has also brought with it responsibility.

Responsibility for our actions and Responsibility for our words.

We must be mindful of the fact that both are potentially dangerous.

We still live in a Society where except for those incidents that are somewhat disturbing to us all we do not have to fear gun bombs and other missiles.

We still live in a Society where we enjoy relative calm and peace. We still prefer to live here in St. Lucia than most other parts of the world like The Middle East, Haiti and even some of our very neighbours in the region.

Let us not take this reality for granted.

But while we may not fear missiles and bombs today we should note that our words and actions can as well be particularly harmful and are too often used as weapons to hurt and destroy each other.

Emancipation day should therefore be used by us to reflect on the need to temper our every action and to respect the freedom of others while being responsible about how we manifest our own freedom.

There is an unacceptable crime wave in our country and while it pales into insignificance when compared to the majority of other societies, these incidents of crime in our society show that many persons have and continue to abuse their freedoms.

Many of our problems have to do with the indiscriminate way in which some people have abused their freedom including their access to weapons and illicit drugs. These persons are infringing on the rights of others to enjoy the freedom we celebrate today.

We are a proud people, Proud of when we have come and what we have achieved as a society. Let us guard jealously our ST. Lucianess and all that makes us the people we are.

Let us therefore use this occasion of emancipation observance, not only as an event for celebration but for our society and all of us as individuals to reflect and truly appreciate the huge responsibility our individual freedoms place on us.

Today we celebrate our freedom but collectively reaffirm our commitment to guard and protect our rights to be free and to live in peace and unity. A society where we can truly be our brothers keeper. Thank-you.

NOVEL NATIONAL DISASTER SIMULATION EXERCISE



Flooding in the City of Castries

The National Emergency Organisation is calling on all St. Lucians to conduct their own disaster Preparedness Exercise. On Thursday 3rd August, NEMO organized a novel national disaster simulation activity in which persons were asked to conduct their own Disaster Preparedness Exercise. Director of NEMO Dawn French says "Saint Lucians don't have to wait for NEMO, Red Cross or Government to be prepared."

Thursday's activity was based on a model from New Zealand in which there was an informal, nationwide exercise where the public were asked to conduct a preparedness drill at home, work or during the numerous workshop/seminars/meetings that take place daily on the island. In St. Lucia, the NEMO Secretariat requested that at Middy Thursday August 3rd the whole country stop and check how prepared it was, through following the advice constantly given out by NEMO, Red Cross and the Media.



NEMO Director Dawn French

The NEMO Director elaborated on the format by explaining, "Assume that at on THURSDAY August 3 at Middy there is an Earthquake. Saint Lucia has experienced two massive Earthquakes, a 7.5 in January 1839 and other 7.5 in March 1953". On that date and time persons were asked to do the following: quickly take stock of their situation - wherever they were - and note what resources they had available; think about where their loved-ones were, their dependents, and those in the community whom they knew could readily care for themselves in time of disaster. How would they get to them?

According to Dawn French it is supposed to be a simple exercise in which "We are actually asking for the various workshops and meetings to stop and participate -- it only takes a few minutes and it could save lives."

NEMO chose Thursday August 3rd as this was the date when Hurricane Allen struck Saint Lucia in 1980. The public is urged to bear in mind that

most disasters give no warning and that it is important to prepare because the next major earthquake, flood, or landslide that strikes will not necessarily happen when everyone is at home or with warning.

The do it yourself disaster preparedness activity is the brain child of Greg Blanchard, Managing Director of Community Emergency Supplies Ltd., a New Zealand company. Mr. Blanchard may have been speaking to Saint Lucians when he pointed out that: "The odds are that it could strike just after you drop the kids off at school, or as you are driving down the road to check the cattle," He said, "Or you could be down ... at the cinema." He continued by pointing out, "The point is, being prepared is not just about being prepared at home: it is about being as well-prepared as possible wherever you are, or being prepared to leave your home." The Director of NEMO is of a similar opinion and hopes to make the activity an Annual one.



Earth movements and its effect on a home

OECS Ministers Accept Minister Rambally's Call

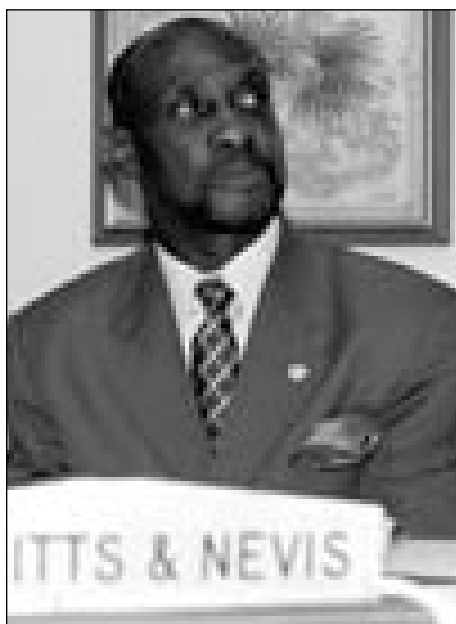
Ministers of Social Transformation in the OECS have accepted the call by St. Lucia's Minister of Social Transformation, Menissa Rambally for a meeting between the sub region's Ministers of Finance and its Social Transformation Ministers. Delivering welcoming remarks at the opening of the visioning meeting on the Second OECS Human Development Report held in St. Lucia last week, Minister Rambally, citing the need for financial resources to undertake social development had called for "a joint meeting of Ministers of Finance and Ministers of Social development to look at the whole issue enabling and sustaining the process in light of the fact that there are no quick fixes and this must be a medium to long term undertaking."

Responding to his St. Lucia counterpart, Antigua and Barbuda's Hilson Baptiste initiated a discussion among all government ministers present and they agreed to accept an offer by St. Kitts-Nevis to host the first meeting of OECS Ministers of Social Transformation and Ministers of Finance. Commenting on the outcome of their meeting, Minister Baptiste said: "That was a very good meeting. What we have planned to do is to begin to have the OECS Ministers of Finance and the Ministers of Social Transformation have a convention. I think the Minister from St. Kitts-Nevis agreed to be the host for that meeting in the not too distant future so that we can begin to look at how we can harmonize our efforts and prepare to look at harmonizing the laws through the region. So we have a lot of work to do."

The St. Kitts-Nevis Minister for Social Transformation Sam Condor who also attended the meeting echoed his colleague's sentiments that it is time for a new kind of action. "It is very important because we have to put the social programme at the top of the agenda. Right now many countries



Minister of Social Transformation of Antigua and Barbuda Hilson Baptiste (R)



St. Kitts-Nevis Minister for Social Transformation Sam Condor

don't seem to give much thought to the social programmes and we as ministers have a task in trying to get them to understand the importance of social transformation in the development of our countries. The social programme is as important as the economic pro-



Head of the OECS Social Policy Development Unit Ezra Jn Baptiste

gramme or any other programme. So when the budget is thought of, enough finance and thought is given to policies and programmes that relate to social development."

The head of the OECS Social Policy Development Unit Ezra Jn Baptiste



Hon. Menissa Rambally
Minister for Social Transformation,
Culture and Local Government

said that the meeting achieved its main objective in recommending a theme for the second Human Development Report. However some minor adjustments are being made to the wording of the theme. Youth development, Plans for the disabled, Social Protection, Migration, Labour, Employment and the CSME as well as Population and Development in the Caribbean were some of the issues discussed at the recent meeting. The importance of media support in the Human Development Report planning and finalization process was also highlighted. The recent planning meeting of the theme for the second Human Development Report is part of the preparatory stage which is expected to last normally around six months, followed by the launching of the report. The second Human Development Report is due within 2007.

OECS Component of Caribbean Regional Trade and Private Sector Development Programme Opens



A sample of OECS Products

The OECS Export Development Unit EDU is implementing its component of the 9th Caribbean Trade and Private Sector Development Programme.

The main objective of this programme, financed by the European Union is to contribute to the gradual integration of OECS countries into the world economy, with a view towards enhancing regional economic growth; thus helping to alleviate poverty.

The programme will seek to provide support for "improvement of the regional business environment and competitive climate, the reinforcement of the capacity of private sector organizations and service providers, and the promotion of new forms of business collaboration, clustering and trade facilitation with a focus on SMEs".

Priority issues of the programme for 2006 are: To increase the competitiveness of firms in the OECS re-

gion; To take advantage of the CSME or any other bilateral arrangements signed by the region such as vertical or horizontal alliances across the region; To foster intra regional cooperation to enhance productivity and take advantage of economy of scale; Promote programmes of impact into underdeveloped areas or disadvantage sectors within the region (rural areas, women, etc)

The identification of new sub-sectors for the services sector, collaboration with Business Support Organizations Trade Policy and Trade Information Services, Market Access interventions as well as Grant Schemes for the direct support to individual firms and group of enterprises feature among the programme's several areas of intervention. Through the grant support to groups and individual firms the aim is to assist the region's firms in the process of working together to enhance their competitiveness and promote regional integration.

New export sectors are to be identified and promoted as direct support is provided to selected companies through

the implementation of a Matching Grant facility as well as technical services delivered through EDU's professional team of Business Development officers. Those actions will be supported by national Business Services Organizations (BSO) who will receive special attention in capacity building for increased collaboration with EDU.

The OECS Export Development Unit (based in Dominica) is calling for proposals for grant assistance under the 9th European Development Fund (of the European Communities) from Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St Kitts & Nevis, St Lucia as well as St Vincent & the Grenadines. The deadline for submission of applications is AUGUST 31ST 2006 at 4:30 p.m. Queries can be sent to OECS-EDU at email address oeccsedu@cwdom.dm Further information is available on the OECS-EDU website at www.oecs.org/edu.

Recently the OECS-EDU staged an unprecedented Trade Show entitled "The Best of the OECS" in Bassterre St. Kitts-Nevis as part of activities marking the 25th Anniversary of the OECS.

Largest Group of Peace Corps Volunteers for OECS

Over the next three weeks Saint Lucia will be the training ground for 72 Peace Corps volunteers who arrived over the weekend. All visiting for the first time, the trainee peace corps will be exposed to their new environment through a process of orientation.

Associate Peace Corps Director Sharon Jules says a special component of the orientation is that 72 host families will actively help them assimilate and settle down by accompanying the volunteers to workshops. At the end of the orientation and training periods the peace corps will depart to various OECS islands of their choosing, where they will work for the next two years.

“For the next three weeks they will be based in four communities. In Desrusseaux, Micoud, Ti Rocher and Mon Repos. During this three week period they will be going through a pre-service training where we begin to introduce them to the tools, skills, and knowledge that they would need in order to perform in the communities.”

Ms. Jules says formal workshops will

be conducted for the volunteers at the Ti Rocher Multi-purpose Centre, and at the Ange and Micoud Secondary Schools respectively.

“During this training period we would be assessing their progress in terms of their skills, aptitudes, ect. And then through an interview process we would decide where the volunteers will be based in the 6 OECS islands.”

Meantime the arrival of the largest ever group of Peace Corps also signals increased capacity and support at the sub-regional level.

Country Director for the Peace Corps Eastern Caribbean Kate Raftery says most of the volunteers have to design a plan that will enrich community life in the islands.

“The peace corps volunteers have come to work at the community level with community leaders and community groups; to identify the areas in which the community feels they could benefit from some assistance. The volunteers hopefully will have experience and background in such areas as HIV and AIDS education, small business development, youth work, women’s work ,education etc.”

A total of 17 peace corps volunteers will remain in Saint Lucia to work for the next two years. They are expected to be sworn in on 13 September, 2006.

Saint Lucia Sports Minister Welcomes Windwards School Athletes



Hon. Mario Michel

Minister for Education, Human Resource Development, Youth and Sports Honourable Mario Michel raised the curtains on the 2006 Windward Islands Schools’ Games on Sunday when he declared the games officially opened. The minister wished the athletes success while encouraging competitors to al-

low good sportsmanship to prevail.

While addressing the teams fielded by St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica, Grenada and three time host St. Lucia, Minister Michel said the governments of the Windward Islands were making huge investments in youth and sports.

“Part of the importance of that is for you the young athletes to understand the efforts and resources that governments of all of these four islands are putting in ensure that you the young athletes of our countries get the best facilities that our countries can afford. I know Grenada invested heavily in the construction of their own facilities before us; in 1999 they completed the facilities. We completed ours in 2002. St. Vincent and the Grenadines has recently invested and is investing in completing their and I know that Dominica is doing a lot of work as well.”

Regional Tax Officials Challenged

Tax administrators from the Caribbean have been issued with a number of challenges at the 19th General Assembly and Technical Conference of the Caribbean Organization of Tax Administration (COTA). These came from some of the officials addressing the formal opening of the meeting on Monday, at the Bay Gardens Hotel here in St. Lucia. Interestingly, COTA was established about twenty years ago in St. Lucia at a meeting of the Heads of Regional Tax Administrations when the organization’s constitution was ratified and ironically, this was the last time St. Lucia hosted a meeting of COTA. The challenges to the COTA officials came from the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of finance in St. Lucia, Philip Dalsou and the Assistant Secretary General of Caricom Irwin la Rocque.

Improve Services To Tax Payers

Philip Dalsou called upon policy makers and tax administrators to im-

prove upon their services to tax payers and to make them aware of their the rights. In presenting a message from Prime Minister Honorable Dr. Kenny Anthony, Mr. Dalsou said that this improvement is critical for the development of sound fiscal management.

“Expansion of tax revenues and by extension, public expenditures, have become inextricably linked to economic growth and social stability; therefore there is a need for policy makers and tax administrators to foster improved harmonization of tax policy, improve their enforcement of tax administration and to improve tax payers services and the promulgation of tax payers rights. These represent the key elements of good governance and sound fiscal management and must be recognized and vigorously pursued at all times by policy makers and administrators if significant improvement are to be achieved in the development of strong societies in the region.”

The Permanent Secretary however warned that policy makers and tax administrators would have to contend with some challenges in accomplishing this goal.

“First of all tax systems must be made

flexible and responsive in order to keep pace with new developments while remaining as simple as possible in order to curb the risk of non-compliance and compliance cost. Secondly, tax systems must conjure a sense of transparency if it is to ensure that tax payer rights and privileges are protected. Thirdly, tax systems must ensure that the correct tax is payed at the right time and in the place and little opportunities are created for fraud and tax evasion.

Moderinze Tax Admin For Csme

Meanwhile Caricom has challenged COTA to become the initiators of modern and effective tax administration measures supportive of the Caricom Single Market and Economy(CSME). The harmonization of Taxation Structures in the Region has been considered a necessary ingredient in the advancement of the Single Market and Economy of the Caribbean Community and the Secretariat has been campaigning for the active participation of all stakeholders in the adoption and implementation of

coordinating policies and measures that will facilitate its formulation.

Speaking at the opening of the COTA Assembly, the Assistant Secretary General of Caricom in charge of Regional Trade and Economic Integration, Irwin La Rocque said: “As guardians of the public purse, tax administrators are in a unique position to support the mobilization of resources required to allow our governments to effectively discharge their responsibilities within the community”.

The Conference Theme

Under the theme, “Options for Building Strong Economies through Innovative Tax Policies and Administration”, the 19th COTA Assembly focused on innovations in taxation relevant to small countries in the region. It also reviewed physical policy reform in the region and reflected on how improving their effectiveness could contribute to enhancing the various administration systems.

CDB, Petroleum Fund Assistance for Haiti’s Recovery

The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) will contribute US\$17 million towards Haiti’s social and economic recovery in keeping with the Caribbean Community’s (CARICOM) commitment to assisting that Member State in its reconstruction process.

At a Donor Community Meeting specially convened by the President of Haiti, H.E. Rene Preval, on Tuesday 25 July in Haiti, CARICOM’s Assistant Secretary-General for Foreign and Community Relations, Ambassador Colin Granderson stated that CARICOM stood ready to play its part in the work of Haiti’s international partners in helping to stimulate reforms, strengthen institutions and promote political, economic and social development.

Apart from the sum being provided by the CDB, Ambassador Granderson disclosed that Haiti will also have access to the Petroleum Fund established by Trinidad and Tobago in 2004 to provide relief to CARICOM Member States experiencing economic hardship resulting from persistently high international prices for crude oil and petroleum products.

Ambassador Granderson stated that plans were in train for a CARICOM tech-

nical assessment mission to visit Haiti in the coming weeks to work along with a Haitian counterpart team, in response to a request by President Preval. He said the Community also intended to re-establish a technical office in Port-au-Prince, to facilitate Haiti’s “regulatory and other efforts, as well as functional cooperation with the Community in areas such as health, education, agriculture and natural disaster mitigation.”

Ambassador Granderson said that Haiti’s re-engagement with CARICOM provided it with the “political, technical and functional support of the sub-regional grouping whose integration process continued to advance and to deepen.”

He assured that the Community would do “the utmost with its own resources to lend support to Haiti’s efforts to create the necessary conditions for reconciliation, reconstruction and recovery.” In this regard, Ambassador Granderson noted that CARICOM will focus on “resuming the support for Haiti’s establishment of the required juridical, regulatory and administrative arrangements arising from the integration process.”

The Donor Community Meeting saw pledges coming from the international

community of US\$750 million, a sum in excess of Haiti’s request for \$500 million to expedite rebuilding activities for the period up to September 2007.

Caricom Welcomes Neptune’s Release

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has welcomed the release of Mr. Yvon Neptune, Prime Minister of Haiti in the Aristide government, following an order by the Appeals Court of Haiti. CARICOM had repeatedly condemned the abuse of due process and of the rule of law associated with the prolonged detention without trial of Mr. Neptune.

In a press statement issued last Friday, the Caricom Secretariat however added that the high profile personality of Mr. Neptune should not obscure the fact that a large number of persons supportive of former President Aristide, arrested arbitrarily for what appeared to be political reasons under the Interim Administration, have also been denied justice, remaining in prolonged detention without trial or

charge. The Caricom Statement went on to point out that its April 2006 Communiqué, the CARICOM Council for Foreign and Community relations after reiterating its concerns over these grave human rights violations had called on the Interim Administration “to take the necessary measures to rectify this objectionable situation” before it demitted office.

According to Caricom the new constitutional government of Haiti has underlined the emphasis it places on strengthening the judiciary in order to uphold the rule of law and due process. The earlier release of Mr. Privert, a former Minister of the Interior and now of Mr. Neptune following judicial decisions are a hopeful sign of change which CARICOM hopes will extend to other persons wrongly arrested and imprisoned.

Saint Lucia In Demand

In Last Day Rush for CWC 2007 Tickets



St. Lucia was one of the host venues of Cricket World Cup which was one in great demand as cricket fans engaged in a last-day rush for tickets - both online (www.crick-worldcup.com) and at ICC Cricket World Cup Official Ticket Centres in Host Venues - on Monday 31st July, at the end of Public Ticketing: Phase 1 - Application for next year's tournament.

A notable surge during the last 24 hours of the three-month Application process saw 20 000 tickets being applied for as the first stage of Public Ticketing drew to a close. This figure represents half of the 40 000 tickets applied for in the final week of the Application phase as cricket fans worldwide sought to acquire tickets to some of the best matches at the signature event being held in the Caribbean next March and April.

While online traffic soared, as the hours ticked down to the 11.59 p.m. Eastern Caribbean time (ECT) end of Applications on July 31, staff at Official Ticket Centres across the nine Host Venues in the Caribbean - including Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago - reported a significant increase in the number of fans submitting Ticket Application Forms.

Trinidad & Tobago's Official Ticket Centres were inundated with submissions. The massive response by fans there is borne out by the fact that the twin-island republic has jumped to third

overall among countries from which the most applications have been received. The top ten are as follows: the UK, the USA, Trinidad & Tobago, Barbados, Australia, Jamaica, India, Canada, Guyana and St. Kitts & Nevis, respectively. Fans from 124 countries have applied for match tickets.

Additionally, the attractive Follow A Path and Venue Combination packages - which were only available in the Application Phase - continued to be in heavy demand. More than 8 000 Venue Combinations - which allows a fan to watch all the matches at a particular stadium - have been applied for while more than 3 000 Follow A Path packages are being sought. The latter allows a fan to choose the path which his/her team would travel if that team advances to the Final.

The top five teams for which Follow A Path packages are in greatest demand are India, Australia, England, New Zealand and Pakistan, respectively. Additionally, Barbados, Grenada, Antigua & Barbuda, Guyana and Saint Lucia respectively are the Host Venues for which the most Venue Combinations have been requested.

ICC Cricket World Cup West Indies 2007 Inc. Commercial Manager, Stephen Price, hailed the success of the Application stage of Public Ticketing, noting that the rise in ticket applications was a firm indicator that cricket fans worldwide understood the process and had acted accordingly.

"Ever since we unveiled the Ticket-

ing Programme last November we have stressed the fact that regardless of when ever one applied during the May 1st to July 31st Application phase, one would have the same chance of being allocated match tickets," he stated.

"Public Ticketing has done incredibly well thus far. It's an overwhelming vote of confidence in the Caribbean's ability to host such an event and it's certainly an indication that Cricket World Cup will be well attended."

As expected, he noted that ticket allocations for some of the tournament's "top matches", including the Final and Semi-Finals, would have to be determined by an independent ballot.

"This is the norm in mega-sporting events. Obviously, the final of any tournament will be the most sought-after ticket, followed by the semi-finals and then matches which feature top teams against each other. Applications for Cricket World Cup tickets have followed this trend," stated Price.

The ICC CWC 2007 Commercial Manager reminded that though Public Ticketing will be suspended for the month of August - as applications are processed and notification sent to all applicants - match tickets can still be acquired in Tour & Travel packages from ICC CWC 2007 Official Travels Agents (OTAs) and in Hospitality packages, which are being sold by ICC CWC 2007 Official Hospitality Agents (OHAs). Contact details for all OTAs and OHAs

worldwide can be found on www.crick-worldcup.com.

Regarding how the rest of Public Ticketing will be rolled out, Price explained that Phase 2 will run from Friday September 1, 2006, to Thursday November 30, 2006. This stage will be conducted on a "first come, first served" basis with remaining tickets available online and at Official Ticket Centres in the nine Host Venues.

The third and final phase of Public Ticketing begins on Monday January 9, 2007, and will end on the morning of the Final on Saturday April 28, 2007 - again on a "first come, first served" basis, subject to availability - with actual seats being sold online, at Official Ticket Centres and Venue Box Offices in the Host Venues.

More than 800 000 match tickets were made available for ICC Cricket World Cup 2007 with ticket prices ranging from US\$10 for a Single Match ticket to Warm-up games to US\$300 each for the best seats at the Final; a policy designed to give every fan an opportunity to enjoy cricket's premier tournament.



THIS WEEK ON NTN

Sat. Aug. 5th - Fri. August 11th, 2006

Professional St. Lucian Women discuss their rise in the corporate world - Sat. Aug. 5th 9:30 a.m.

Are black folk emancipated nearly 175 years of the abolition of slavery - a mind opening 60 minute discussion - Sun. Aug. 6th, 9:30 a.m.

Secondary school students discuss problems facing the island and offer possible solutions - Mon. August 7th, 8:00 p.m.

The Caribbean Media Exchange forum discusses Cricket World Cup 2007 and sports tourism - Tues. August 8th, 8:00 p.m.

Professor Vaughn Lewis speaks to the CSME and the way forward - Wed. August 9th 9:00 p.m.

CARICOM Youth Ambassadors engage in a frank discussion on issues affecting young persons - Thurs. August 10th, 8:00 p.m.

Crime Prevention is Everybody's Business - August 11th, 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 and then click on the NTN icon.

www.stlucia.gov.lc

Saint Lucia's Venue Facilities on par for the ICC Cricket World Cup 2007

With just over eight months to go to Saint Lucia's hosting of the first round matches of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2007, the Local Organising Committee is focusing on the island's Venue Development ensuring that all the facilities are ready for this international event in March 2007.

Presently, overlay works are being effected at the Beausejour Ground and its environs to cater for the thousands of visitors including international journalists expected to arrive in Saint Lucia for the event. Such work includes temporary extension to the Media Centre and additional seating to accommodate twenty thousand patrons for the first

round and semi final matches.

The construction of an Indoor Sporting Facility adjacent to the Beausejour Ground to facilitate practice on rain days during the Cricket World Cup 2007 is expected to begin soon. The practice facility which is one of the legacy projects arising out of Saint Lucia's preparations will accommodate other sporting activities such as Tennis, Netball, Volleyball and Basketball post Cricket World Cup 2007.

Two other playing facilities are also expected to be upgraded for use by the visiting teams during the tournament. The Gros Islet Community Field and the Mindoo Phillip Park when completed will meet the international

standards set by the ICC for practice grounds. These upgraded facilities can only serve to benefit the island's cricketers in the future.

The responsibility of the Venue Development team is extended beyond the cricket ground as can be seen in the road works and Promenade recently completed in time for the hosting of the two international games held in May and June 2006. The beautification and landscaping of the immediate area of the Beausejour Cricket Ground to ensure the esthetics of the area will also form part of the Venue Development agenda as Saint Lucia work towards hosting "the best Cricket World Cup ever".

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

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