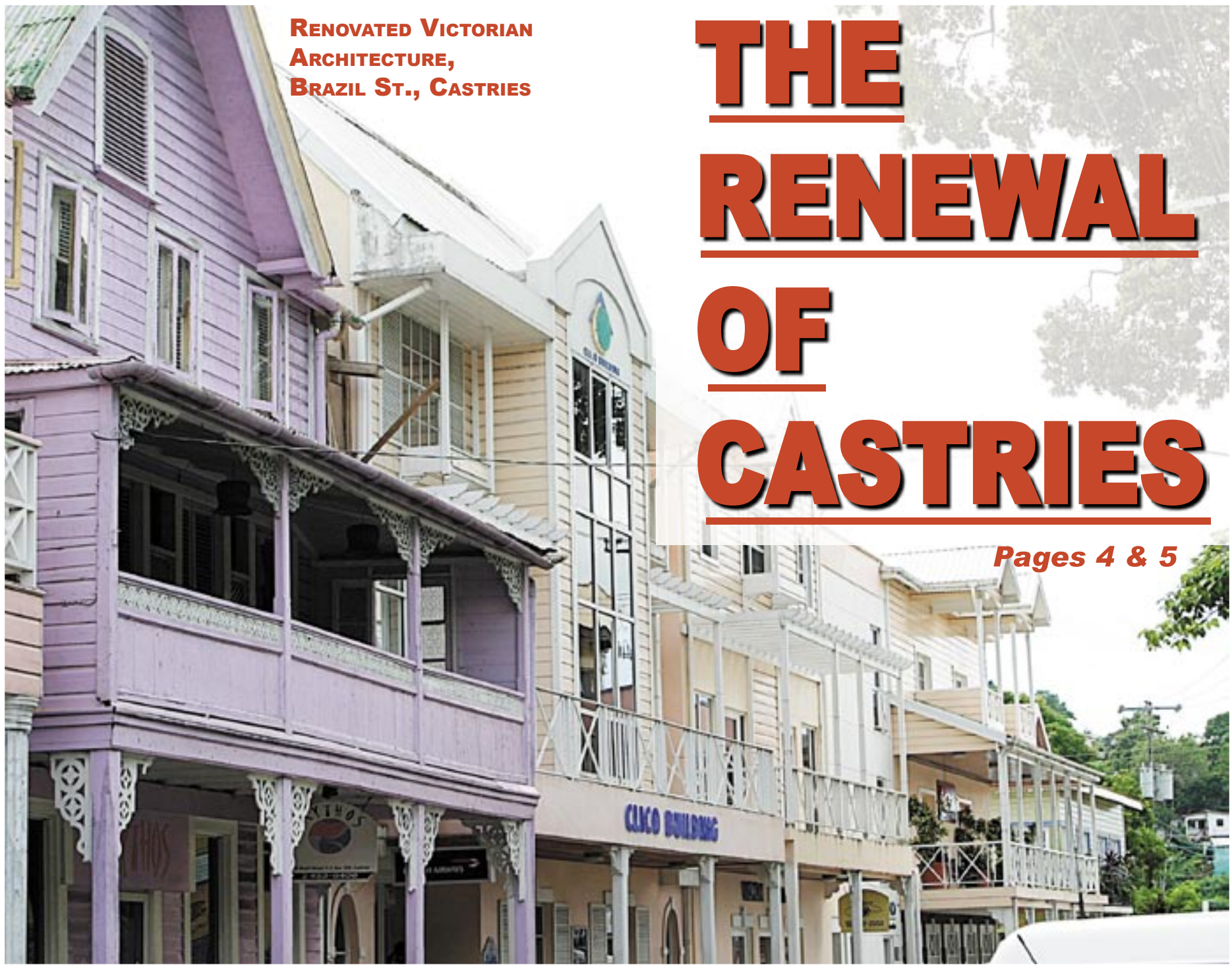




NATIONWIDE

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RENOVATED VICTORIAN
ARCHITECTURE,
BRAZIL ST., CASTRIES

THE RENEWAL OF CASTRIES

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A section of the Soufriere-Vieux Fort Road



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FINANCING THE 2006-2007 BUDGET

THIS EDITION OF NATIONWIDE CONTINUES OUR SPECIAL COVERAGE OF THE 2006 – 2007 BUDGET PRESENTATION BY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF FINANCE DR. KENNY ANTHONY. THE FOLLOWING IS THE SECTION OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH WHICH ADDRESSES THE QUESTION OF HOW GOVERNMENT WILL FINANCE THE COUNTRY'S FIRST BILLION DOLLAR BUDGET

Now that the principal budgetary policies have been outlined, I will proceed to explain how the budget will be financed.

In formulating a budget, Mr. Speaker, we have the difficult task of striking the correct balance between taxes, expenditures and debt. Our task is to ensure that current and future generations are treated fairly. At a minimum, current generations should be required to pay, via taxes, for the goods and services that they consume. We also believe that the current generation should contribute to investment as they are also beneficiaries of the future growth that is generated by that investment. We must also ensure that we do not unduly burden the future generation by increasing debt to unsustainable levels.

We have, Mr. Speaker, carefully evaluated the policy options and the policy trade-offs and believe that we have come up with the optimal balance between policies that will contribute to sustaining growth while at the same time ensuring that our debt remains sustainable.

I shall now present the Budget Estimates for the 2006-2007 fiscal year.

The total planned level of expenditure amounts to \$1,121.5 million, representing an increase of 17.3 percent over the planned budgetary outlay in the 2005-2006 fiscal year. In effect, this is a 1.1 billion dollar budget.

The details are as follows: (1) The planned level of recurrent expenditure, exclusive of amortisation, is \$611.6 million, representing 54.5 percent of total planned expenditure, and is 2.9.8 percent higher than the previous year; (2) Debt amortisation is forecast at \$88.5 million and accounts for 7.9 percent of total planned expenditure; (3) The planned level of capital expenditure is forecast to increase by 25.5 percent to \$421.4 million and accounts for 37.6 percent of the total budget. This increase largely reflects the continuation of ongoing capital projects and the re-budgeting of EU-grant financed projects, as funding was not received in the last fiscal year.

The sources of financing for the 2006-2007 Budget are as follows: (1) Recurrent Revenue of \$621.6 million; (2) Capital Revenue of \$9.2 million; (3) Excess Revenue and the re-budgeting of bonds from fiscal year 2005-2006 of \$16.0 million; (4) Grant Funding of \$76.5 million, of which \$61.4 million is from the European Union; (5) Previously approved Loan Funding of \$153.8 Million; (6) Previously approved bond funding of \$88.4 million. Members are asked to note that Parliament approved by Resolution dated 12th September, 2005, an amount of \$188.4 million, to be raised by the issue of Savings Bonds to assist in the financing of capital and other expenditure and debt refinancing. However, we decided to raise only \$100 million. The unutilised approved bond funding of \$88.4 million is to be applied to refinance existing debt and therefore will not add to our debt stock; (7) New loan funding of \$32.4 million in substitution for previous bond financing, for which I shall seek the approval of this Honourable House later; (8) New bond funding of \$123.6 million.

In effect, Mr. Speaker, I shall be seeking the approval of this Honourable House for \$156.0 million for new funding. This amount, Honourable Members will be pleased to know, is \$32.4 million lower than the amount that I sought approval for last year, which was \$188.4 million. This confirms the downward trend of borrowing.

Approach to Forecasting

Allow me, Mr. Speaker, to comment on our forecasts for the 2006-2007 fiscal year.

This Government, Mr. Speaker, has always erred on the side of caution in making projections of revenue and expenditure. We tend to be highly conservative in our revenue estimates and as a result tend to under-estimate. Conversely, our precautionary approach leads us to over-estimate recurrent expenditures. In many other countries the practice is the reverse and as a result those countries experience fiscal problems. Given that Saint Lucia is a highly vulnerable economy susceptible to shocks, our approach to forecasting is conservative and judicious. In order to see the benefits of that practice, I shall review last year's fiscal performance against the planned budget.

Mr. Speaker, last year I projected recurrent revenue at \$546.2 million. I indicated that we had to be cautious because of the worrying trend of increasing oil prices. While oil prices did increase, Mr. Speaker, and we had to make some adjustments, I am now pleased to report that revenue intake was \$73 million or 13.4 percent higher than the actual forecast. This additional revenue has enabled us to meet our commitments to public servants in respect of new salaries and back-pay. More crucially, we have been able to reduce our borrowing requirements.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to emphasize that our sound fiscal management enabled us to pay the back-pay to public servants without having to resort to borrowing from the banks or for that matter the Central Bank.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we had planned to raise bonds of \$189.6 million to finance the capital programme last year, of which \$56 million was earmarked for the Cricket World Cup project. Given that we received more favourable rates from a bank than what we would have obtained from the Regional Government Securities Market (RGSM), we decided to take a loan for Cricket World Cup. This reduced our bond requirement to \$133.6 million. However, given our excellent revenue performance Mr. Speaker, we only had to raise bonds of \$100 million. Mr. Speaker, this is proof that the financial stewardship of this country is in safe hands.

This year, Mr. Speaker, while we are projecting real GDP growth of 6.6 percent, we are again going to err on the side of caution and project revenue collections at only \$621.6 million, a mere \$2.4 million above last year's actual collections. If our real GDP growth materialises, as we have every reason to believe it will, revenue collections may well climb to \$680 million. But, Mr. Speaker, we are cautious. We are again haunted by the spectre of rising oil prices, which hit a peak of US \$75 per barrel only last week. We have also been told to expect another active hurricane season.

Allocation of Expenditure

This budget is framed to enhance our social infrastructure, and to strengthen programmes in health, education, social protection, security and justice. These are programmes that are ultimately important for improving the welfare of our society and particularly, of the more vulnerable groups.

This budget is, therefore, a budget with the future in mind. It provides for the future opportunities of the youth, the future care of the elderly, the provision of health services that our citizens will require for the foreseeable future, and for the long term growth and development of Saint Lucia's economy.

I now turn to the distribution of the budget among agencies. Comprehensive details of expenditure by agencies, programmes and activities are contained in the draft 2006-2007 Estimates, copies of

which have been circulated to Honourable Members.

Economic Service Agencies

The proposed allocation to the Economic Service Agencies is \$682.1 million; 24.7 percent higher than the amount allocated last year and 60.8 percent of the total budget. The amount allocated to recurrent expenditure is \$387.7 million, of which \$180.5 million is for debt servicing and \$40.9 million is for the payment of pensions to retired public servants.

I have also increased the capital allocation to these agencies significantly by 36.2% to \$294.4 million. This increase reflects, largely, the amounts required to complete ongoing projects.

Cricket World Cup

Mr. Speaker, you would recall that it was our intention to raise all the funds for the Cricket World Cup Project in the last fiscal year, given that I predicted that interest rates were likely to increase. I am pleased to say that this was the right decision as interest rates have increased and are expected to continue to increase. The funding for this project has been raised and we are in effect re-budgeting the balance of the loan funds, which amount to \$42.8 million, to complete the upgrading of the Beausejour Cricket Ground and provide for the operating expenditures for the hosting of the matches.

Water Supply Infrastructure

As indicated in my last budget presentation, Government has launched a major Water Infrastructure Improvement Programme, which is aimed at alleviating the water shortage problem in the north of the island. Honourable Members, I am sure, would agree that this improvement programme is critically needed as the development in the north continues apace. I would like, for the benefit of Honourable Members, to restate the components of this programme: (1) Upgrading the Roseau Dam Pumping Station; (2) Improving the raw water transmission between Vanard and Sarot; (3) Upgrading the Theobalds Water Treatment Plant; and (4) Upgrading the Morne-Bocage Distribution Pipeline.

The contractor for the project is in the process of mobilising for commencement. This project, which is financed by the World Bank, is expected to be completed in one year and will bring great relief to residents living in the north of the Island. An allocation of \$26.4 million has been made for this project.

Road Infrastructure

Mr. Speaker, this Government has made record levels of investment in road infrastructure over the past five years. This has been necessary because of the aging road infrastructure and the rapid deterioration in the road network. This year we will continue with our investment programme. The Ministry of Communications, Works, Transport and Public Utilities is the recipient of \$106.9 million; \$46.1 million or 75.8 percent higher than the allocation received last year.

An allocation of \$28 million is made to the East Coast Road Project. It is expected that Phase 2 of the project, which covers Castries to Praslin, will be completed. Rehabilitation will also commence on some of the critical sections of the road between Praslin and Vieux Fort.

Honourable Members would also note that work has commenced on Phase 1 of the Castries to Gros Islet Highway. This project, which covers the section of the highway between Castries and Choc, will cause some discomfort to motorists. Once again, I plead for your patience and understanding as we seek to improve and widen this road network. On completion, traffic congestion is expected to be relieved significantly. An allocation of \$28.1 million has been earmarked for this project.

The Urban Renewal Programme, which was explained earlier in my presentation, will receive an allocation of \$9.6 million.

It is expected that the Tertiary Roads Programme, which entailed the rehabilitation of 108 kilometres of road, will be completed this year and a provision of just under \$23.0 million is made for this project.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, I have allocated \$5.3 million towards community infrastructure.

After spending significant sums of money to rehabilitate our roads, it is absolutely important that we develop a maintenance plan to prevent a recurrence of this situation in the near future. In addition, Mr. Speaker, it is important that we reduce the damage caused by heavy goods vehicles. As a result, we have agreed to implement a motor vehicle weight control system. An allocation of \$1.5 million is earmarked for this initiative.

Increased Allocation to the Tourism Sector

The expansion of the Saint Lucia economy has been driven, in large part, by the tourism sector. This sector is now the engine of growth of the economy and it is crucial that Government provides the requisite support. I propose therefore to increase the overall allocation to this sector to \$29.6 million. Of this amount, \$25.8 million will be allocated to tourism marketing.

Agriculture Diversification Programme

Sadly, Mr. Speaker, last year we could not implement the agriculture diversification programme because the anticipated receipt of Special Framework of Assistance (SFA) funds from the EU did not materialise. We are assured that most of the bureaucratic hurdles have been resolved and are hopeful that funding will become available early in the fiscal year.

Reflecting the importance that our Government has attached to agricultural diversification, we have programmed \$9.2 million for this programme.

Last year, I announced a comprehensive package of incentives for the agriculture sector. I wish to complement our incentives programme with a capacity building programme, for which a sum of \$2 million is allocated.

Support to Restructure Banana Industry

Notwithstanding the low level of production, for reasons outlined earlier Government remains committed to supporting the restructuring of the banana industry to enhance productivity and thereby enable it to survive post-2006 and in a tariff-only regime. This year, I have allocated \$4.7 million to this sector, of which \$1.4 million is to continue the ongoing irrigation and drainage projects implemented by the BIT and \$3.3 million is for the Banana Emergency Recovery Unit (BERU).

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Cost Overruns: Is The Oppositon Without Sin?

PM Converses with the Nation



Prime Minister Dr. Kenny D. Anthony

The House of Assembly has concluded its debate on the 2006/07 Budget Estimates. Most of you were asleep by the time the debate concluded at about 12:15 a.m on Saturday. Inevitably, one of the subjects which came up for discussion was the cost-overrun incurred in respect of the Soufrière to Vieux Fort Highway. This was anticipated. After all, it is a favourite subject of the Opposition, for reasons which I shall reflect on later. I had promised that the final cost of the highway would have been disclosed during the Budget Debate and this was done by Hon. Felix Finisterre, Minister for Communications, Works, Transport and Public Utilities.

Inventing Cost Overruns

One would think that the Saint Lucia Labour Party invented “cost overruns”. Of course, the term, “cost overrun” now occupy prominence in our political vocabulary because of the Rochamel Development.

Let’s clarify the term. “Cost Overrun” simply means the amount by which the actual cost of a project or activity exceeds the budgeted, estimated, original or targeted cost. So, if you plan to build a house for \$100,000.00 and you actually spend \$120,000.00, then there is a cost overrun of \$20,000.00.

Amazingly, the Opposition behaves as if it is without sin, that no cost overruns ever occurred during its tenure. The fact is, cost overruns were rife during the UWP administration, particularly when Sir John Compton was Prime Minister. Here are two recent examples:

- (1) In his 1995 Budget Address, Sir John announced the construction of the Tunnel Road at a cost of \$53 million dollars. This Government completed this project after it assumed office in 1997. The total bill was over \$80 million. This Government paid it. It did not squirm. It did not accuse Sir John of corruption. I well remember the then Minister of Communications, Works, Transport and Public Utilities, Hon. Senator Calixte George, commenting that the cost of the Tunnel Road per mile was the highest ever in Saint Lucia. It is still the case!
- (2) Then there was the infamous Darling Road Housing Project. Sir John’s U.W.P. administration borrowed a total of \$32.7 million from the N.I.C. in two tranches.
- Interestingly, it was this Government, in order to protect the NIC, which went to Parliament on November 22 1997 to guarantee this loan, so adding to the island’s Public Debt.
- One who criticises must never ignore his own sins. To this day, one cannot reconcile the total cost of the Darling Road Housing Project and the value of the buildings. And

the sins of the U.W.P. administration are plenty. Here is a list of Projects which incurred cost overruns during their tenure without explanation.

(1) Castries Harbour Redevelopment by Concreto (Venezuelan Firm); (2) East Coast Road Improvement and Alignments (1972 – 1979); (3) Hewannora Airport Renovation and Expansion; (4) Vigie airport Extension (storm damage during period of construction); (5) Castries/Gros Islet Highway Project; (6) Pigeon Island Causeway Development (Expensive sea coral back fill material utilised); (7) Castries Waterfront Office Building Development; (8) West Coast Road Development (Phase I, II, III – 1983-1990); (9) RIM Road Projects – (1990 – 1995); (10) Cul De Sac Flood Protection Works; and (11) Cul De Sac Industrial and Commercial Development.

Why The Fuss?

Why then all, all the insinuations? Every Saint Lucian has a right to be concerned about how public money is spent. Indeed, this is a good thing. Citizens need to be satisfied that if additional expenditure is incurred, that such expenditure is fully justified. And, a Government has an obligation to explain once all the facts are available. When all the facts are not disclosed, it becomes easier for mischief makers to sow seeds of doubt, suspicion and distrust.

And the Opposition has successfully done this. They have led many to believe, that

advised CDB to select another Consulting Firm to assess the bids. A Canadian firm was selected and recommended that the contract be awarded to Lagan Holdings, an Irish Company which had submitted the lowest bid. The Caribbean Development Bank issued its “no objections” to the recommendation and the Tenders Board duly approved the recommendation. So, the machinations worked in favour of Lagan Holdings, the same company that is now attacked by those who initially campaigned in their favour. That is life!

The Role of Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)

The real question that must be answered is this: Are the cost overruns on the Soufrière to Vieux Fort highway justified?

Before I answer this question, I must remind each and everyone of you that it is the Caribbean Development Bank which provided the loan for the construction of the highway. Consequently, the CDB had an interest in the project, and its implementation.

Why Cost Overruns?

On two occasions, I requested the Caribbean Development Bank to evaluate the progress of the project. On the second occasion, the Caribbean Development Bank confirmed that there would be substantial cost overruns. The Bank advised that the cost overruns were due, primarily, to the following reasons:

(1) Drawings of the location of Cable & Wireless cables were not available. According to the CDB Report “The overall scope of the telecommunications works

corresponding re-tender the tenderers attempted to under bid each other with the result being a contract price substantially less than the consultant’s original estimate. This has resulted in a contractor, that is Lagan, that is highly claims-conscious attempting to compensate for a low bid.”

These factors led to substantial delays. A contract whose performance was originally twelve months extended to twenty four months. Inevitably, this also added to the original cost.

An Earlier Indication

Some have asked, why is it that this Government did not indicate earlier, the total cost of the project?

As I explained on Mr. Poleon’s Newsmaker Live Programme, the Government could not advance a final amount for the cost overrun, when it was engaged in negotiations to finalise the full amount. Of what use is it to announce a figure, which is, at best, a preliminary figure. Then, too, the final cost constitutes a variation which must be approved by the Central Tenders Board. All of these procedures had to be resolved.

Can Government Hide?

Some, in their mission to sow distrust and suspicion, accuse the Government of hiding the figures. The fact is, no Government can hide public expenditure of the scale incurred in the construction of the Vieux Fort to Soufrière highway. Such expenditure must emerge because the Director of Audit will, eventually see to it. So too will public officers who mange Government funds. Moreover, the loan was



A section of the new Soufriere to Vieux Fort Highway

because the cost overrun, for the Soufrière to Vieux Fort was substantial, that someone must have been corrupt. And, since they are unable to prove corruption, they have shifted to describing it as “wastage”.

How was the Contract Awarded?

It is interesting to reflect on how the contract for the construction of the Soufriere to Vieux Fort highway was awarded.

When the project was first advertised and the bids opened, B & D, a local company, took the Government to court and claimed that the process was unfair. It was alleged too that the consulting firm, DIWI, favoured CCI over other firms, including Lagan Holdings and C.O. Williams and Company, a Barbadian firm resident in Saint Lucia.

Sir John Compton waded in. He wrote to CDB and suggested that the process was tainted.

In order to avoid court proceedings the project was re-advertised. Government

also vastly increased, from 8,000 meters of ducting to 22,000 meters.”

(2) Likewise, during the design stage little was known about the location and state of WASCO’s pipes. There was “considerable scope changes after tendering was concluded.” A substantial amount of the older pipelines had to be removed and replaced.

(3) There was inadequate identification of periodic soft spots within the road sub-grade. There was an overall lack of adequate fill material.” The contractor experienced difficulty in identifying and sourcing material. In some instances, the source material was a considerable distance from where the material was required.” This added to the cost.

Crucially, CDB also identified a major weakness in the bid process as a direct result of the earlier court action. According to the CDB evaluation,

“The first tender exposed the intended bid price of all tenderers. During the

secured from the Caribbean Development Bank, so inevitably, they will, as they have done, publish the total loan advance to the Government of Saint Lucia.

Conclusion

Like all Saint Lucians, I would prefer to have all projects completed on time and within budget, with the highest quality of finish. However, this is not always possible in the real world.

I hope my explanations have helped you to better understand an issue tainted with slander and misinformation. But, that’s enough!

Today is “May Day”, so I salute the workers of Saint Lucia I wish to assure every worker that this Government, no matter what, will continue to advance the cause of workers of Saint Lucia on every front.

So happy May Day, be of good cheer, and God Bless, until next week.

THE RENEWAL OF CASTRIES

TODAY’S COVER STORY, “THE RENEWAL OF CENTRAL CASTRIES”, IS PART OF THIS PUBLICATION’S CONTINUING SPECIAL COVERAGE OF THE 2006 – 2007 BUDGET ADDRESS BY DR. KENNY ANTHONY, PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF FINANCE. AMONG THE SEVERAL BUDGETARY PROPOSALS WERE PLANS FOR URBAN RENEWAL IN CASTRIES, THE COUNTRY’S CAPITAL. THE FOLLOWING IS THE PART OF THE ADDRESS WHICH OUTLINED THE DETAILS OF THOSE PLANS

Urban Renewal In Castries

Mr. Speaker, for many of our citizens, certain parts of the city of Castries have become unattractive, unappealing and unsafe. The areas to the east of Peynier Street and to the south of Brazil Street spring to mind, because the signs of decay are very visible. This is reflected in an increase in dilapidated buildings, crumbling street infrastructure, especially sidewalks and drains, and unplanned and unsightly developments.

The city too is becoming dysfunctional. The flow of pedestrian and vehicular traffic is stymied by sidewalk vendors on the one hand and haphazard street parking on the other.

Urgent and concerted action is required to present a more appealing and functional city to the thousands of residents who use it on a daily basis and the tens of thousand of visitors who grace our shores every year. The challenge is both short term and long term. One of the long term solutions has to do with the rejuvenation of certain communities within the Castries Basin. Let us start with this.

Acquisition of Lands For Urban Renewal

Mr. Speaker, in the 2005 Throne Speech, Her Excellency Dame Pearlette Louisy, our Governor General, addressed the overcrowding and indiscriminate squatting in the Castries Basin and its satellite communities. Her Excellency addressed the issue this way:

“Mr. President, Mr. Speaker it is

ised construction, poor drainage, land slippage and worse.

It is now vital that there be a systematic rationalisation of such settlements to bring relief to residents and improve prospects for poverty reduction and wealth creation through the acquisition of land ownership and title.

Accordingly, my Government will, during this year, commence a resettlement program in Conway. Thereafter, similar processes will be undertaken in other communities based on economic and social analysis of existing conditions and determination of resident profiles. These tasks will be undertaken by the Ministry of Physical Development, Environment and Housing. Given the extent of the problems to be tackled, these processes are likely to be complex and lengthy and will require patience on all sides.”

Plans are well underway to commence the resettlement of Conway residents and this financial year should see the commencement of construction of infrastructure on the selected site of relocation.

The problems in the wider Castries Basin are, however, more complex. Many of the residents live on properties rented from landlords, spanning in many cases, several generations. Citizens turn to Central Government for help but sometimes the Government is unable to respond because the land is in private ownership. In some areas, it is impossible to improve access because of the location of homes. Overcrowding has led to unacceptable and intolerable social conditions.

The first step in tackling these is-

existing families on terms and conditions to be offered by the Government, and the relocation of some residents to approved areas.

Given the sheer scale and cost of this initiative, implementation will take time, and necessarily, must be phased. The Government will approach this challenge as follows: (1) First, the lands to be acquired will be identified and acquired in phases, commencing this financial year; (2) Prior to acquisition, the Government will hold discussion with the owners or the representatives of the owners; (3) This initiative will be managed by the Programme for the Regularization of Unplanned Developments (PROUD), a unit already established in the Ministry of Physical Development Environment and Housing. PROUD will be expanded and strengthened to cope with this new responsibility. Initially, PROUD will have to capture information and data about the residents. PROUD will be multidisciplinary in composition, outlook, and skills; (4) Where relocation is necessary to facilitate the construction of infrastructure, Government will identify sites for relocation of the persons likely to be affected.

Mr. Speaker, the Government has already identified the following communities for attention: Faux a Chaux, Bananes, Bagatelle, Cedars, Morne Du Don, Marchand George Ville.

Other communities will be added once the preliminary studies are completed. Acquisition of the areas in question will be phased over a cycle of three years.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to make it abundantly clear that until such time that the Government acquires these properties, the owners are entitled to rental payment from the persons to whom they are leasing.

Repair and Rehabilitation of Castries Sidewalks

Over the years, Mr Speaker, there has been a noticeable and steady deterioration of the sidewalks in Castries, much to the distress of citizens. Some effort has been made to effect repairs to sections of the City, but at best, these efforts have been sporadic and piecemeal.

Our Government now proposes to undertake a comprehensive programme of reconstruction and rehabilitation of the City’s sidewalks during this financial year. I propose to allocate \$2.3 million to this programme. I have no doubt that this programme will enhance the general appearance of the city and restore some of its legendary charm and appearance, particularly in those areas where no rehabilitation has taken place.

The implementation of this programme will be the shared responsibility of the Ministry of Communications, Works, Transport and Public Utilities and the Castries City Council.

Castries Waterfront Development

Mr. Speaker, we recognize that the first image that our visitors get when approaching our City whether by boat, plane or car is the Waterfront. The Castries Waterfront has a long history of welcoming visitors and in times past was admired as one of the most beautiful ports in the Region. But alas, we can no longer boast that the Waterfront is as welcoming to the eyes as before.



The Castries Harbour and Waterfront which is to be redeveloped

The only recent development to the Waterfront has been the construction of the two phases of La Place Carenage by SLASPA. This Duty Free Shopping Mall, along with the recently completed Desmond Skeete Animation Centre, represent only the beginning of the realization of the potential for the development of the entire Waterfront. So, in order to continue this Development, SLASPA, along with its subsidiary Anchorage Investments Limited, the National Insurance Corporation and its subsidiary National Insurance Property Development and Management Company, and the Bank of Saint Lucia have come together to formulate a strategy for the redevelopment of the Castries Waterfront. Interestingly Mr. Speaker, two non-national entities have also expressed an interest in participating in the redevelopment of the Castries Waterfront. One of these entities is in the Cruise Industry.

The prospects for this Development are interesting and exciting. Permit me to share with this Honourable House some of the ideas that have been discussed so far. The area under consideration encompasses the entire Waterfront area, from the former Castries Yacht Centre to Sheds 4 and 5 along lower Jeremie Street.

The proposed development will be modular in nature and it is proposed that the following modules will be pursued: (1) Castries Yacht Centre, Ganter’s Bay up to the tenders jetty adjacent to the restaurant “Froggy Jacks”;

most of the land in that area is owned by SLASPA and the Crown and it is proposed that the area be developed into an up-scale condominium complex, and a yacht facility with restaurants. (2) Pointe Seraphine, the reef and the access road to the Pointe Seraphine Shopping Complex: some portions of the land in this area are also owned by the Crown and NDC. It is proposed that this area is to be developed to cater to a mix of tourism, commercial and entertainment related activities. (3) The final module would involve the stretch of property along Jeremie Street, including the Vendors Arcade, the Port Police and Fire Sta-

like. The promenade should provide an arena-like experience to users with ample vistas of the harbour and special pavilions along its way to enhance the experience”.

In the view of the consultants, “the promenade can and should be the signature structure of the downtown waterfront and part of an attractive, welcoming “approach” to the city of Castries. The Promenade would express the unique character and beauty of Port Castries.”

Construction of a promenade along the Castries waterfront can give citizens the opportunity to realize both old and new dreams for the water sporting events, which took place in the harbour long ago.

Government has accepted this recommendation and decided to construct a tree-lined, shaded promenade/boardwalk extending northward from within



The Castries Market, one of the oldest landmarks in Castries

derly manner. Consequently, this year, I have instructed the National Development Corporation to work with the Castries City Council to conduct an assessment of the vendor situation in Castries. Upon completion, the National Development Corporation will make available a sum of EC\$300,000 to construct quality vending carts or stalls that can maintain the aesthetic beauty of the City.

Repairs To Central Market And Arcade

The Castries Market, Mr. Speaker, is unquestionably one of the oldest and most noticeable features of the landscape of the City of Castries. For decades it has assumed prominence, not only as an environment that facilitated income generating opportunities for vendors and the farming community

the Castries City Council, this facility has deteriorated to the point where it now adversely affects the integrity of the products offered by the vendors, thereby compromising their overall ability to sustain their economic activity. The intrusion of the elements (both sun and rain) has exposed the fragility of the current drainage and roofing systems in particular. Moreover, the prevailing on-site conditions are significantly diminishing the historical and aesthetic value of the Market Complex, as they act as deterrents to those seeking to patronize the facility.

Our city, with all its architecture, must exude confidence, vibrancy, freshness and aesthetic appeal and the Market Complex can play a lead role in catalyzing this transformation.

An allocation of \$300,000 has therefore been made available to enable the



The Vendors Arcade

tions, La Place Carenage, the Customs and Excise building and Sheds Four and Five. It is proposed that this area be developed to enhance the shopping experience for citizens and visitors.

Already, a committee, comprising board and council members of the NIC and SLASPA and other interests, has been established to pursue the most appropriate corporate development model.

Mr. Speaker, given the excitement that has been generated by the relevant parties, I am of the firm view that this venture merits the support of the Government of Saint Lucia and we will certainly want to offer any assistance to bring this idea to fruition.

Waterfront Promenade

Meanwhile, Mr. Speaker, Government will proceed with one aspect of upgrading the waterfront.

Our Government recently commissioned a Castries Urban Transportation Study, and the consultants who prepared the report have suggested that, “A waterfront promenade can provide an opportunity to link Pointe Seraphine with the City centre, making it an integral experience for locals and visitors

the existing craft market along the waterfront to the small vehicular bridge adjacent to the St. Lucia Electricity Services building at Sans Souci. This proposal will be the first step in a dramatic waterfront improvement. It will stand as a symbol of revitalization and triumph for an entire section of the city. I expect this will be done in time for Cricket World Cup in 2007.

Honourable Members may wish to note that a sum of \$6.25 million has been allocated in the Estimates to finance the construction of the promenade.

Support To Vendors

Mr. Speaker, it is vital that Castries reflects the image of a rapidly developing city. While we witness the refurbishment of buildings within the commercial section, we also observe a proliferation of tray-vending along our sidewalks that stands in stark contrast to the profile that needs to be created of the City. This is aesthetically incompatible. But our vendors must be provided an opportunity to earn a living; they must feed and educate their children. So Mr. Speaker, Government must intervene and assist them in plying their trade in an organised and or-

alike, but just as critically, as a major tourism asset. It is also a political asset, for it is the undisputed home of the Saint Lucia Labour Party – Saint Lucia’s first university so to speak.

The Market Complex, which comprises the Vendors Arcade, the Provisions Market and the Arts and Craft (Old) Market, accommodates 388 vendors in total. Over the years, it has been patronized by hundreds of thousands of tourists and locals. Its value to our people, and our economy, indeed, its overall intrinsic value, cannot be underestimated.

Despite on-going maintenance by

Castries City Council to undertake urgent upgrading works to the Complex. The major works to be implemented will include: (1) The installation of extractor fans and drainage works in the Arts and Craft Market; (2) The upgrading of the guttering system in the Provisions Market; and (3) The installation of down pipes, as well as drainage and roofing works in the Vendors Arcade.

I am particularly pleased for those vendors who occupy the Arcade because they have had to endure from the inception, a facility with inherent design deficiencies. They have, in the past, complained loudly and deserve some relief.



A part of the Conway, whose residents are to be resettled under the Urban Renewal Programme

well known that there is tremendous overcrowding in the Castries basin and surrounding urban areas. This is the unfortunate result of years of spontaneous and unplanned expansion of residential communities. It is also the result of urban drift and indiscriminate squatting. In many cases, this has led to intolerable social conditions and dangerous physical conditions: unauthor-

sues is for the Government to gain unimpeded access and ownership of the properties in question. Government, therefore, proposes to acquire these properties from their owners. Once this is done, the process of rationalisation can commence. This will entail the improvement and extension of existing infrastructure, the grant of title and ownership of the land occupied by

CARICOM-UK Reaffirm Regional Security Cooperation Plan

The Caribbean Community and the United Kingdom have reaffirmed their support for a Caricom - UK Regional Security Cooperation Plan. The two sides renewed their commitment to a joint approach to regional security at the Fifth U. K - Caribbean Forum hosted by the Government of Barbados, which took place in Bridgetown on 26-28 April 2006. The Forum was co-chaired on the Caribbean side by the Hon. Elvin Nimrod, MP, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade of Grenada and current Chair of the CARICOM Council for Foreign and Community Relations, and on the UK side by the Rt. Hon. Jack Straw, MP, Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

On the subject of security, the Communique issued at the conclusion of the meeting, states:- At the last Forum in May 2004, Ministers underlined the significance of effective cooperation between the Governments of the United Kingdom and the Caribbean on law and enforcement, and reform of the security sector, and decided to draw up a Framework for Security Cooperation. This resulted in the adoption, in October 2004, of the CARICOM-UK Security Cooperation Plan, focusing on four strategic priority areas – border security, regional maritime cooperation, establishment of a regional information and intelligence sharing network, and training of security and law enforcement officials. A Joint Management Committee (JMC) was established, comprising representatives from the UK and CARICOM Member States with responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the implementation process. The Ministers noted that subsequently CARICOM agreed to the establishment of an institutionalised framework for the management of crime and security issues in the Region. This includes an Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) to ensure the effective implementation of these and other security measures.

Ministers endorsed the Report of the JMC, reaffirmed their full support for the activities covered by it and acknowledged that in spite of early challenges, the activation of the new Framework for the Management of Crime and Security in the Region has accelerated the pace of implementation in the four priority areas under the co-operation plan. The Ministers noted that the particular progress is being made in human resource development and leadership for the CARICOM security and law enforcement community, acknowledged the steps taken in maritime co-operation and reaffirmed the aim of complete adherence to the Regional Maritime (Aruba) Agreement. In intelligence co-operation, Ministers further noted that the elements of an effective



Above: International and regional cricket and government officials reviewing security arrangements during a simulation exercise at the Beausejour Cricket Ground earlier this year. The local British Government Representative is fifth from the left
Below: Troops from the Regional Security System during a simulation exercise at Beausejour earlier this year

regional system were coming into place and co-operation with external partners was being enhanced. Once the technical capabilities for sharing were completed, it is expected that enforcement agencies would make the fullest operational use of the systems.

Ministers expressed their deep concern over the illegal trade and availability of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in the Region which contribute to the increasing level of armed violence and undermine stability, security and development. They stressed the connection between drug trafficking, illegal trade in small arms and organised crime and the need to work on a regional SALW Plan. Ministers also recognized the importance of global guidelines on SALW transfers and called on the international community to work together to develop international norms on

the transfer of SALW in the context of the UN Programme of Action. Ministers also added their voice to the calls for work to commence at the United Nations on a treaty on the trade in all conventional arms.

Border Security - On Border Security, Ministers emphasized the importance of control of land, as well as maritime borders. With regard to the Guyana-Venezuela border controversy, both sides reaffirmed their unequivocal support for the maintenance of Guyana's territorial integrity, including its unrestricted right to the development of the entirety of its territory for the benefit of its people. They expressed satisfaction at the cordiality which had characterized relations between Guyana and Venezuela in recent years, and recognised the instrumental role of dialogue at the highest levels in facilitating the commitment to a peaceful settlement of

the controversy under the aegis of the UN Good Offices Process, and to enhancing cooperation at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels.

The Ministers noted a report from Belize in relation to the ongoing process to reach a just, equitable and permanent solution to Guatemala's territorial claim to Belize within the framework of the Organisation of American States (OAS). They emphasized that the international community remained fully supportive of the OAS process between Belize and Guatemala in accordance with the Framework for Negotiations and Confidence Building Measures of 7 September 2005, under which they will attempt in good faith to resolve the dispute by negotiations, and should this not be possible provided a mechanism to allow recourse to an international judicial body for final resolution. Ministers expressed the hope that this mechanism will ensure that the dispute is finally settled within a reasonable time. They recalled and reaffirmed the strong support of the Commonwealth Heads of Government (Malta 2005) and CARICOM Heads of Government (Saint Lucia, July 2005) for the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of Belize.

Preparations For Cricket World Cup 2007 - Ministers agreed that Cricket World Cup (CWC 2007) preparations meshed closely with and are contributing to the emerging collective security capability of the Region as is being promoted under the CARICOM/UK Security Cooperation Plan. For an event of this scale regional coordination is essential to ensure that security is in no way compromised by facilitating quick and easy movement of a large volume of persons and goods across the Region. Ministers welcomed the steps already taken including the CARICOM political leadership provided by the establishment of the Ad Hoc Ministerial Sub Committee for Security Issues pertaining to CWC 2007 and the identification of CWC 2007 security coordination as a priority activity for the Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS).

The UK agreed to support CARICOM in the roll-out of its common visa arrangements for the period of the CWC 2007 and to address urgently the question of assisting in the issuance of such visas in countries where CARICOM is not represented. The UK would facilitate intelligence links with South Asian and the other international intelligence agencies and would examine the possibility of providing operational support for disaster preparedness. CARICOM would provide the UK with updated versions of its regional threat assessment as the basis for such intervention.

SAINT LUCIA AND CARICOM ISSUE STATEMENTS ON THE ASSASSINATION OF GUYANESE MINISTER

CARICOM FOREIGN MINISTERS' STATEMENT

The Foreign Ministers of the Caribbean Community gathered in St. George's, Grenada, for the Ninth Meeting of the Council of Foreign and Community Relations received with shock and a great sense of sadness the news of the assassination of the Honourable Satyadeow Sawh, Minister of Fisheries, Other Crops and Livestock and Acting Minister of Agriculture of Guyana, in the early hours of Saturday 22 April, 2006 in Georgetown, Guyana, along with his brother, sister and his security guard.

The Foreign Ministers of the Caribbean Community expressed their revulsion over this heinous act of violence which they strongly condemned. Such acts of violence have

no place in the democratic culture of the Region and undermine the political, economic and social stability of the countries of the Community. They expressed the hope that the investigations launched by the Guyana Police Force would result in the capture of the perpetrators and their being brought to justice.

The Foreign Ministers of the Caribbean Community extend their deepest sympathy to the Government and people of Guyana and to the families of the victims, and their hopes for the full recovery of those persons who were wounded in the attack and who are currently receiving medical attention.

The Foreign Ministers pledged CARICOM's full support to the Government and people of Guyana at this trying time.

SAINT LUCIA GOVERNMENT'S STATEMENT

The Government and People of Saint Lucia join the rest of the Caribbean and the world in condemning the brutal murder of Guyana's Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Livestock, Satyadeow "Sash" Sawh by an armed gang.

Mr Sawh is recalled by fellow Agriculture Ministers across the region as one who made significant contributions at the Caricom level to the search for solutions to the region's agriculture, fisheries and livestock sectors.

His colleague subject minister in Saint Lucia, Hon. Ignatius Jean, remembers him as one who clearly articulated the needs of the farming fishing and livestock communities of Guyana and the Caribbean in the face of problems brought about by the new terms of world trade and Globalization.

The Government and People of Saint Lucia join the Government and People of Guyana in unreservedly condemning the multiple murder of Minister Sawh and the other victims of that brutal attack.

These and other high-profile killings, in Guyana as in other Caricom states, add to the growing concerns that Caricom Governments and citizens collectively share about the state of crime in our region.

The Government and People of Saint Lucia offer deepest condolences to the Government and People of Guyana and pledge to continue to work together with other Caricom Governments and People to even more effectively coordinate efforts in the fight against crime, across borders and between jurisdictions.

FINANCING THE 2006-2007 BUDGET

Continued from page 2

Providing Low Income Housing

With the rising price of construction material, it is important for the Government to continue to provide some measure of support to low income households. The Low Income Housing Grant Facility had to be suspended last year because of the non-availability of EU resources. However, as I indicated earlier, we are now advised that the funding will be available this year and we have accordingly allocated a sum of \$2.0 million for this facility.

Honourable Members will recall that this facility has two components: (1) For low-income persons who own their lots, the Government will provide a Grant support of 10 percent of a loan to construct a home, up to a maximum of \$10,000; (2) For those persons who do not own land, the Government will provide Grant Support of 20 percent of the loan, to a maximum of \$20,000.

Amounts of \$5.7 million and \$2.1 million are allocated to the ongoing programmes of Shelter Development and PROUD respectively.

Disaster Mitigation

With the Castries and Anse-La-Raye Flood Mitigation Project coming to an end, the major ongoing disaster mitigation project that will continue this year is Phase 2 of the World Bank-funded Saint Lucia Emergency Recovery and Disaster Management Project. A sum of \$10.3 million is allocated to complete the coastal protection works for the Dennergy Village, to rehabilitate bridges and implement mitigation works.

Social Service Agencies

Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that this Government places strong emphasis on the social services, because improving the welfare of our people is on the top of our agenda. This year, I have increased the overall allocation to the Social Service Agencies by almost \$30 million or 10.8 percent, to \$306.3 million. Of this amount, \$204.7 million is for recurrent expenditure and \$101.6 million for capital expenditure.

Developing Human Capital: Investing in the next Generation

The world economy is increasingly being driven by knowledge-based industries. A skilled workforce is a key requirement for making the successful transition from a low wage economy to a high wage economy. According to the World Bank Report “A Time to Choose - Caribbean Development in the Twentieth Century”, the private returns to education for Saint Lucia are as

follows: 6 percent for Secondary Education, 34 percent for Post Secondary Education and 22 percent for Tertiary Education. This study, Mr Speaker gives real meaning to the statement that our Nobel laureate, Sir Arthur Lewis made so long ago; “the cure for poverty is not money, but education.” This is why, Mr. Speaker, this Government has placed increasing emphasis on the establishment of a sound education and training system. I have allocated a sum of \$168.2 million to the Ministry of Education. As a percentage of GDP, this represents almost 7 percent. Mr. Speaker, it is instructive to note that in the same World Bank study to which I referred earlier, only Barbados in the Caribbean spends more on education as a percentage of GDP than Saint Lucia.

I am proud - as I am sure are all Honourable Members and indeed all Saint Lucians – of achieving a major milestone in our national development with the implementation of universal secondary education. A capital allocation of \$26.8 million or 63.3 percent of the Ministry’s budget is made to the project, namely the Education Development Project, which supports the implementation of Universal Secondary Education.

Mr Speaker, I have allocated \$6.2 million for the rehabilitation of schools, of which \$5.1 million is earmarked for the refurbishment of schools falling within the Economic Reconstruction Programme financed by CDB. Additionally, \$1.1 million has been allocated for major repairs to the school plant.

Our capital programme for human resource development was unfortunately also affected by the non-receipt of EU funds. I have allocated a sum of \$3.2 million this year, of which \$2 million is allocated directly to the NSDC and \$1.2 million is for a Human Resources Programme that is EU-funded. These programmes were explained earlier, so there is no need for further elaboration.

Mr. Speaker, I have already highlighted major interventions in the area of sports development. Suffice it to note here that the overall Capital allocation increases by \$1.4 million over last year’s allocation.

Investing in the Health and well-being of our People

Mr. Speaker, this Government is undertaking the most radical transformation in our health sector. This transformation is based on the philosophy that health care should be available to all, irrespective of income level. In keeping with our commitment to transform the health sector I have made available an allocation of \$110.5 million, of which \$64.3 million is for recurrent expenditure and \$46.2 million is for capital expenditure. As Honourable Members heard earlier, provisions have been made

in the recurrent budget for the free medical drugs programme for persons who suffer from diabetes and diabetes with hypertension.

The capital budget of the Ministry of Health is primarily for providing the new infrastructure required to improve the delivery of our health and welfare services. I wish to highlight the following allocations for the benefit of Honourable Members: (1) \$17.3 million for the New National Hospital; (2) \$2.8 million for the preliminary works for the New Mental Health Facility; (3) \$716,779 for the completion of refurbishment works at the Soufriere Hospital; (4) \$5.9 million for repairs to health centres; (5) \$8.8 million for HIV/AIDS prevention and control; and (6) \$500,000 for a home repair programme for the elderly.

The Emergency Medical Services and Port Health Services will both be upgraded for the 2007 Cricket World Cup, and this enhancement will provide yet another legacy from the hosting of this event. In addition to comprehensive training of emergency medical personnel, and a marked upscale of the vector control programme, new ambulances will be procured. Funding for these improvements totalling \$3.1 million will be derived from the budget for Cricket World Cup and from the Capital Reserve.

The last project which I wish to highlight, Mr. Speaker, is the new Home for the Elderly, which is estimated to cost \$13.1 million. An allocation of \$8.6 million is made in this year’s Estimates for commencement of construction. This was outlined earlier in my presentation.

Social Transformation Programmes

Mr. Speaker, our social programme would be incomplete if we did not mention the range of poverty alleviation programmes that this Government has implemented and continues to implement. In this regard, Mr. Speaker, the allocation given to the Ministry of Social Transformation, Culture and Local Government is \$27.6 million, of which \$14.6 million is for recurrent expenditure and \$13.0 million is for Capital Expenditure. I wish to highlight the following projects for the benefit of Honourable Members: (1) An allocation of \$7.2 million is made for the 5th Programme of the Basic Needs Trust Fund. I understand this programme has been affected by slow disbursements and I wish to implore the Ministry to do all in its power to speed up the implementation rate; (2) An allocation of \$1.8 million for the Poverty Reduction Fund; and (3) An allocation of \$2.0 million for an Integrated Social Recovery Programme to be funded by the EU.

Cultural Development

An allocation of \$462,155 is given to cultural development, of which \$200,000

is provided for upgrading performing venues, \$100,000 for the National Arts Festival and \$162,155 is for the Training of Artists and Technicians. These amounts are in addition to the traditional allocations for Carnival, Assou Square, and Emancipation Day Observance.

Crime Reduction

Earlier in my presentation, I announced a series of initiatives that the Government will be undertaking this year to improve security. I will, therefore, focus on other areas of the Justice and Security Agencies budget. Overall, the Justice and Security Agencies will receive an increase of 14.3 percent in allocation this year. The total allocation to these agencies is \$84.5 million.

The major focus this year for the Ministry of Justice is to complete ongoing projects. These include: (1) Constructing the building to house the Forensic Unit, which is estimated to cost \$3.8 million and for which an allocation of \$2.7 million is made. A budgetary provision of \$688,174 is made for the procurement of Forensic Equipment. (2) Rehabilitating the High Court building, for which an allocation of \$340,155 is made; (3) Establishment of the Night Court, staffed by two additional magistrates, to determine traffic cases.

I also wish to announce that the Government will invest significantly in security for Cricket World Cup. As I indicated in my presentation last year, we cannot afford to compromise on security for the biggest international event that Saint Lucia would have ever hosted. An amount of \$5 million is to be funded from the Capital Reserve to meet the security needs for Cricket World Cup, much of which will carry over as a legacy impact of the event.

Allocation to General Service Agencies

The allocation to the General Service agencies, which include the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Labour Relations, Public Service and Co-operatives, is \$42.4 million.

The key highlights are: (1) A sum of \$12.0 million is provided to the Office of Private Sector Relations to support the private sector. This is from different EU sources; (2) A sum of \$1.0 million is for the establishment of e-Government; (3) A sum of \$1.4 million for the Constitutional Reform Commission; and (4) \$955,000 for the Renovation of the Greaham Louisy Administrative Building.

The Office of the Governor General and the agencies of Parliament, namely the Legislature, Service Commissions and the Electoral and Audit Departments, shall receive a total allocation of \$6.2 million. In keeping with this Government’s efforts at strengthening democracy, this year we will begin decentralising registration services

Automated Fingerprinting System For Saint Lucia

The percentage of undetected crimes on the island, it is hoped, will be reduced considerably with the purchase of an EC \$750, 000 automated fingerprinting system for St. Lucia.

In making the disclosure on budget day, Prime Minister Hon. Dr. Kenny said government’s investments in the security of Saint Lucia have been substantial, particularly in the fight against crime.

“The problem has to be addressed because there is no greater invasion of one’s privacy and security, than burglary. The loss of confidence is palpable and understandable. The fact is the detection rate for robberies and burglaries is less than 10 percent. All kinds of explanations have been offered for this ridiculously low detection rate. The police argue that the manual system of fingerprint

identification is inefficient and ineffective,” said Prime Minister Anthony.

The fingerprinting system, he said, will be complimented by a forensic science laboratory now under construction at Tapion. The facility which is being constructed at just over three million dollars is expected to be opened in December.

“Mr. Speaker, this Government has always given its commitment to do all within its powers to address the level of crime in Saint Lucia, and this facility represents a critical component in moving that process forward. It is an expensive but significant step in the fight against crime,” said Dr. Anthony.

Meantime government will continue its programme to increase the number of police officers in the Royal Saint Lucia Police Force. Currently 65 recruits are



Site of the Forensic Lab at la Toc

undergoing training and are expected to graduate in July this year. On completion of this training cycle, a further 60 recruits will enter the Police Training Academy.

The Prime Ministersaid these interventions, coupled with the acquisition of more police vehicles, operational and communications equipment, is an indication of the seriousness with which his Government views the fight against crime.

The Prime Minister also announced that St. Lucia will be hiring help from the British Police Force to aid the country in its crime fighting strategies and to develop capacity within the police force.

St. Lucia will become the third country in the region to adopt this measure, following in the footsteps of Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.

CWC 2007 TICKETING CENTRE OPENS



Minister of Sports Mario Michel, (centre) assisted by Mello the CWC 2007 Mascot (far left) and CEO of Cricket World Cup St. Lucia, Ernest Hilaire (second from left), cutting the ribbon to open the Ticketing Centre



Cyril Saltibus, one of the first local applicants for World Cup tickets, filling out his application form

The Local Organising Committee (LOC) for the ICC Cricket World Cup 2007 officially opened its Ticketing Centre on Tuesday May 2nd at the Cable & Wireless outlet, Gablewoods Mall, Sunny Acres.

In attendance were the Minister of Youth and Sports the Honorable Mario Michel, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the LOC Dr. James Fletcher, the Chief Executive Officer Ernest Hilaire, representatives of Cable & Wireless (official sponsor), Board Members and Staff of the LOC and the local Media.

The CEO in his welcoming remarks encouraged persons to make use of the Ticketing Centre, indicating that there was an allotment of tickets for Saint

Lucians and interested persons should take advantage of the application process. He reiterated the need to change the present culture of purchasing tickets last minute and warned that this would not work for the up coming Cricket World Cup in 2007, as there were thousands of requests worldwide through the net. The CEO thanked Cable & Wireless for their support through the use of its facilities and staff in the Ticketing process.

The Minister for Sports, Honorable Mario Michel commended the LOC and its staff for their continued work in ensuring that the event is a success. He indicated that there was no doubt that Saint Lucia will be a successful venue as there was indication that the

largest purchase of tickets were being done by the English of whom Saint Lucia would be hosting. He advised the Permanent Secretary of Tourism Mrs. Maria Fowell who was also present, that this may be an indication of visitor numbers during the Cricket World Cup in 2007.

The representative of Cable & Wireless Mrs. Deborah Barley also addressed the audience and expressed her company's support to the LOC in its preparation for the up coming event. The Ticketing Centre will be opened Monday to Friday from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm and Saturdays from 9.00 am to 1.00 pm

Minister of Sports Mario Michel, assisted by MELLO, the mascot for

Cricket World Cup 2007, cut the ribbon to officially open the centre and afterwards, the Minister was one of two persons completing the first St. Lucian applications for tickets. The other was Cyril Saltibus.

Dehring: CWC 2007 Match Allocation Remains Unchanged



Chris Dehring

Chris Dehring, Managing Director and CEO of ICC Cricket World Cup West Indies 2007 Inc., has clearly stated that the current status for all stadia across the region is "full steam ahead". Speaking from Grenada earlier today, he noted that the nine Host Venues are all currently focussed on

ensuring that the stadia are ready for an October deadline. He went on to dispel any rumours that this was not the case.

"It is full steam ahead across the region, everyone is moving forward as planned. Of course we have a back-up plan in place and it is currently being reviewed by the ICC. That plan will only be implemented if absolutely necessary," he said, addressing the relocation issue. At present, there is no one country that is being earmarked to 'take' matches currently assigned to another Host Venue. If a decision were to be taken to relocate matches from one Host Venue to another, it could only be taken by ICC CWC WI 2007 Inc. This is not a decision that can be made by anyone outside of CWC."

A number of countries in the region have indicated that they are on standby and willing to take on matches should other Host Venues not be ready. Dehring added that while "this spirit of co-operation" was "critical to the overall success of the tournament, at this time every country is expected to meet its obligation to host matches".

"Each Host Venue is working not only on the completion of their stadia but on all the other infrastructural elements required to support the hosting of the tournament. We have just over 300 days to go, including weekends and public holidays, and everyone con-

cerned is working assiduously to ensure that no time is lost."

Given that 300-plus days remain until the first ball of ICC Cricket World Cup 2007 is bowled, the spotlight is fixed on all 12 venues being upgraded or constructed for the tournament and their respective states of readiness. Dehring elaborated on the situation stating that: "At this point in time, we at ICC CWC 2007 Inc. have a clear understanding of where each country is in their stadium development and I expect that each one of them will indeed be complete within the time frame set."

While Jamaica recently confirmed that it had encountered some delays based on cement shortages on the island, a revised critical path of completion has now been submitted by the contractors and is under review by the Local Organising Committee (LOC). Warner Park in St. Kitts is on the verge of completion and will shortly be formally handed over to the St. Kitts & Nevis LOC. In Antigua, the most recent phase of the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium has just been completed – 22 days ahead of schedule. The contractors aim to build on that momentum to ensure that the stadium is completed well within the prescribed deadline. Guyana's Providence Stadium is also progressing at a pace and is scheduled for completion by the October 2006 deadline.

THIS WEEK ON NTN

Sat. May 6th to Fri May 12th, 2006
NTN – PROVIDING

INFORMATION YOU NEED

Rebroadcasts of parliamentarians presentations at the House of Assembly Hon. Marcus Nicholas & Hon. Damian Greaves - Sat. May 6th, 9:00 a.m.

Rebroadcasts of parliamentarians presentations at the House of Assembly - Sun. May 7th, 9:00 p.m.

The Banana Irrigation Project – Mon. May 8th, 6:30 p.m.

AgriFocus – Fish Handling in St. Lucia - Tues. May 9th, 6:30 p.m.

On A Point of Law: Get familiar with the constitution and your rights: – Wed. May 10th, 8:00 p.m.

What is the status of technical vocational education at schools? - Thurs. May 11th – 8:00 p.m.

Proud: Empowering Communities – Fri. May 12th – 7:30 p.m.

Another Edition of "A Point of Law" 2006 – Fri. April 21st – 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.

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