



NATIONWIDE

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

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EXCITING TIMES FOR TOURISM

ADDRESS BY THE HON. PHILIP J. PIERRE MINISTER FOR COMMERCE, TOURISM, INVESTMENT & CONSUMER AFFAIRS ON THE OCCASION OF THE RETURN OF AIR JAMAICA TO SAINT LUCIA NEW YORK WEDNESDAY 22ND FEBRAURY 2006

To say I am pleased to be in New York in celebration of Air Jamaica's return to St Lucia is an understatement. That decision by Air Jamaica is testimony of confidence in St Lucia tourism industry at a time when airlines continue to face major challenges. This confidence is not misplaced as St Lucia tourism continues to perform satisfactorily.

St Lucia recorded a 6.5% increase in tourism arrivals at December 2005 bringing for the first time the number of stayover visitors to over 300,000 (317,939). CTO estimates stayover arrivals to the Caribbean region increased by 3.6% and WTO estimates international tourism arrivals increased by 5.5% in 2005. Clearly St Lucia is holding its own and we are thankful to our partners for their support.

Air Jamaica's return to St Lucia is timely. The airline returns at a time when Caricom countries are embarking on a path of further integration through a Caricom Single Market which mandates freedom of the factors of production and right of establishment in each other's economies. Air Jamaica as a Caribbean airline is a practical example of the benefit of that integration.

We are aware that Air Jamaica has re-focused and is well placed to continue its expansion to destinations in the Caribbean. We believe that this is a positive step since the Caribbean brand is in need of more airlift. A region operating as a single market must emphasize on the uniqueness of its product and the need for airlift is a prime condition for growth.



Minister of Tourism Phillip J Pierre

and Tourism Association has designed a new advertising campaign in the electronic and print media. This campaign will focus primarily on the USA market and will be very visible in the New York area.

There will also be other joint marketing initiatives with Air Jamaica and the local private sector to complement that new campaign to ensure the sustainability of the service and a possible increase in flights in the near future.

This service is a welcome addition to our airlift not only because it is the only direct service from JFK to St Lucia but it will serve to fill a void ex-

Cricket World Cup. The island is expanding its playing stadium to increase existing spectator facilities.

An important part of that preparation is the need to house visitors expected to converge on St Lucia from around the world. Government through enabling incentive legislation has created the catalyst for growth and expansion in the hotel plant with the goal of expanding present room stock of 4500 to 7000 by April 2007. In 2005 - 480 new rooms had already been commissioned with the opening of Coco Palm Resort at Rodney Bay and Coconut Bay Hotel in Vieux Fort near the international airport.

These investment incentives include tax breaks for up to twenty years in some cases for new construction, expansion renovations of large and small hotel properties. To maintain St Lucia's reputation as a destination offering diversity in accommodation we have sought to upgrade bed and breakfast offerings and small hotels through special incentives that will allow them once they satisfy the required standards to offer accommodation to our visitors.

St Lucia's hotel plant is expanding and investors are demonstrating tremendous confidence in the future of the tourism industry. Commitments in new building expansions, refurbishments or upgrades are now over \$500 million USA and many of these developments are either under construction or nearing completion.

These new hotel developments range

on the future of our hotel sector. We are continuing our efforts to continuously improve the brand St Lucia. The road between the international airport and Soufriere, home to the Pitons, has been improved and resurfaced. Work on the east coast road to the international airport has commenced and when completed will provide motorists with a smooth ring-road network around the island. The Gros Islet Castries Highway is also slated for attention. Improvements on the regularity of our water supply are ongoing.

Diversification of our product continues. Government has granted the first gaming license to an American Company Treasure Bay Limited for the construction of a casino in the north of the island. These was also an announcement last week that a Jack Nicklaus signature golf course will soon be coming to Cap Estate in the north of the island.

Air Jamaica's return could not be at a more opportune time. I am aware that many factors determine an aircraft's destination but I am sure that the environment in St Lucia is encouraging for the future of Air Jamaica.

While we celebrate this evening I want to thank the people who made this historic return possible by keeping alive the vision of a major Caribbean airline.

In this regard the government of Jamaica must be complemented. Former Chairman Mr. Butch Stewart and Dr. Vin Lawrence and present chairman Mr. O.K. Melhado all share the desire



Construction Work at Discovery at Marigot Bay

The USA continues to be the largest source market apart from the Caribbean for St Lucia in 2005 increases of 5.1% were recorded from the USA with double digit increases in certain months. We are striving to continue that trend in the future and Air Jamaica non-stop flights from New York's JFK will help in that mission.

We are aware that airlift is necessary but not a sufficient condition to sustain a destination. In this regard the St Lucia government through its marketing agency the St Lucia Tourist Board and with the help and agreement of the private sector through the St Lucia Hotel

pressed not only by our visitors to St Lucia but by St Lucia nationals living in the USA and wanting to return home on a holiday. Air Jamaica is a Caribbean airline and I am sure management understands the needs of the Caribbean clientele. It would be remiss of me if I did not at this ceremony convey a message from and on behalf of the St Lucia passé in New York that Air Jamaica should ease up on the luggage.

These are exciting times in St Lucia's tourism industry and for our country generally. We are in the middle of preparations for hosting the world's third largest major sporting event -

from intimate small hotels to business five star properties. A brief review of major hotel construction in St Lucia will include the Landings, Plantation Bay, Bay Gardens and Le Sport Villas in the North. Discovery Bay and JJ Villas on the West Coast, Anse Chastanet Infinity Suites and Jalousie Resort in Soufriere (home of the Pitons), Le Paradis with a Westin property on the east coast village of Micoud. Work has already commenced on these sites. There are also many upscale villas and luxury homes being built all over the island.

You will agree that optimism exists

to make Air Jamaica the best possible airline - I salute the vision and determination of these gentlemen. (Other thanks - Mike Conway, William Rodgers, George DeMarcado, Lorine St Jules - SLTB)

To my mind the return of Air Jamaica to St Lucia signifies a major step in the development of our region and the tourism industry in particular. Our industry is dependent on airlift and I am sure Air Jamaica understands that reality and will serve St Lucia in the finest tradition of professionalism and love bird hospitality.

HEALTH MINISTER UNVEILS FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Health Minister Damian Greaves says the construction of a new EC \$60 million national general hospital will be a major feature in the drive by the Government to ensure that the people's health needs are addressed in a comprehensive way.

Speaking about this week's signing ceremony for the financing agreement for the new hospital between the European Union and the Government of St. Lucia, Mr Greaves said the Government is embarking on a major, strategic five-year Health Sector Development Plan for the year 2006-2011.

With this plan, he says, the Government, through the Ministry of Health, "intends to comprehensively transform the overall health landscape of the country."

"We are modernizing the health system nationally. We have begun and we will continue after the next general elections," says the minister.

According to Mr Greaves, the Plan comprises "several components, all aimed at addressing our needs and improving the system in a scientific and planned manner."

The minister identified the priority areas as including "eye health and disabilities, environmental health, oral health, communicable and non-communicable diseases."

Also on the priorities list are "emergency medical services, violence and injury, social protection (elderly, welfare children's services, domestic violence and men's issues) and child and adolescent health."

The list also includes "food and nutrition, sexual and reproductive health and mental health."

Mr Greaves says it was "necessary to broaden and deepen the scope" of the island's overall health services because, among other things, "we in the Caribbean are already beginning to see

signs of illnesses and conditions that were once only heard of in the developed countries."

"But," he points out, "while we are preparing to confront new medical challenges, we are also gearing to better handle existing ones, such as Diabetes and Hypertension, which affects as much as 40% of the island's population."

The minister says that under a special programme being put together by the Government, "as of May 1 this year, pensioners suffering with Diabetes and Hypertension will be getting free medicines."

This programme will be administered by the National Insurance Corporation (NIC), and according to the minister, "it will be a precursor to the introduction later of the Universal Health Care (UHC) programme, which will also be administered by the NIC and funded by the Government."

"The UHC," says the minister, "will be a kind of National Health Insurance that will combine and rationalise the available health services island-wide, to ensure that everyone, everywhere in St. Lucia, will have direct and immediate access to health facilities."

"Under the UHC," the minister says, "each St. Lucian will be registered on a computer database and their records will become available at any and every health institution they may go to, at any time."

"Apart from constructing a new general hospital and a new psychiatric hospital," the minister points out, "we have also allocated over \$2.5 million for the rehabilitation of 15 health centres around the island."

In addition, he says, "there will be full time doctors in every community, as we have more doctors being trained and returning home now than ever before."

He reports that 17 newly-trained doctors entered the health service in

2005 "and there will be as many as 23 more this year, as we prepare to launch the two modern and brand new hospitals."

According to official statistics, as many as 70 new doctors will return from Cuba in the coming period, in time for the opening of the new hospitals.

He also says "many St. Lucians have benefited from the Cuban Eye Care programme, which has seen over 10,000 persons getting their eyes tested free, and which has been extended for the year 2006."

"This," he adds, "is another programme that ensures we take care of all our people's eye care needs, no matter who they are or which party they support."

Explaining that the Labour administration was "taking a comprehensive approach to the solution of the island's health problems," Mr Greaves says, "We aren't only talking, we are also doing."



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

According to the minister: "The previous UWP administration promised St. Lucians one new hospital, but we are giving two. We are taking care of the health of the nation, and in so doing we are taking care of everyone – UWP, SLP, everybody."

He says: "We are talking the talk, but we are also walking the walk."

15 HEALTH CENTRES TO BE REHABILITATED



The La Clery Health Centre

The Ministry of Health has allocated some \$2.5 million towards the rehabilitation of 15 health centres around the island. This has been disclosed by Health Minister Damian Greaves.

According to the Minister, the money was allocated "to improve the quality of health care services delivered at health centres."

He said the rehabilitation works were also being undertaken "to improve the conditions of work for health care employees."

The Minister says the health centres will be rehabilitated at Grande Riviere, La Ressource and Richfond in the Dennery area and at Belle Vue in Vieux Fort North.

Health centres will also be rehabilitated at Babonneau and Fond Assau, as well as at the La Guerre Health Outpost in the north, as well as at Fond St. Jacques and Mongouge in Choiseul.

There will also be rehabilitation to health centres at Grace in Laborie, Desruisseaux in Micoud, as well as at La Croix Maingot and Bexon in Castries South and South East, respectively.

Meanwhile, the minister says his ministry is currently awaiting the award of contracts "by next month" for the health centres in the village of Micoud and in the community of Mon Repos, which will together cost almost \$478,000.

He said the ministry also hoped to award by April this year a contract for renovation works at the La Clery and Canaries Health Centres, at an approximate cost of \$483,000.

Mr Greaves also indicated that some work was done at the Soufriere polyclinic, where a maternity wing has been completed and a counselling room has also been constructed for attending to patients with mental health problems.

Over 10,000 Saint Lucians have benefited from Cuban Eye Care Programme

Over ten thousand St. Lucians have benefited from the Cuban Eye Care Programme in the first five months of operation on the island.

That's the word from Health Minister Damian Greaves.

According to the Minister, 10,000 persons were examined between August 2005 and January 2006 by the contingent of Cuban eye doctors on the island to implement the programme.

After being examined, he said, some 2,000 persons have been recommended for surgery, of which 1,000 have already travelled to Cuba

for treatment.

The programme, which began in August 2005, sees St. Lucians getting free eye examinations by the Cuban ophthalmologists and hundred of St. Lucians have received surgical operations in Havana to correct eye problems.

Many of those who have been to Cuba were operated on both eyes.

The programme is quite popular among St. Lucians and in December last year, at the request of the Government of St. Lucia, it was extended for another full year, ending in December 2006.

FINANCING SECURED FOR NEW GENERAL HOSPITAL

ADDRESS BY THE PRIME MINISTER HONOURABLE DR. KENNY ANTHONY ON THE OFFICIAL SIGNING CEREMONY FOR THE FINANCING AGREEMENT FOR THE NEW NATIONAL HOSPITAL PROJECT ON MONDAY, MARCH 6, 2006

The occasion which has brought us here today has been much anticipated. Indeed, I am particularly delighted that the Excellencies of the diplomatic corps could share this special occasion with us.

This occasion, as you know, is the signing of an EC\$91.7 million or EUR 27.8 million Financing Agreement for the construction of a new general hospital which is but one facility of a major medical complex. Already, the other compound, the Psychiatric Hospital, is under construction, thanks to our great friends, the People's Republic of China. The construction of these hospitals will be living symbols of the Government of Saint Lucia's commitment to transform the landscape for the delivery of health services to our population and to our visitors.

Background

It has been a long, sometimes difficult journey since the Government of Saint Lucia opened the debate on the subject of the viability and prospects for sustainability and long term viability of the existing Victoria Hospital which is well in excess of one hundred years old. At least five 5 independent investigations were conducted on the prospects for the improvement of hos-



Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony speaking at the Hospital Financing Agreement Signing ceremony

pital services in St. Lucia. Throughout the entire process, the EU has stood steadfastly by our side supporting us through the various stages with the necessary funding and technical assistance. At least three of the five feasi-

The Government of St. Lucia and the European Union have signed a financing agreement for a grant of just over 20 million Euro (EC \$65.81 million) for the construction of the island's new national hospital scheduled to commence during the third quarter of this year. The agreement was signed on Monday by Prime Minister Hon. Dr. Kenny Anthony and Ambassador Amos Tincani, head of the European Union Delegation based in Barbados. The 153 bed hospital, which will become St. Lucia's main secondary health care facility, replacing the Victoria hospital, will be located off the Millenium Highway in Castries and will cost EC \$92. 29 million. The Government of St. Lucia will provide the remaining EC \$24.39 million for the completion of the project.

According to Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony, the new general hospital along with the new psychiatric hospital, now under construction, will be living symbols of government's commitment to transform the landscape of health services on the island.

The new National Hospital will also be the health facility to house the Eastern Caribbean Cancer Management Centre, which will serve all the countries of the Eastern Caribbean as the centre for holistic management of cancers in the sub – region. This centre was researched and proposed by the French Technical Co-operation Agency in St. Lucia. Funds totalling 3 million Euro (EC \$ 9.6million) originating from another European Commission Instrument FLEX (Fluctuation of Exports) will be used for the establishment of this centre.

bility studies were funded through various EU financing instruments: These include: (1) Tomlin Voss & Associates (TVA) of Barbados - Alternatives for Hospital Development; (2)Health Research for Action (HERA) Consultants of Belgium - Health Sector Reform; (3)TVA Secondary Report & Site Assessment for New Hospital.

These studies concluded that Victoria Hospital could not possibly be transformed to meet our health demands into the foreseeable future without compromising ongoing treatment and care. The reports all agreed that the best option for the improvement of secondary care was to develop a brand new hospital on a new site.

Since then, we have been working diligently towards this objective. In January, 2004 Sir Frederick Snow and Partners Ltd of the UK and their local affiliates in Newel Lewis Broadbridge

and Associates (NLBA) and Halcrow St. Lucia LTD won the contract to be our Design Consultants. With their assistance we were able, by April, 2004 to conclude a scope investigation and schedule of accommodation for the new hospital.

By, October, 2005 we had produced a preliminary design and costing for the proposed new general. In this regard, we chose to be consultative by soliciting the participation and views of our doctors, nurses, health practitioners, fire and emergency personnel and various communities in arriving at the final design. It was the obviously the longer and more arduous approach to the design task but experience has taught us that there are no short cuts in planning for development without consultation, especially long term development of a project with such tremendous implications. We were exceedingly pleased

and Associates (NLBA) and Halcrow St. Lucia LTD won the contract to be our Design Consultants. With their assistance we were able, by April, 2004 to conclude a scope investigation and schedule of accommodation for the new hospital.

when the final design presented in July last year was overwhelmingly accepted by the health sector community and the general public.

For us, the initiative to establish a new national hospital at this stage of our development is critically important.

The project will create the physical environment for enabling the success of our health reform programme. Already, even before the first brick has been laid, the project is starting to have a positive spin-off effect on worker morale through the excitement, anticipation and hope it has generated amongst our health practitioners.

An important reform initiative which comes immediately to mind is the implementation of the Universal Health Care (UHC) system of national insurance. This health insurance initiative which will be managed by the National Insurance Corporation, the NIC, is designed to ensure equitable access to local and overseas care services by all St. Lucians. The UHC will require a comprehensive financial strategy to ensure the future sustainability of all health infrastructure and service offerings. UHC is in keeping with the principles of equity, efficiency, effectiveness and solidarity articulated within our Health Reform Proposal of 2000. The success of the UHC System will be better assured through the existence of a national hospital which is able to administer a broad package of services at high quality and so uphold public confidence in the national health services. To this end, I must point out that we have once again been fortunate to receive EU support under STABEX towards the drafting of a Universal Health Care Bill. Other aspects of health service delivery are also to be drafted into legislation as the policy agenda unfolds.

Another important undertaking which we have pursued also with EU support has been the preparation of a Five Year National Health Strategic Plan which will cover the period 2006-2011. This Strategic Plan is in draft stages and is expected to be published by the end of March, 2006.

Project Objectives and Expected Results

The long term objective of the project is to improve the overall quality and



The Prime Minister and Ambassador Tincani exchange the signed documents

effectiveness of delivery of health care services so as to improve the health status of the island's population. Its purpose is to improve the quality, access and range of acute care services available in Saint Lucia by establishing a new hospital to complement improved primary care services.

The project's most important result is the establishment of a new, 153-bed, functional general hospital, fully integrated with the enhanced primary care services with a floor area of approximately 14,000 square metres allowing for logical operational circulation patterns and optimal clinical management.

However, specific allocations have also been made for the advancement of the institutional reforms, quality assurance and the enabling environment for the successful operation of the new hospital. I speak specifically of the provisions within the Financing Agreement for: (1) Instituting an autonomous governance structure for Victoria Hospital which would allow for greater efficiency and effectiveness of management ahead of its transfer to the new hospital facility; (2) Improving the in-

stitutional capacity of the Ministry of Health for policy, regulation, through reinforcement and integration of corporate planning functions.

Another important anticipated result is that the New National Hospital upon its commissioning in 2009 will be quality assured and internationally accredited. This process began in 2005, with the commissioning of the Canadian Council of Health Services Accreditation to support the national quality initiative designed to have the health service accredited within four years. National structures to institutionalize quality are also being supported through the Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards.

Project Costs

The total project costs is EC\$91.7 million of which EC\$66.5 million is provided by the European Union and EC\$25.2 million by the Government of Saint Lucia.

The EU's contribution will go towards the following: construction, professional supervision services, capacity building of the Ministry of Health for Regulation, licensing and accredita-

tion, a new hospital governance, audit and evaluation.

The Government of Saint Lucia's contribution has gone into the land acquisition and the design of an access road to the site. In April, the Government contribution will continue with the start-up of construction of the access road.

Other government counterpart commitments to be made to the project include: Site preparatory work, the provision of utilities to the site, biomedical equipm, furniture and fittings, IT and office equipment and, ongoing Human Resource Development Support.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I take the opportunity to express the thanks and appreciation of the people of Saint Lucia to the European Union for their unstinting support over the years on this project of such developmental significance to us. This hospital will be an enduring monument of the support and friendship of the European union, and surely, the wisdom of the Government and people of St. Lucia.



Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony signing the Agreement on behalf of Saint Lucia



Ambassador Amos Tincani of the European Union signing for the EU



Dr. Anthony with the British Government Representative and the French Ambassador

CARICOM Mission to Europe on ACP/EU Sugar Regime

The Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis, Hon. Dr. Denzil L. Douglas is currently heading a Caricom Mission to European capitals to discuss the African-Caribbean and Pacific/European Union (ACP/EU) Sugar Regime. Guyana's President, His Excellency Bharrat Jagdeo did not travel as planned for the meetings.

Caribbean Heads of Government agreed to mount the mission to outline the Region's concerns with respect to the proposed measures by European Union with respect to the sale of sugar on the European market. The EU has decided on a 36 percent reduction in the price of sugar over the next four years with the first five percent being instituted in July 2006.

The Mission will seek to convey that the measures could have permanent repercussions not only for the sugar industry in the region but for the region as a whole.

"It is a decision that not only St. Kitts and Nevis is grappling with but it is a decision that other countries that are producing sugar in the Caribbean, in Africa and in the Pacific regions have to

take similar decisions like what we have had to take in St. Kitts and Nevis," said Prime Minister Douglas, who closed the 300 year old sugar industry last July.

"They (other ACP nations) may have more room and a little more time to play, but they have to take certain specific decisions which will lead to either the closure of their industries or a leaner, much more efficient industry that will amount to the dislocation of several hundreds of people as well in their industries," said Dr. Douglas at a recent press conference.

He said that the issue in St. Kitts and Nevis is a restructuring of the National Economy, "because we would have lost so much revenue, we have made people out of work and we now have to generate new industries, new economic activities."

"They (EU) say they are willing to help us finance these new initiatives that have to be introduced as a response to the closure (in St. Kitts) or the downsizing of the sugar industry as it pertains to Barbados, Guyana and Jamaica in the Caribbean," said Prime Minister Douglas.

"We go first to London where we

will be briefed on Monday and then we begin our lobbying sessions in meetings for the whole week and so it has become necessary for us to indicate very clearly and loudly to the Europeans that we are dissatisfied with the financial package that they have already offered in support of the accompanying reform measures to the Sugar Protocol," said Dr. Douglas.

Accompanying Prime Minister Douglas are St. Kitts and Nevis' Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Dr. the Hon. Timothy Harris and St. Kitts and Nevis' Ambassador to CARICOM, OECS and the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), along with Minister Clement Rohee of Guyana and officials from the CARICOM Mission in Brussels.

During a press conference after his arrival in London on Sunday, Dr. Douglas used the opportunity to thank the British Government and specifically Prime Minister Tony Blair for the support that he has given and for especially using St. Kitts and Nevis as the country that has been singled out to have been most affected as a result of the changes in the sugar regime.



Hon. Dr. Denzil Douglas

"In fact Mr. Blair during his Presidency of the European Union which ended last December, was able to take our case to that body and even after he had given up the European Presidency, he has continued to make statements in support for St. Kitts and Nevis to have more financing than the other ACP States because of the adverse effects that the changes to the Sugar Protocol will have on our national economy and the national life generally here in St. Kitts and Nevis.

OECS Trade Officials Review WTO, EU Talks

Trade Officials from member states of the OECS have concluded a review of the outcome of the Sixth World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference convened in Hong Kong last December. The members of the OECS Trade Negotiations Group (TNG) met in Dominica recently to look at the implications of the outcome of the Hong Kong Ministerial for the OECS with specific consideration of Agriculture,

Non-Agricultural Market Access, Services, Development and Institutional Issues and to frame an OECS work programme in light of the Hong Kong meeting.

The OECS trade officials' encounter also provided an opportunity to take stock of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations, in which the OECS is involved with the EU as part of the CARIFORUM configuration, and to discuss a study exploring alternatives to an EPA. The

highlight of the review of EPA negotiations was a presentation of an EPA Impact Study conducted for the OECS.

The Impact Study examines strategic trade policy considerations for the OECS within CARIFORUM and pays particular attention to the issue of market access. The OECS officials agreed that the Report would be forwarded to Member States at a technical level for their detailed review and comment, prior to being adopted by any country.

The Trade Negotiating Group of the OECS provides a forum for OECS trade officials to review and consolidate OECS positions on a spectrum of trade issues. The grouping enables the sub-region to arrive at common

positions on trade issues, which informs its approach in the broader CARICOM and CARIFORUM settings. Those positions are fed into the broader regional architecture in order to cement a common regional trade policy. As the technical consultative arm for galvanizing sub-regional trade positions, the TNG also serves as the primary vehicle for advising the OECS Economic Affairs Committee, a ministerial body constituting OECS Trade Ministers. The ministerial body meets periodically to provide political sanction to OECS trade positions articulated in the broader CARICOM and CARIFORUM contexts.

Banana Authorities Mount Surveillance For Black Sigatoka Disease

The Banana Emergency Recovery Unit (BERU) located in Cul De has announced it is increasing its surveillance for the deadly Black Sigatoka disease. The heightened vigilance against the disease comes after reports that Black Sigatoka was edging its way up the Windward Islands after being discovered in Trinidad and Tobago in 2004. It was recently identified in Grenada. This new development has prompted new calls from the local banana industry for port workers, farmers and tourists in general to step up vigilance to ensure infected fruits are not brought into the country.

Black Sigatoka is reputedly one of the most lethal diseases to affect banana production and it can reduce crop yields by as much as 50%. Programme Manager of the Banana Emergency Recovery Unit Mr. Hilary La Force, has informed St. Lucia Natiowide that in light of the seriousness of

the disease, an island-wide survey of farms will be undertaken beginning this month. He said the survey will seek to determine whether the disease has found its way into Saint Lucia.

"In 2005 a survey was carried out in St. Lucia to determine whether the disease had actually entered our shores. Fortunately there were no signs of it. Now we cannot not say because there were no signs, we should drop our guard and continue on our merry way. We have to continue carrying out surveys to ensure the disease is not present and if it is, for us to begin to prepare ourselves to manage it."

Mr. La Force said persons coming from countries in Latin America, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Trinidad and Tobago and other places where the disease exists and who have come into contact with bananas or plantains are advised to have a change of clothes when entering Saint Lucia to reduce the transfer of spores.



Hilary La Force Head of BERU

"It can be transported several ways, among them via strong wind but the major way is by human beings in transporting food and other goods and trade

activity."

The BERU official also said that his Unit will be revamping its public sensitization of the Black Sigatoka.

\$20 MILLION MOBILISED FOR BANANA PRODUCERS



Hon. Ignatius Jean
Minister for Agriculture, Forestry
and Fisheries



A Banana Farmer at work



Prime Minister Anthony and Ambassador Tincani

The St. Lucia Government and the European Union have signed an agreement that will mobilize EC\$ 20 million to assist banana producers in St. Lucia. Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony and the European Union representative, Ambassador Amos Tincani, on Monday signed a Financing Agreement mobilizing the European Union's 2005 allocation of the Special Framework of Assistance for banana producers (SFA). The delay in the release of the funds had been caused by legal difficulties at the European Union which had slowed down the transmission of banana related funds under STABEX and the SFA.

The 2005 SFA project aims to enhance the competitiveness and efficiency of banana enterprises, expand and diversify agricultural production, improve export performance with a diversified export mix, reinforce social stability and promote the sustainable use of the country's natural resources. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, the SFA 2005 funds will complement those from STABEX, SFA 1999 to 2004 which are already being used for these objectives.

The following are the activities being pursued under the first three objectives.

1. Enhancement of the efficiency and competitiveness of banana enterprises

Banana modernisation/transformation; Market development; Disease control

Banana Transformation - This initiative seeks to develop, acquire and disseminate technologies to strengthen the linkages between the primary agricultural sector and agro-industrial activities. This will be done by the following: Development and commercialisation of alternative end uses and by-products of bananas; Provision of training in agro-processing; Facilitate the production of fair-trade bananas and the development of certification systems; Provision of support to banana producers' organisations in fostering marketing improvement.

Market Development - This initiative will provide market research/development for new banana markets: Markets in new geographical areas that are currently not accessed (such as China and Japan) for traditional and non-traditional agricultural commodities with a view to expand trade; Seek additional distribution channel in its present location.

Disease control - This initiative seeks to address the problem of leaf spot disease in the banana industry. This will be done by the following: Provision of input for the control of

leaf spot disease by farmers; Monitoring levels of plant disease, inspecting growers on a regular basis.

2. The expansion and diversification of agricultural production

Generation, adaptation and transfer of appropriate technologies; Strengthening the capacity of business oriented farmers' organisations; Credit support.

Generation, adaptation and transfer of appropriate technologies - This initiative seeks to develop, acquire and disseminate technologies to enhance agricultural competitiveness by the following: (a) Provide equipment, lab facilities and related supplies to upgrade the analytical and diagnostic capabilities of the Ministry of Agriculture; (b) Provide the necessary testing facilities for the maintenance of agricultural health systems and quality control; © Conduct technology adoption studies; (d) Assess technology development and transfer initiatives being undertaken in agricultural transformation by various research institutions in the region; (e) Train staff to identify, formulate and manage relevant agricultural technology development/transfer programmes; (f) Facilitate linkages with countries so as to promote the exchange of technical and scientific information; (g) provision of appropriate marketing infrastructure (livestock).

Strengthening the capacity of business oriented farmers' organisations

- This initiative seeks to strengthen the administrative capacities of rural agricultural organisations to allow them to be effective carriers of projects, loan funds and allied services by way of the following interventions: (a) Strengthening of existing producer organisations to functional market-oriented commodity organisations; (b) Training of members of producer organisations in financial management; © Training of members of producer organisations in the use of information technology; (d) Training of members of producer organisations in accurate production forecasting; (e) Training of producer

organisations in elements of corporate relationships and responsibilities.

Credit scheme for rural investors

- This initiative seeks to provide rural farmers greater access to investment capital and related support services to facilitate the effective diversification of the agricultural sector. The credit scheme established under SFA 1999 and SFA 2000 will be further supported. This scheme facilitates the provision of credit support services; financial planning, preparation of business plans, financial monitoring and training for rural investments. The conditions/criteria already attached to the scheme will continue to apply.

3. Improving export performance

Major activities to be implemented under this component are as follows: Establishment of an Export Development Fund; Strengthen the capacity to deal with multilateral trading arrangement.

Establishment of an Export Development Fund

- This initiative seeks to provide institutional support for export activities in the following areas: (a) Provision of specialized support services, including export packaging, pricing, credit, insurance, generic publicity and targeted missions, and technical assistance support in working to resolve the administrative problems faced by exporters; (b) Management training to develop strategic partnerships between local and foreign firm; © To assist in the acquisition of the necessary technology and to help meet the cost of marketing new products in international market; (d) To assist enterprises in retooling their plant for greater efficiency.

Strengthen the capacity to deal with multilateral trading arrangement

- This initiative seeks to develop the institutional and technical capacity to formulate and implement trade policy: Institutional support for the Coalition of Services; Institutional support for the Council on External Trade.

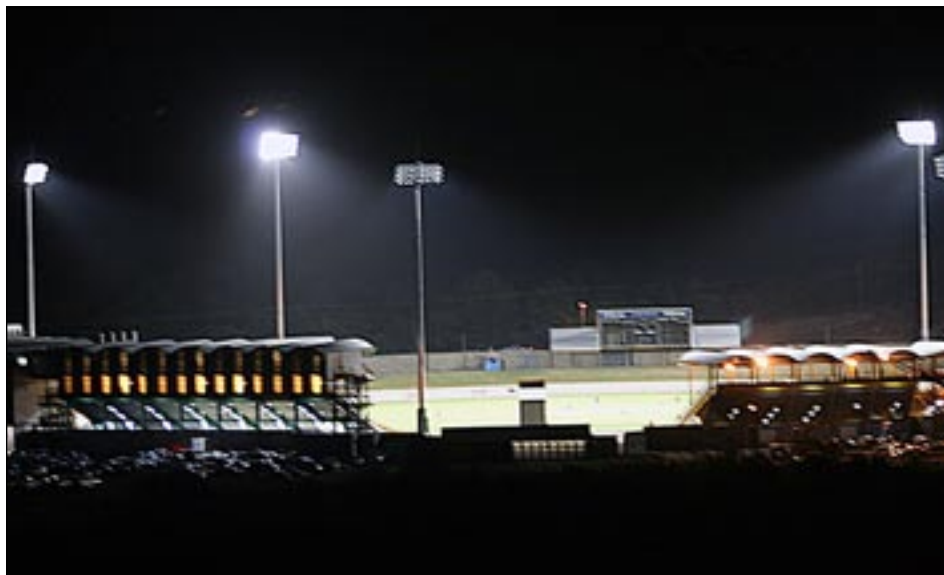
BEAUSEJOUR HOSTS SECOND DAY/ NIGHT ODI

St. Lucia's state of the art national cricket stadium will today host its second day/night one day international match when the West Indies A and England A teams meet for the third time in St. Lucia as the England A team tour of

the West Indies continues. Last Friday at Beausejour, the teams met in the second test match which England needed to win to square the series. The game ended in a draw on Monday giving the West Indies 1-0 victory in the Tests.

On Thursday, the two teams became the first to play an international day/night cricket game at the Beausejour stadium. The lights for night cricket were installed at the Ground two weeks ago making St. Lucia the only cricket

country in the West Indies with the capacity to stage night matches. Below: (left) A picture of the stadium when the lights were first switched on and (right) Action in the second test match between West Indies A and England A.



National Volunteer Programme for CWC 2007

Building upon the strong culture of volunteering in Saint Lucia, is one of the objectives of ICC Cricket World Cup Saint Lucia Inc (CWCSL Inc.) and the launching of the National Volunteer Programme under the patronage of Her Excellency Dame Paulette Louisy Governor General of Saint Lucia is expected to achieve this objective.

The programme Volunteer Saint Lucia (VSL) will be based on the principles of equal opportunity and non-discrimination while celebrating the talents and strengths of our citizens. It seeks to develop working relationships with the existing volunteer efforts, community sectors and organizations and add value through training, experience, and the development of a multi-level structure of volunteers and volunteer leaders. Its main objective will be to develop a cadre of persons who are adequately trained and skilled to serve as volunteers in community development roles without seeking reward or compensation for service.

The programme is managed by a Board of Trustees (BOT), appointed by the Governor General, which is responsible for overseeing its establishment and growth. The organization will soon see the appointment of a programme manager and an administrative secretary who will be the only two employees of Volunteer Saint Lucia.

A screening and selection process commencing with an interview of the applicant will provide an opportunity to speak with the potential volunteer about his or her background, skills, in-

terests and availability. Most importantly, it will help to explore any doubts about the suitability of the candidate, their "right fit" for specific skill areas in which they might be interested. The interview process will be conducted by persons who have been designated with this responsibility by the Board of Trustees and who have completed the Behavioral Interviewing training programme.

Recognizing that there is no one type of volunteer, people of different ages, personality and backgrounds are expected to bring different attributes when participating. Training for volunteers will therefore be conducted in areas such as Communication Skills, Self-Awareness, Customer Service, Organizational Skills, Ethics, Know your Country.

Trained volunteers are expected to enrich and add dynamism to events and activities of national benefit and serve in many ways based on their time, interests and abilities. By capturing the enthusiasm for volunteering triggered by the hosting of ICC Cricket World Cup 2007 (CWC 2007), Volunteer Saint Lucia will manage this legacy and promote a culture in which more people can give more time to helping in their communities in exchange for acquiring new skills and experiences.

ICC Cricket World Cup Saint Lucia Inc. therefore encourages Saint Lucians who have a sincere interest in people and in community and national development to become a member of Volunteer Saint Lucia and collaborate with Saint Lucia in hosting "the best World Cup ever".

Tourism Accommodation Unit for ICC Cricket World Cup 2007

Saint Lucia is expected to meet the accommodation requirements for the ICC Cricket World Cup 2007 (ICC CWC 2007) and the Ministry of Tourism, in collaboration with Cricket World Cup Saint Lucia Inc. and the Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards, has established the Tourism Accommodation Unit (TAU), effective February 01,

2006. The unit which is housed within the Ministry has responsibility for processing of applications and monitoring of concessions in respect to the Tourism Incentives Act (Accommodation projects only), the Cricket World Cup Tourism Accommodation Act and the Bed & Breakfast Cricket World Cup Incentives Act. The unit is staffed by Ruth Louis-

Charlemagne (Administrative Assistant), Cyril Remy (Building Technician), Karen Dolcy-Joseph, Aniceta Gonzague-Henry and Orlando Crick (Hotel & Restaurant Inspectors).

The Tourism Accommodation Unit will coordinate the registration and certification of small properties and 'Home Accommodation' for the event which include Inns, Guesthouses, Bed & Breakfast, Rooms to Let, Self-contained apartments and Villas. Properties must meet minimum requirements, as defined by the Ministry of Tourism and Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards and a database of available accommodation will be compiled, and available to individuals and agencies wishing to make bookings for the tournament period.

Discussions are ongoing between the related agencies and the Saint Lucia Tourist Board, for the enhancement of the current 'INNtimate St. Lucia' website and development of a Central Reservations System (CRS), where properties can be advertised and accommodation booked in 'real time'. The CRS is expected to remain functional beyond 2007, with heavy use anticipated during periods of high accommodation demand, including Saint Lucia Jazz, Easter and Carnival.

Saint Lucia will host the Blue Package in the ICC CWC 2007, which features 6 matches in the Group Stage from March 14 - 25th, and a semi-final on April 25th. The England team, known for its huge, energetic fan following, will be based in Saint Lucia along with New Zealand, Canada and Kenya and it is anticipated that between 7,000 and 10,000 persons will visit our shores during the period.

Several Saint Lucians have expressed interest in providing accommodation for the event and copies of the guidelines for accommodation can be obtained at the Tourism Accommodation Unit, Ministry of Tourism, Sir Stanislaus James Building, Waterfront, Castries, Telephone 468-4633, Email: rcharlemagne@gosl.gov.lc

Hosting of the ICC CWC 2007 will provide incentives and projects which will benefit Saint Lucians beyond 2007 as well as create history as Saint Lucia prepares to host 'the best Cricket World Cup ever'.



THIS WEEK ON NTN

Sat. March 11th to Fri. March 17th, 2006
NTN - PROVIDING INFORMATION YOU NEED

Three Women in Decision Making Positions in St. Lucia Talk About Their Rise to Their Prestigious Positions.

Sat. March 11th, 9:30 a.m.

Amidst the call for diversification in the Agriculture Industry, two farmers discuss the planting of mauby and latanye as alternative crops - Sun. March 12th, 10:30 a.m.

On the heels of St. Lucia joining the CSM, The Ministry of Commerce encourages the population to support local goods and services - Mon. March 13, 6:15 p.m.

Need information on purchasing tickets for World Cup Cricket 2007 - CEO of the Local Organizing Committee discusses the issue - Tues. March, 14th, 8:00 p.m.

Learn how to fill in your Income Tax Returns - Wed. March, 15th, 8:00 p.m.

Saint Lucia's Folk Culture and the Struggles for - Thurs. March. 16th, - 8:30 p.m.

St. Lucia's premiere long distance runner Zephrynus Joseph speaks about his achievement thus far and what the future hold for him - Friday March 17th - 6:30 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 NATIONWIDE is published every week by the Department of Information Services.

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