



HOUSE SITS ON THREE CRITICAL BILLS

- **CRIMINAL CODE'S 361 REPEALED**
- **LABOUR CODE'S FIRST READING**
- **NEW MEDICAL PRACTITIONER'S ACT**

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CONSUMPTION TAX AMENDMENT AIDS MANUFACTURERS

Commerce and Consumer Affairs Minister Hon. Philip J. Pierre has declared that the Consumption Tax amendment bill passed in Parliament on Tuesday is government's latest step in facilitating the growth in the manufacturing sector. He said that as a result of several government interventions, such as the retooling allowance, the sector has been showing much buoyancy.

Mr. Speaker I am pleased to tell you that last year manufacturing output expanded by 10.2% and accounted for 5.7% of the GDP. and Mr. Speaker this year for the first quarter of this year, production by the manufacturing sector grew by 3%.....at the fiscal level.

The current bill stipulates that the consumption tax be calculated on the sale value of the goods, when it reaches the retail sector. The result is that the tax is placed at the retail end rather than the cost of manufacturing the goods. However, the new bill alters the basis on which the consumption tax is applied.

Minister Pierre said that while the Bill might sound simple, it is strategic, and comes in response to a major outcry by the sector. "What will happen is that the cost of the good is going to be



Hon. Philip J. Pierre

cheaper... with imported manufactured goods." The Minister also paid tribute to the St. Lucia Manufacturing Association for their immeasurable contribution to the growth and development of the sector.



Locally manufactured products

Micro Business Fund Enters Review Stage!



(L-R) Marcellus Joseph, Wayne Vitalis, Peter Lorde & Perry Thomas at the launching

With the deadline date for the receipt of applications under the National Development Corporation Micro-Business Fund having elapsed, a select committee comprising NDC officials along with representatives from the Belfund and SEDU, have begun the review process.

The Micro-Business Fund, the second grant initiative launched to date by the NDC, makes available \$250,000 to persons who wish to engage in micro business ventures, up

to a maximum grant of \$10,000.00 per project. The heavily subscribed fund has received over 200 project proposals from small entrepreneurs across the country. Those proposals are currently being examined to ascertain which ones will receive funding.

Categories of business to be funded under the initiative includes; Service & Trade, Retail & Distribution, Manufacturing, Tourism and Agro-business. Successful proposals will have to meet select criteria which include being a commercially viable micro business

proposal. The business must be a primary source of income and employment. The funds must be used to finance fixed assets for new and existing businesses.

To benefit from the initiative, a prospective applicant must make a tangible investment in the project either in cash or in kind.

Successful applicants will be notified by December 2006 with disbursements of funds to begin in January 2007.

NDC Launches Property Database

The National Development Corporation (NDC) is in the process of developing a Land & Property's database. The database will inform prospective local and foreign investors of lands, buildings, warehouses and other commercial interests available for rent, sale of development purposes.

Are you in possession of any of these assets? Contact the NDC with information on location, size, and price ranges etc, along with digital photos of your lands, buildings, warehouses of commercial interests. Our Investment Services Unit will assist you in marketing and advertising your property to prospective investors.

Information packages can be sent to: National Development Corporation, First Floor, Heraldine Rock Bldg, The Waterfront, P.O. Box 495, Castries, St. Lucia, W.I. or email us at devcorp@candw.lc.

House Repeals 361 of Criminal Code, Receives Labour Code

Several historic pieces of legislation were passed in the House of Assembly at its sitting on Tuesday. The first major act was the repealing of Section 361 of the Criminal Code, followed by passage of the Medical Practitioners Act, an amendment to the Consumption Tax Act and the First Reading of the Draft Labour Code.

In what has been touted as possibly the penultimate sitting of the House of Assembly before Parliament is prorogued, Prime Minister Anthony introduced two amendments to the Criminal Code. The amendments were taken through all their stages with the first one dealing with Section 361. Section

361 of the Criminal Code stated that anyone who wilfully publishes statements, tales or news that he or she knows is false, and that is likely to cause injury or mischief to a public interest commits an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment of a term not exceeding two years

The Prime Minister explained that there were two reasons for the revocation of Section 361. First, he said, it would be "difficult to secure a conviction" under that clause as worded; and secondly, "improper and inaccurate motives had been ascribed to the government," such as intending to gag or jail journalists. The prime Minister added that the provision had

provoked much misguided debate and discussion.

The Prime Minister also explained how the Code would be revised given the removal of Section 361. "The Government has taken the occasion of the basic amendments before the House to repeal the section and to avoid a section where a gap will be left into a code because contrary to what is thought, sometimes amendments to a code can be a very torturous matter, because if this particular section was totally repealed it would have left a gap. The Attorney General has skillfully decided that the original provision of section 360 will be divided into two sections 360 and 361."



Prime Minister Hon. Kenny Anthony



A Sitting of the House of Assembly

The other amendment to the Act deals with the repeal of section 593-4. That section stated that a person charged with murder, treason or any offence under the Firearms Act, Drug Prevention and Misuse Act is punishable on indictment by imprisonment of not less than five years.

Meanwhile the proposed Labour Code was given its first reading at Tuesday's sitting of the House. The Labour Code went to Parliament four years after work began on it and after a three day consultation between the Government, Employer's Representatives and Trade Unions two weeks ago, to finalise agreement on the Code. It is expected that the Labour Code will be passed at the next sitting of the House of Assembly on Tuesday November 14, thus fulfilling a promise by the St. Lucia Labour party Government to have a Labour Code before the next General Elections in St. Lucia.

NEW LEGISLATION FOR MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS

Minister for Health Honourable Damian Greaves tabled the Health Practitioners Bill at Tuesday's Sitting of the House of Parliament, signalling major changes to come to the legislative environment governing medical practitioners on the island.

Describing the document as revolutionary, Minister Greaves said the provisions of the bill will amount to more professional and conscientious delivery of health services on the island as the bill addresses outstanding loopholes of accountability in the profession.

"So no doctor or dentist can practice without having a practis-



Hon. Damian Greaves

ing certificate and this certificate, Mr. Speaker, will detail the type of practice and therefore the scope, of the practice. The certificate will have to be displayed Mr. Speaker and that is very important, it will have to be displayed in a prominent location such that the public will know exactly what the practitioner is licensed to practice."

The bill introduces new requirements such as a licensing regime, an appeals board and clear definitions between the roles of general practitioners and that of specialists, among other measures, aimed at heightening professional standards and public protection.

The Minister added that the bill also applied to allied health prac-

tioners. "Similarly Mr. Speaker for the allied health practitioner, chiropractors and herbalists and such like optometrists, there will be a license that is renewable every year and this license will also clearly define the type of practice. This means Mr. Speaker, that the existing confusion that has been created between the various disciplines of the healing professions will be eliminated."

The Minister expressed his pleasure that the process leading up to the compilation of the Health Practitioners Bill was accomplished through dialogue and made particular note of the contributions of the Saint Lucia Medical and Dental Association and the Practitioners of Natural Medicine.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATION AND CONVERGENCE

ADDRESS TO THE FORMAL OPENING OF THE 4TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ORGANIZATION OF CARIBBEAN UTILITY REGULATORS (OOCUR) ST. GEORGES GRENADA, 8TH NOVEMBER 2006 BY HON. FELIX FINISTERRE

Let me first of all extend a warm welcome to you and the executive members of the Organization of Caribbean Utility Regulators (OOCUR), presenters and participants on behalf of my colleague, Hon. Gregory Bowen and the Government and People of Grenada. It is also a distinct pleasure to extend welcome to everyone present on behalf of the Council of Ministers, Board and Management of ECTEL and to express thanks to you for the decision to host this year's conference in the ECTEL Member State of Grenada.

Today, I propose to share some thoughts with you on utility regulation and on the all important and embracing issue of telecommunications convergence. It is an area of considerable significance to us in the ECTEL Member States as we witness the impact of the Internet on the social and economic landscape both regionally and internationally. Internet Governance therefore has become a critical issue which requires very careful analysis as we move forward with the full liberalization of the telecommunications sector in the sub-region.

I am aware of course that OOCUR is concerned with utility regulation generally and not only the sector specific area of telecommunications. Yet the impact of telecommunications and convergence will pose considerable challenges to what we do in electricity, water and perhaps to a lesser extent in transportation.

I have noted with interest that the objectives of OOCUR are to: (1) assist in the improvement of utility regulation; (2) foster transparent and stable utility regulation through autonomous and independent regulation in Member Countries, and (3) undertake research, training and development to facilitate understanding of regulatory issues and sharing of information and experiences.

It is my understanding that as part of its mandate, OOCUR is currently pursuing the establishment of a Regulatory Research Centre in collaboration with the University of the West Indies to be based at the St. Augustine Campus of the University. This centre would facilitate research, training and a teaching agenda in the area of regulation. It is intended, I am told, that the centre would respond in an on-going manner to the needs, interests and priorities of regulatory agencies and regulated service providers throughout the Caribbean region. This is a noteworthy undertaking that must be pursued with vigour and enthusiasm so as to enable regulators and their multi-disciplinary staff to cope with the rapid changes in utility regulation, not least of which the changes are being driven by the Internet.

Effective regulation is one of the three key elements in the reform process, along with liberalization and privatization. Each of these elements is essential and reinforces the others. Although in the case of telecommunications in our sub-region, privatization was not an issue since governments' involvement was insignificant, except

possibly in one Member State. However, when one examines the other utility sectors of water and electricity, governments hold significant interest, and this will pose its own challenges where governments attempt to respond to public calls for privatization especially in electricity generation.

Mr. Chairman, I believe it is reasonable to assume that the founders of OOCUR were motivated by the conviction that a properly functioning regulatory regime requires both guiding policy and suitable authority for implementation of its statutory responsibilities. In our Caribbean region, this authority usually takes the form of a regulatory authority or commission which reports to the government and works to a mandate set by the legislature while exercising operational autonomy.

Why Regulation

The ultimate aim of any regulatory regime must be to create the circumstances to enable the sector to become efficient and profitable. The regulatory arrangements must be such that it encourages the delivery of good service, offers value for money and provides extended access to affordable services. But perhaps even more importantly, the transition to a competitive market requires regulatory intervention for the following reasons.

These are to: (1) open the market to new entrants by means of an authorization process; (2) remove barriers to entry for new competitors; (3) oversee interconnection arrangements between network operators; and (4) ensure that the competitive market continues to supply both high cost areas and low income users.

It should therefore be apparent that the role of the regulator is primarily facilitative. It is not the regulator's role to provide detailed management of the sector. Major policy issues should be decided by government, with the operators themselves taking care of commercial and operational matters. The regulator stands at the centre of any liberalization process, charged with ensuring that the competitors can enter the market. The regulator must also encourage service providers to operate their businesses effectively thereby enhancing their performance so as to provide improved services more efficiently and at lower prices.

In introducing competition, ECTEL Member Governments were faced with a few major policy decisions. These decisions were made more difficult by a populace which was aware that they had been paying monopolistic and exorbitant rates for telecommunications services. Specifically, there were challenges with interconnection, rate rebalancing and price control in the absence of competition in fixed line services. The experience revealed that considerable knowledge and skill were required in negotiating and in ensuring that the incumbent did not unduly delay the process of competition.

Development of Regulation

The OECS, like most countries that embarked on liberalization had to establish a regulatory agency to improve sector per-



Broadband Cables being landed in Saint Lucia by Antilles Crossing

formance. This is because regulators generally focus on regulating firms and thereby facilitate competition. Sector performance is generally measured in terms of service availability and system expansion; cost efficiency, affordability of prices, range of services offered and quality of service.

In an attempt to balance the power of the incumbent and in the absence of competition in fixed line services, ECTEL entered into negotiations with the incumbent and successfully negotiated a price cap regime. This was predicated on the view that excessive profits were being made in the provision of these fixed line services. As a result, users benefited from price reductions in various fixed line services ranging from a high of 45% to a low of 8%.

In fulfilling their legislative mandate, regulators are often called upon to implement policies for attracting capital to the sector and increasing investment, monitoring licences and concessions, enabling the development of effective competition in the market, while providing incentives for operators to improve efficiency. While regulatory agencies vary in their scope of authority and responsibilities, generally such agencies are engaged in setting standards for quality of service, price regulation, monitoring performance of licensees, handling consumer complaints, monitoring competition and settling disputes.

In our Member States, Governments took the approach that there would be accountability and transparency and enshrined these principles in the legislation. Therefore while the commissions and the regional advisor, ECTEL, have been entrusted with the regulation of the sector, public consultation has been made mandatory. Through this approach, operators,

users of telecommunications services and the general public all have an opportunity to contribute to the formulation of policies that are likely to affect them. Critical to the consultative process also is the approach whereby those who have commented on draft documents have the opportunity to comment on the initial comments received before the policy decisions are made and acted upon.

Technology Neutrality and Convergence

Mr. Chairman, another fundamental principle enshrined in our legislation is the concept of technology neutrality. You will recall that earlier I indicated that it is not for the regulator to intervene in the detailed management of the process, but rather to be facilitative. Those who are familiar with the history of telecommunications will be aware that as with most technologically driven industries, telecommunications has been characterized by steady growth punctuated by an occasional leap forward, usually when a new communications technology is introduced.

Today, telecommunications convergence is altering the way we communicate. Until recently, different media were used for voice, video and text. Now we are witnessing the merger of technology to new systems that consolidate voice and data networks to provide integrated communications services. All of those developments are being fuelled largely by the use of the Internet Protocol and technologies such as VoIP.

Indeed, the growing popularity of the Internet and other Internet Protocol (IP) based networks have driven rapid growth in demand for telecommunications capacity and bandwidth, resulting in innovation in access and transport networks. Today,

intense work is continuing at the ITU, and in other standards bodies, to further the integration and interoperability of IP-based networks with the public switched telephone, mobile and broadcast networks. All major telecommunications operators and equipment manufacturers are investing in "next-generation networks" (NGN). These can be seen as a logical progression to a unified telecommunications network for electronic communications based on IP.

While all of these developments appear to be occurring in the telecommunications sector, it is my view that the changes there can and must serve as a catalyst for change in the other utility sectors. Already electricity generating companies are examining ways of utilizing their infrastructure for providing telecommunications services and sharing the existing and new infrastructure with telecommunications companies. It seems therefore that if these approaches can be successfully and cost effectively undertaken, the synergies should result in cost savings to both electricity and telecommunications service providers.

Regulators must therefore be alert to those developments and provide an enabling environment that will result in greater access and cost savings to end users. However, these developments are occurring at a price. Regulators must carefully analyze the benefits versus the costs of these developments, thereby ensuring that net benefits accrue to their main constituents, the consumers.

Internet Governance

Recently, we have witnessed the debate over Internet Governance, and though the governance debate is neither new nor necessarily detrimental, it clearly indicates



Hon. Felix Finisterre

to policy makers that the stakes are now much higher. A robust telecommunications infrastructure is considerably more important than simply a platform for voice. It is now a fundamental underpinning layer of networked economies and information societies which is a major policy objective of many Caribbean governments today. More and more, these networks are seen as important determinants of national competitiveness in an increasingly globalized knowledge economy. These networks can offer new opportunities in areas such as education, health and social advancement.

About a decade ago, a common question asked was: should the Internet be regulated. Although the debate continues with no simple answers to the regulators whom you serve, there is now an increasing number of Internet regulating legislation and regulations around the world. It is a reality that the Internet has become far too important to be treated as radically different from the rest of society. The emerging view suggests that as the Internet evolves into a public infrastructure necessary for the general functioning of society and on which people depend, governments will increasingly need to impose certain capability requirements on the infrastructure.

Regulators can therefore expect as the shift occurs to the Next Generation Network (NGN) infrastructure, countries will make the transition to policy or regulatory requirements that may be similar or identical to existing rules applied to services offered over circuit switched networks. Such rules might include provisions for public safety needs, disability assistance, law enforcement support, competition considerations, fraud prevention, privatization and data protection and consumer protection against unwanted intrusion.

According to the ITU, it seems that the concept of the nation state and its sovereignty over communications policy and regulation is likely to serve as the foundation of multi-lateral cooperation in future governance of the Internet due largely to its key role in convergence.

Benefits of Liberalization and the Way Forward

Mr. Chairman, the audience may well ask what has been achieved from telecommunications liberalization and what next. I believe one approach to answering this question is to briefly examine the purposes of ECTEL. According to the Treaty, the major purposes of ECTEL shall, among other things, be to promote: (1) open entry, market liberalization and competition in telecommunications; (2) a universal service ... to enable the people of the Contracting States to share in the freedom to communicate over an efficient and modern telecommunications network; (3) the introduction of advanced telecommunications technologies and an increased range of services; (4) increased penetration of telecommunications in the Contracting States.

A summary of a few major achievements since the introduction of competition in the sector, and in particular since the issuance of licences to new entrants in 2002, reveal that the objectives are being met. These include investments in the telecommunications sector of \$590 million in the five ECTEL States. Growth in mobile subscribers increased from a mere 38,000 in 2002 to 352,000 by March 2006 representing a 76% penetration, while international telephone rates between the ECTEL Member States fell from a high of EC\$2.20 per minute to a harmonized rate of 50 cents.

While these developments have been very significant and consistent with the policy objectives of Governments, there is still considerable work required to ensure that broadband connectivity is available and affordable to all sections of our Member States. Clearly, the policies have encouraged the required investments in new submarine cable systems. And even though, 73% of all Internet users now enjoy broadband access with minimum download speeds of 256kpbs, penetration levels are still generally low with only 34,000 subscribers in the five Member States at March 2006.

However with the additional bandwidth expected to be launched in all our Member States in 2007, and additional capacity already in Saint Lucia, end users can expect the price of broadband connectivity to fall by at least 50% of the existing rates once the systems are commissioned.

In this way telecommunications should truly become a facilitator of growth and provide our people with additional opportunities to improve economic and social conditions, particularly through distance education, tertiary health care and e-businesses.

Notwithstanding that the focus of this presentation is Telecommunications Regulation, I beg that you pay requisite attention to regulation in the other utilities. I

especially urge you to dedicate some time during your deliberations to give consideration to advancement of the concept of multi-sectoral regulation.

Multi-sector Regulation

Regulation as has been emphasized is imperative to the structured and continuous advancement of the utilities sector, but also comes at a high cost in terms of human and capital resources. As small island states we have to grapple with a discipline in which, until relatively recent times, there was a dearth of expertise.

In St. Lucia we have made great strides towards attracting investment through introducing private sector participation in the water sector. Legislation has already been enacted and regulations developed to make provision for the economic, quality and standard regulation in the delivery of water and sewerage services. A Regulatory Commission is in the process of being established. As this process unfolds, the stark reality of the high cost of regulation as well as the relative paucity of regulatory expertise is evident.

With respect to electricity, a study has been commissioned on the feasibility of Regional Co-operation in Regulation of the Electricity Sector of the Eastern Caribbean States. The Consultants have submitted their report and a cursory look at the prospects are encouraging. Again, the main area of concern is the cost which leads me to make a pitch for multi-sector regulation.

A different approach that is well worth considering therefore, involves the establishment of multi sector regulator. Such an agency would regulate telecommunications, electricity and water and if successful could even be extended to include postal services and transportation. This concept must not be considered far fetched as Jamaica has already pioneered the experiment when they created the Office of Utility Regulation (OUR).

We in St. Lucia as far back as five years ago, have given some serious thought to multi sector regulation and given the high and increasingly escalating cost of separate utility regulation we propose that the debate be rekindled.

If I may be permitted to impose my own perspective on this matter, economies of scale in areas of administration, support services and technical expertise outweigh the disadvantages.

Embrace the vision that we in the OECS could take regulation to higher heights by moving from regional regulation to regional multi sector regulation.

Regional regulation as can be attested to by reputable international agencies like World Bank and ITU was pioneered and perfected by the sovereign states comprising OECS. We can raise the bar if we aspire to regional multi sector regulation.

Finally, let me again express the hope that you will have a successful conference and that you fully enjoy your stay in the Spice Isle. I thank you.

THE CHALLENGES OF CHILD ABUSE AND FOSTER CARE

Social workers are said to be facing daily challenges in curbing a high level of child abuse on the island.

Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Health, Human Services, Family Affairs and Gender Relations Jon Odium made this pronouncement while addressing the recent launching of an adoption and foster care programme here.

“When I visit my workers at the Human Services my heart goes out to them. Sometimes they are so mesmerised. Sometimes they do not know where to go. The cases are flowing one on top of the other, from Vieux Fort to Gros-Islet and it just goes on. And our poor workers are out of their depth trying to find the solution to the problem.”

The Government official appealed for help, especially from persons who are able to provide foster parenting. He said there were citizens who are in a position to do so, but were afraid to come forward. Meanwhile, the Parliamentary Secretary paid glowing tribute to a recently deceased Soufriere resident who was described as a model foster parent to be emulated by all St. Lucians as she made caring for abandoned children her life's passion. Eugenia Fostin who passed away on the 18th October ran her privately owned children's home in her community.

Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Health, Honourable Jon Odium, said though her physical form has departed this life, the memory of her contribution to St. Lucia, in the Soufri-

ere area will always live on. Mr. Odium said Ms Fostin has exemplified the qualities of a true humanitarian, who will surely be missed.

“The humanitarian initiative for the provision of foster care began when Ms Fostin's heart wept for a six-month-old baby girl, whose parents neglected her. Malnourished and sickly, the baby's future seemed bleak with little hope for survival. Eugenia who was a mother of two young biological children, at that time, offered to become the baby's foster mother.”

It is this selfless act, he said, that led to Ms Eugene to open up her home and heart to neglected, forgotten, orphaned and abandoned children throughout the community. He added that it was her benevolent nature that caused her

to neglect her own health conditions, something which eventually led to her death.

“Ms Eugenia Fostin's life and her contributions should be a remainder to us of how we should all extend ourselves to those who are less fortunate. We can rejoice in her memory because she extended herself to others until her death. The children of the children's home in Soufriere can testify to her life as a foster mother.”

Her death came just days before the launch of the major foster care and adoption awareness campaign on the island. The programme, spearheaded by the Department of Human Services and Family Affairs, advocates for more St. Lucians to open their hearts and homes to abandoned and abused children.

Four year strategic plan for OECS PPS

The OECS Pharmaceutical Procurement Service -PPS is currently developing a four year strategic plan, with the hope of achieving five major goals. Managing Director Francis Burnette says one of those goals is to visit targeted countries in the OECS, to hold discussions with pharmacy associations and related bodies.

He says this is in an effort to increase access and availability to pharmaceuticals via the public and private sectors.

“Our mandate so far at the OECS PPS, has been to purchase drugs for the public sector, but with the establishment of the St. Lucia Universal Health Care Program, the pilot drug program, the OESC PPS we have been providing pharmaceuticals for the UHC program, which is a mixed of public and private sector, we would like to extend that range in the other OECS countries where by OECS PPS will provide drugs not only to the public sector but also to the private sector”.

The OECS - PPS is also hoping to publish the 7th edition of the OECS -

PPS regional family therapeutics manual. The publication is a pocket reference guide to physicians, pharmacists and nurses for the prescribing and rational use of pharmaceuticals and will be published and released in 2007.

Mr. Burnette further commented on another goal—combating the possibility of the influx of counterfeit drugs. He says the distribution of counterfeit drugs should not be taken lightly.

It is now estimated that about 7% of pharmaceuticals circulated worldwide is counterfeited and this is a very serious menace to public health. We

have developed some strategies to safeguard out market against counterfeit drugs so the OECS countries have adopted the ROME declaration, which was passed in 2006 and comprise a concerted effort to put in place a number of measures to minimize the influx of counterfeit drugs.

During its four year work program, the OECS - PPS will be sensitizing member countries to the importance to formulating legislation, that will give greater leverage, in making a wider range of patented drugs available to OECS countries.

Women, Sex and Diabetes

Greater attention is paid to the challenges experienced by men with diabetes but women with diabetes too, may also experience a lower sex drive than normal. It is important that when this occurs that you discuss the matter with your doctor and with your husband, boyfriend or sex partner. Here are some health issues that are unique to women with diabetes.

Decreased Vaginal Lubrication: Nerve damage to cells that line the vagina can result in dryness, which in turn may lead to discomfort during sexual intercourse. Discomfort is likely to decrease sexual response or desire.

Decreased or Absent Sexual Response: Diabetes or other diseases, blood pressure medications, certain prescription and over-the-counter drugs, alcohol abuse, smoking, and psychological factors such as anxiety or depression can all cause sexual problems in women. Gynecologic infections or conditions relating to preg-

nancy or menopause can also contribute to decreased or absent sexual response. Many women with diabetes may experience decreased or absent sexual response. Decreased desire for sex, inability to become or remain aroused, lack of sensation, or inability to reach orgasm can result. Symptoms include: (1) decreased or total lack of interest in sexual relations; (2) decreased or no sensation in the genital area; (2) constant or occasional inability to reach orgasm; (4) dryness in the vaginal area, leading to pain or discomfort during sexual relations.

If you experience sexual problems or notice a change in your sexual response, talking to your doctor about it is the first step in getting help. Your doctor will ask you about your medical history, any gynecologic conditions or infections, the type and frequency of your sexual problems, your medications, your smoking and drinking habits, and other health conditions. A physical exam and laboratory tests may

also help pinpoint causes. Your blood glucose control will be discussed. The doctor may ask whether you might be pregnant or have reached menopause and whether you are depressed or have recently experienced upsetting changes in your life. Prescription or over-the-counter vaginal lubricant creams may be useful for women experiencing dryness. Techniques to treat decreased sexual response include changes in position and stimulation during sexual relations. Psychological counseling, as well as exercises to strengthen the muscles that hold urine in the bladder, may be helpful.

Diabetes and Urologic Problems: Bladder dysfunction can have a profound effect on quality of life. Diabetes can damage the nerves that control bladder function. Both men and women with diabetes commonly have bladder symptoms that may include a feeling of urinary urgency, frequency, getting up at night to urinate often, or leakage of urine (incontinence). These symptoms have been called overactive bladder. Less common but more severe bladder symptoms include difficulty urinating and complete failure to empty (retention). These symptoms are called a neurogenic bladder. Some evidence indicates that this problem occurs in both

men and women with diabetes at earlier ages than in those without diabetes.

Neurogenic Bladder: In neurogenic bladder, damage to the nerves that go to your bladder can cause it to release urine when you do not intend to urinate, resulting in leakage. Or damage to nerves may prevent your bladder from releasing urine properly and it may be forced back into the kidneys, causing kidney damage or urinary tract infections.

Treatment for neurogenic bladder depends on the specific problem and its cause. Your doctor will check both your nervous system (your brain and the nerves of the bladder) and the bladder itself. If the main problem is retention of urine in the bladder, treatment may involve medication to promote better bladder emptying and behavior changes to promote more efficient urination, called timed urination. Occasionally, people may need to periodically insert a thin tube called a catheter through the urethra into the bladder to drain the urine. Learning how to tell when the bladder is full and how to massage the lower abdomen to fully empty the bladder can help as well. If urinary leakage is the main problem, medications or surgery can help.

Governor General and Prime Minister Celebrate with Lady Leen

Governor General Her Excellency Dame Pearlette Louisy and Prime Minister Dr Kenny Anthony and his wife Professor Rosemarie Antoine were among a number of dignitaries who helped Marilyn "Lady Leen" Baptiste celebrate sixteen years of music in Saint Lucia.

The show which featured all female acts, with headliners, Singing Sandra, Deridee Williams, Sisterhood, Black Pear and Lady Leen herself was a showcase of the talent of women artistes in a wide cross section of music genre.

Prime Minister Anthony commenting after Saturday night's show said, "It was a great pleasure to have been part of such a momentous occasion and to have witnessed the parade of local talent."

Dr Anthony said with the wealth of talent in Saint Lucia, "I am pleased my government has actively promoted support for the development of music here."

Recently, the National Development Corporation, NDC disbursed close to \$90,000 dollars in grants to local artistes for the development of their craft. The first disbursement which was presented sometime in October is part of a close to \$300,000 dollar allocation by the government of Saint Lucia for that purpose. This is the first such investment by any government in the local music sector.

Prime Minister Anthony says, "the music industry has a magnetic appeal for young people in particular who invest time in appreciating and creating. There is vast economic potential for music development of which local concerts are just a part. I look forward to the day when Saint Lucia can see large scale export of talent and income flows from recording and sale of music."

The Government has not only created the fund being administered by the NDC, copy right laws passed in the last nine years are helping to ensure artistes are not robbed of their intellectual property and enjoy the fruits of their labour.



Lady Leen



Prime Minister Hon. Kenny Anthony

Additionally, artistes who are members of the Cultural Development Foundation CDF enjoy a 50 percent rebate on import duties and consumption tax on musical instruments.

Dr Anthony says, "the level of com-

mitment of the St. Lucia Labour Party Government to the artistes is unsurpassed and we hope to do a lot more as this industry takes its place as a major player in the economic landscape of Saint Lucia."

Agricultural Sector Awards Ceremony

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries held its Agricultural Sector Awards Ceremony on Friday the 5th of November at the Sandals Grande's William Jefferson Clinton Ballroom. The activity was jointly sponsored by the Bank of St. Lucia, the Windward Islands Banana Development and Exporting Company (WIBDECO), St. Lucia Insurances Ltd, the Sandals Grande Resort and Spa, the Banana Industry Trust, the St. Lucia Banana Corporation and the Banana Emergency Recovery Unit.

During the ceremony the contributions of various agricultural stakeholders, as well as retirees and outstanding employees and departments/divisions/units of the Ministry of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, were recognized.

Taking home the award for Outstanding Agri-Entrepreneur was Mr. Darius Dujon of D.G. Farms, a poultry production and processing enterprise, while the Outstanding Farmer in Sustainable Use and Management of Natural Resources was deemed to be Ms. Paulina Ferdinand, a latanye planter and broom producer. The Progressive Fisher award went to Mr. Albert Edmund, a progressive fisher and proud owner of two fibreglass pirogues.

The award for Outstanding Crop Farmer went to Mr. Augustin Emmanuel, a longstanding, successful, diversified farmer, while the Outstanding Live-stock Farmer award went to Mr. Ignatius

Augustin, a goat breeder. The Outstanding Banana Producer award went to Mr. Conrad James, who in 2003 was voted the producer of best quality bananas for Waitrose Supermarket in the UK.

The award for the Hotel making an outstanding contribution to the agricultural sector went to the Sandals Grande Resort and Spa, while Consolidated Foods Limited won the award for Private Business Contributing Significantly to the Agricultural Sector. Meanwhile, the award for the Association/Cooperative making an Outstanding Contribution to the Agricultural, Forestry and Fisheries sectors went to the Soufriere Fishermen's Cooperative. The Minister's "Go Local" award went to Mr. Irvin Emmanuel, the owner of "More Bananas", a banana ripening and distributing business.

A highlight of the evening was the presentation of the Special Award for Young Innovative Agribusiness to Koko's Agricultural Marketing and Consultancy Services (KAMCS), bottlers and suppliers of coconut water under the trade name "Dlo Koko". The company is made up of members of the graduating class of 2004, of the Division of Agriculture, of the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College.

Two schools, namely the Mon Repos Primary and Grande Riviere Primary, received awards for outstanding environmental and agricultural practices respectively.

Several other awards were handed out, including awards to staff and departments/divisions/units of the Minis-

try of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries for outstanding performance.

In attendance were Minister for Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries the Hon. Ignatius Jean and his Permanent Secretary Mr. Martin Satney, other senior public servants, members of the

diplomatic corps, representatives of local, regional and international allied organizations, members of the farming and agribusiness community, other business concerns and members of staff of the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries.

NEMO PLANE CRASH SIMULATION

The National Emergency Management Office is gearing to stage another plane crash simulation at the Hewannora International Airport this week. However this time around there is a twist, in that the date will not be disclosed.

Director of NEMO Dawn French says there have been preparations with the airport personnel and businesses which operate at the airport leading up to the simulation.

"As many people have pointed out in past simulations these things don't really give any warning time is very little. It's a plane crash again; for international standards purposes the requirement is that it must be a plane crash so what the trigger is, is usually different so sometimes we say it is a high jacking or we say it's weather phenomenon but eventually the plane crashes. The fire department have a station at the airport all the time, if they are not there the airport cannot function and the airport must close down, so usually they are the first ones on the scene"

She said that the fire department as the first port of call will pave the way for other units to play out their roles.

"They are expected to set up the command post, the advanced medical posts, they are supposed to identify the support so that when the medical team comes in, which they do, they can set up their posts and start dealing with the incoming victims. The fire department will try to take control of the fire, the objective is to control the fire, not put it out in the first instance, so that they can get the victims off the fictional plane; then the medical people take over, they put the necessary ones on the ambulance to take them to the hospital and we actually do take them to the hospital."

Students from the nearby secondary schools will pose as the victims of the plane crash.

The NEMO Secretariat, has meantime, reminded the public that its offices have now moved to the Emergency Operations Centre at Bisee and are no longer located at the Red Cross building.

DENNERY POLICE STATIONS FOR FIGHT AGAINST DRUG TRAFFICKERS

Drug traffickers plying Dennerly waters on the eastern coast of the island are expected to come under tighter surveillance as the construction of new two police stations for the eastern sea side village have already commenced.

The Richfond police station sited for the north and the Dennerly police station in the south underlines the type of strategy that will come to bear upon criminal elements, while residents on the other hand are expected to benefit from increased police security.

Member of Parliament for Dennerly South Honourable Damian Greaves said he welcomes the imminent boost in community policing particularly in light of the location of the Bordelais Correctional Facility.

We want to say to you that this police station must be one with a difference. Why must it be one with a difference. For the simple fact that this police station should be the first port of call should there be any rioting at the Bordelais correctional facility. This police station must be the first port of call."



Hon. Damian Greaves

The Minister said it is common knowledge that law personnel have been fighting the drug trade in that area for some time now. "It is no secret that the Dennerly Fish Port is one of the transshipment points for drugs in the country and therefore there must be some consideration for at least a small marine unit to patrol the waters in the area and that must also be part of the attachment to the Dennerly police station."

The Minister spoke at the sod turning ceremony for the Dennerly Police Station during what was a busy week for the hierarchy for the Royal Saint Lucia Police Force and the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security which saw the sod turning ceremonies of two police stations in one week and preparations for the imminent opening of the new Micoud Police Station. The commissioning of a police station in Bexon is also expected to take place shortly

The Police Commissioner thinks these are very encouraging developments for law enforcement on the island. "The existing La Caye Police

station and its location was specific to a particular purpose and a particular time and we consider that purpose and that time as being irrelevant to the community policing initiative that we have embarked in the community, hence the relocation of the police station to a more centralised location to provide that service to the Mabouya Valley."

Meanwhile Commissioner of Police Ausbert Regis says the plans for police reform are coming off the ground. Last week also saw the swearing in of nine former British Police Officers into the Royal Saint Lucia Police Force. On Monday, prior to the regular meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers, the officers were introduced to Prime Minister Kenny Anthony and other cabinet members.



The British Police Officers meeting Members of Cabinet

Electoral Commission Ready For General Elections

The Electoral Commission on Wednesday, November 8th reported on its level of preparation for the pending 2006 General Elections.

The commission's Chairman Mr. Kenneth Monplaisir has affirmed that the Revised Voters List is ready with expulsions and additions all complete. At this point any other considerations relating to names will be facilitated via the Supplementary Voters List. He told the Government Information Service (GIS): "We are doing everything possible to have our elections for everybody

who wants to vote to be able to vote. I want to stress on two things, although we have the list on the internet it is important that people should go and look to see where their names are. Too often on the polling day, they bombard this office saying, "I haven't seen my name."

Chief Verifications Officer, Mr. Morrison Blanchard, says the revised list of electors for the 17 Electoral Districts was published on November 08th. The department is noting considerable increases in the number of persons registered.

"I was surprised that there were quite a number of persons in St. Lucia between the age of 25 and 40 that have never been registered. I was much surprised and at this elections because of the new ID Card I suppose, we got quite a number of these persons coming in."

There will also be increases to the number of polling stations established in the various districts. According to the officials, approximately 450 polling stations will be established during this election—almost one hundred more than were available for the 2001 General Elections.

NTN THIS WEEK ON NTN

Sat. Nov. 11th to Fri. Nov. 17th 2006
NTN – PROVIDING INFORMATION
YOU NEED

The local music industry is placed under the microscope by two prominent local musicians - Sat. Nov. 11th, 9:30 a.m.

Are credit unions going to survive the 21st century? We discuss these issues and more - Sun. Nov. 12th, 11:00 a.m.

Coordinator of the Nurses' Department at the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College highlights the existing situation at the department. - Mon. Nov. 13th, 6:15 p.m.

REBROADCAST: Feedback: "Child Abuse" - Tues. Nov. 14th, 6:15 p.m.

The GIS speaks with co-ordinator of the Division of Technical Education & Educational Management - Wed. Nov. 15th, 6:15 p.m.

The GIS discusses food security and other issues relevant to hosting Cricket World Cup 2007 - Thurs. Nov. 16th, 8:00 p.m.

Technical assistance for Haiti: The Challenge for Small Enterprise Development - Fri. Nov. 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.

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