



NATIONWIDE

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HEALTH MINISTRY ADVANCES ON KEY ISSUES

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TO CABINET**



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

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daily
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LABOUR CODE ONE STEP CLOSER

The enactment of a new Labour Code for St. Lucia was taken one step closer last Friday when members of Cabinet, the Attorney General's office and technical officers from the Ministry of Labour met to review the draft code. Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony described Friday's meeting as an important step forward in the process of drawing up the new Labour Code and added that he hoped that the review would have given workers in

the country the confidence that Government was moving ahead with the process. The Prime Minister also expressed the view that the adoption of the new labour code should come after shared consensus by all relevant parties. Dr. Anthony noted that Saint Lucians were clamouring for the code and that there were anxieties on the part of employers. But he said he has always felt that the code should evolve from a shared consensus. "I keep on us-

ing that term because I think we have to think about the country and the future of the country. We have to think about what the country requires and how to progress. The economy is doing exceedingly well and we must not engage in decision making that can compromise in any way what is taking place. But at the same time we have to give both sides their due and that is why it is important that we arrive at a shared consensus in this undertaking."



Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony

Saint Lucia At Tourism Security Workshop

A four member team of private/public sector law enforcement and tourism officials (two from each sector) this week represented St. Lucia at the first in a series of workshops on tourism and security which began in Grenada on Monday and ended on Friday. The workshops are being organized by the Organization of American States-OAS, under the theme "Inter-American, tourism, and recreational facilities security". Director of the OAS Secretariat in St. Lucia Paul Spencer said the workshops are just one of the ways that the OAS is lending support to members states in the area of security. "The private sector entities are the ones that implement or run the tourism plant, be it hotels be it the tourism industry and they are sending two persons to that workshop and the whole idea is to plan ways in

which to reduce the risk of the tourism plants in the Caribbean to acts of terrorism." The second workshop is scheduled for Mid September in St. Kitts and Nevis, while St. Lucia will host the last of the series slated for September 25th. Meanwhile the OAS Director, has lauded the efforts of Trinidad and Tobago as the only country in the Caribbean to provide staff from the public sector to help with designing programs that will respond to terrorism. "That is a substantial support which the government of Trinidad is providing. Other countries that are providing support are US, Columbia, Brazil, Uruguay, but for a Caribbean country to delegate two staff members from its ministry of National Security to work at the ...secretariat is a substantial contribution and shows the importance that the Caribbean region attaches to this issue."

Cultural Symposium For September

The next important engagement for the Cultural Development Foundation-CDF, now that Carnival 2006 is history, is the staging of a national symposium. The symposium carded for September this year, will provide the CDF an opportunity to review past carnival festivities and seek a fresh approach to upcoming ones. Director of the Foundation Teddy Francis, said next month's event is part of efforts to re-brand and improve the festivity. Francis who made those comments during the prize giving ceremony for Carnival 2006 on Wednesday August 16th said, "We shall ensure that everybody has their input, from police through to tourism officials, through the mass makers, band leaders, in shaping this all important mass." Commenting on the prize giving ceremony, almost one month after the close of the 2006 Carnival, Francis says the CDF has been making a concerted effort to ensure that prizes are presented within a one-month time frame following carnival. According to Francis such immediacy is indica-

tive of the importance that the Foundation has placed on rewarding those who have contributed meaningfully to the art form. "Only in such a way can you inspire confidence on their part in the organization of carnival and certainly the major cultural players-the wider society and the authorities, and show healthy respect from them." Vice President - Marketing for Cable and Wireless Premium Gold sponsor of Mass 2006 Cheryl Francis- in congratulating the winners,said the company, is committed to keeping St. Lucia's cultural traditions, especially carnival alive. "Our contributions also signify our continued commitment to development of st. Lucia and the progress of our people. We are also delighted that we were able to add our own special touch to this year's carnival celebrations through the TV program bmobile live," said the C&W representative. Among the award recipients were the wining carnival bands, sponsors, Carnival queen contestants, soca artists, media houses, community organizations, and private sector organizations.

Social Transformation Minister Interacts with CYEX 2006 delegates

Minister of Social Transformation of St Lucia, the Honourable Ms Menissa Rambally, has urged delegates of the Commonwealth Caribbean Youth Exchange (CYEX) to be responsible youth leaders. The thirty-year-old Minister, who was elected to parliament at the age of 21, addressed the young people on issues related to youth and politics at the Lambert Beach Resort in Tortola, BVI, last Wednesday August 16th. "Do not let society define what your needs are...your needs are the same as every other citizen in your country, hence leadership should be about integrating people and not stereotyping as some have the custom of doing," she said. Delegates were advised that it was alright to be evolving as young people. "It is okay to move from one interest to another. Your minds are active and you are exploring possibilities...if those possibilities take you to politics, then it calls for development, integration and sharing your knowledge...politics is a people-driven career so you must have the interest of others at heart." "Today, possibilities are immense and limitless and this generation is doing things that were not traditionally done," Minister Rambally observed. Delegates were told that the real world today sug-



Hon. Menissa Rambally

gests that the Caribbean is not removed from the rest of the global environment because what ever happens there affects this region and youth leaders are going to be faced with increasing challenges. She added that the Caribbean has to find safeguards to protect the achievements it has made.

Delegates were given an opportunity to question the Minister and the following are some of the questions posed and her answers.. What are some of the challenges you are faced with as a young Minister and how do you maintain your integrity? The challenges I am faced with are multifaceted. Stereotyping is the biggest challenge for me. Being a young female Minister, older people often want to impose their thoughts by influencing my ideas and views because they felt that I was too young to make those decisions for myself. I was also being pressured to address women needs ahead of men. These opportunities helped me to state clear my stand against stereotyping. Despite that I maintained my integrity by being true to myself and surrounding myself with positive people who had something to share with me that I could learn from. Do you think there is a need for political education in the Caribbean? Yes, we definitely need that in the Caribbean. We have been taught for too long that politicians are bad people. If there is political education in the Caribbean then people will be more informed about the issues affecting them. What would be your advice to young

people who would like to get involved in politics? As young people you need to utilize every opportunity that allows you to be seen by community and at other levels in your country. Give yourself a voice and support the politician who will support and push your ideas forward. Do not get involved in stereotyping. What are your views on complacency in the Political arena? There are programmes and other initiatives sitting on the shelves for a number of years that have not been looked at. It is very important that you realize that the civil society process influences the pace of progress in the region with regards to the implementation of initiatives. Politicians should find a way to help to process. How are you able to keep up with the negative publicity in the media in St. Lucia and still keep your integrity? When it comes to my integrity and character I do not hesitate to defend myself. Apart from that I have adopted a well known philosophy which says 'the best defence is no defence. I feel that young people can play a role in the media. The media should be responsible for the information they disseminate despite their right to freedom of speech.

Over 200 employed on Rodney Bay Marine Tourism Projects

Over 200 Saint Lucians are employed on two yachting-related construction sites in the Rodney Bay area that will raise the profile of the island's yachting sector and provide added up-scale accommodation for Cricket World Cup 2007.

The Landings at Rodney Bay, currently employs some 135 workers on its construction site on the Pigeon Island Causeway. Managers of the project say work is progressing smoothly as the island's biggest tourism investment project is taking shape. They also report that sales are progressing smoothly, with some 46 units already sold. In addition, the contractors estimate that

some of the 60 units for the first phase of the project will also be open in time for CWC 2007. By their estimates, the Landings officials say the impressive and elaborate lagoon being constructed as part of the billion-dollar project will also be completed in time for Cricket World Cup.

The other yachting and marine-related property also taking shape at Rodney Bay is The Harbour, which employs 85 workers. Tropical Homes, the company behind The Harbour, says that project too is quickly taking shape. The Landings and The Harbour are both major investments in the tourism and yachting industry sector by local hoteliers and entrepreneurs.



The Landings Construction Site

PM PLEDGES SUPPORT FOR MARINE INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION

MESSAGE FROM PRIME MINISTER DR KENNY D. ANTHONY TO THE 2006 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MARINE INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION OF SAINT LUCIA (MIASL), AUGUST 19, 2006

I recall the official launch of the MIASL last year, at which Government was represented by the Minister of Tourism, Honourable Phillip J. Pierre. Shortly thereafter, you may recall that Her Excellency Dame Pearlette Louisy, in the Throne speech, promised Government's intervention to address the legislative regime for yachting and the sea. We are pleased that the MIASL has conducted a lot of research into the existing legislative regime, and submitted it's findings to the Attorney General's office, in order that together we may begin to consider the enactment of yachting specific legislation to enable the sustainable growth of this important segment of our tourism product.

I realize that the contribution of the yachting sector is perhaps not as well known as it ought to be, and that it may actually be greater than is reported. The latest figure that we have, EC\$139.2 for 2004, is based on incomplete data. I expect that the MIASL will take the necessary steps to correct this, working assiduously with other agencies such as SLASPA and Customs. I also look



Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony

forward to close cooperation between your Association and the St. Lucia Tourist Board to initiate the necessary advertising and promotion directed specifically at the Yachting Sector. I trust that this cooperation will also extend to other areas to ensure that St. Lucians benefit from the numerous job opportunities which I am told are offered by your industry.

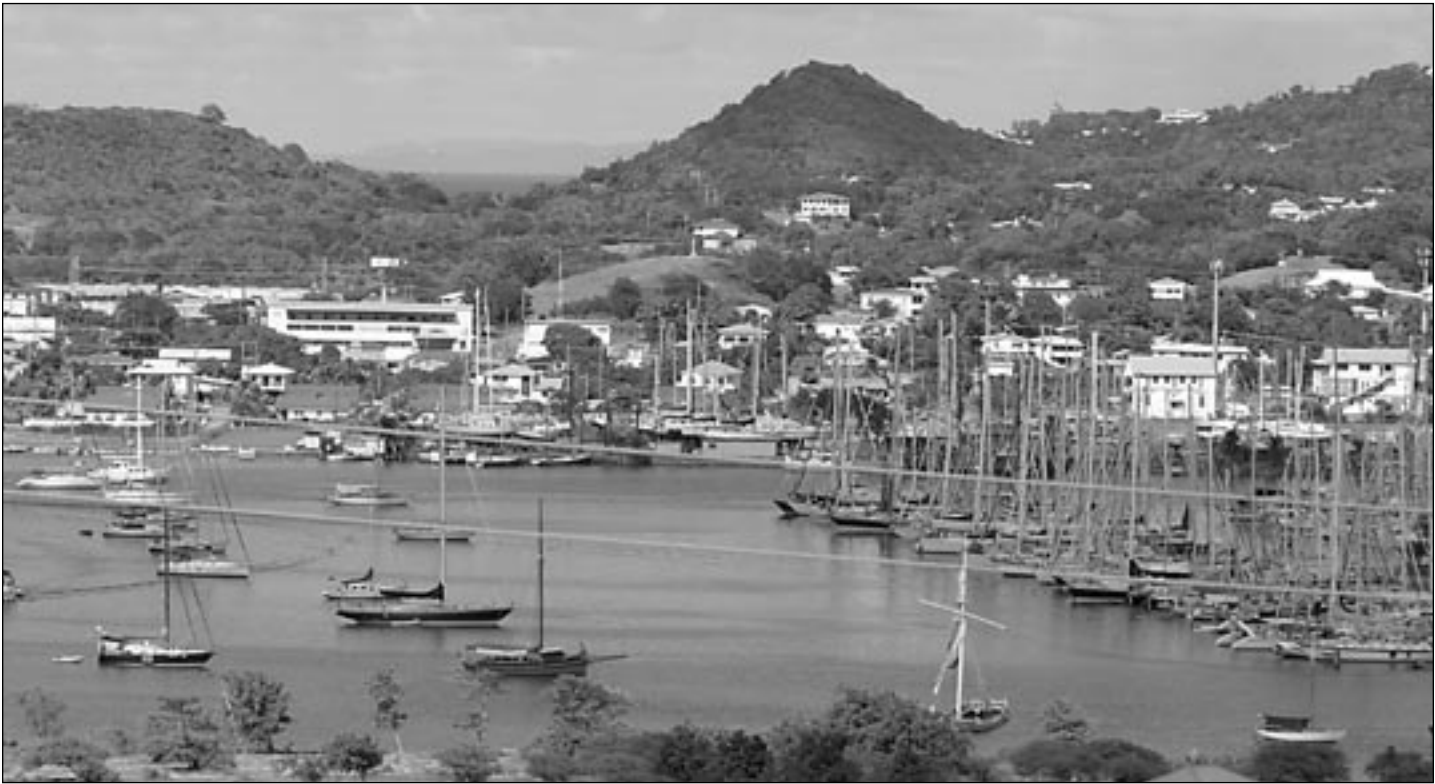
On the regional scene, I am reliably informed that St. Lucia was a co-founder of the Caribbean Marine Association, and also holds the presidency of this regional body. The formation of the CMA is an important development, as no less than the World Bank has recognized the importance and potential of promoting the Caribbean as a single yachting destination, in its major study on Caribbean development in the 21st century.

Finally, I urge you to continue the good work which you have begun, and pledge my Government's continued support, within the limits of our national resources, to your Association in the pursuit of its Aims & Objectives. I also look forward to a successful staging of the Prime Minister's Cup next year.

The Marine Industries Association of St. Lucia

The Marine Industries Association of St. Lucia (MIASL), which held its 2nd Annual General Meeting at the Auberge Seraphine on Sat. Aug 19th 2006, was founded as a non-profit company in 2004 by a group of yachting enthusiasts. The MIASL is now accepted at home and abroad as the voice of the yachting sector in St. Lucia, and has managed to double its membership to 70 since its inauguration in April 2005. Among the significant achievements during its first year were the establishment of the website www.miasl.org; securing OPSR funding for the preparation of a strategic plan for the yachting sector; participation in the Grand Pavois boat show in France as part of an OECS delegation; working with the Marine Police Unit and US Coast Guard to establish a volunteer maritime search and rescue unit; working with local law enforcement agencies on maritime safety and security; working with the SLHTA on crime prevention; joint promotions with SLASPA at mega-yacht events in Florida; damage limitation (locally and abroad) in recent instances of crime against yachting visitors; working with various Ministries to achieve regulatory certainty in the yachting sector; co-founding the Caribbean Marine Association with Antigua, Grenada & Trinidad – St. Lucia holds the presidency.

The MIASL expects to focus on marketing the sector (locally and abroad), human resource development, search & rescue, safety & security, and establishing legal & regulatory clarity in the yachting sector, working with various public and private sector bodies. The importance of data gathering and analysis, attracting locals into the industry, and the establishment of a calendar of local events will also be given high priority. The Yachting Industry has been making a remarkable contribution to national economic development. In 2000, the total economic impact of the yachting sector was EC\$72.64 million (ECLAC 2002), which rose to EC\$139.2 million in 2004 (ACME Consulting 2005). The MIASL is working to ensure the continuation of this growth.



Rodney Bay Marina

Nurses Needed For St. Lucia’s New Medical Facilities

The opening of the New Mental Hospital in St. Lucia, scheduled for 2007, and a new general hospital by 2010, will generate a great demand in St. Lucia for registered nurses and other medical professionals. That is the view of Chief Medical officer Dr. Stephen King who was speaking at a Press conference last week on the issue of the 300 nursing scholarships provided to St. Lucia by the Government of Cuba. Dr. King said that St. Lucia has to urgently train medical professionals to meet the increased human resource needs of the local health sector as it becomes modernised.

He stressed that the demand for nurses would be critical and he was therefore fully supportive of the Cuban nursing scholarship programme: “In particular I want to say that nursing personnel are the back bone of your

health service, be it in the community or be it in the hospitals and an opportunity to have an increase in our nursing personnel is a wonderful, is a wonderful one. These are people that we need to embrace.”

Dr. King, however, underscored the need for nurses trained in delivering mental health services, given the new mental health hospital, “We anticipate great demand for mental health nurses in particular and other mental health personnel;” and he added that St. Lucia would seek to have the Cuban nursing educational authorities put some emphasis on “how our nurses, our students up there can be trained in mental health.”

The Chief Medical Officer pointed out that while St. Lucia was training nurses in Cuba, the Ministry of Health will, in the interim, have to consider strategies to bring on board nurses from the region and to increase the capacity

of Sir Arthur Lewis Community College to train nursing personnel. Meanwhile the regional option is already being pursued with the impending arrival here of 25 Cuban nurses who will be assisting in the island’s various hospitals and health centres. Under a cooperation programme between St. Lucia’s Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Health of Cuba, local nurses will receive expert training from the Cubans to enable them to function in an Ophthalmology Centre which is to be established at Victoria Hospital to serve as a regional centre for thousands of Caribbean patients seeking eye care in Havana. The eye patients from other OECS countries will be treated in St. Lucia rather than taking the long trip to Cuba for their medical care. The standard of care at the St. Lucia Centre will be at the same level as what they would have received in Havana.



Dr. Stephen King



The new Mental Health Hospital Under Construction off the Millennium Highway

Brazilian ARV Drugs for Saint Lucia/OECS

The OECS Secretariat is moving closer towards facilitating the provision of Anti-Retroviral drugs, pledged by the Government of Brazil, to persons in the OECS with HIV and Aids.

This follows a recent series of negotiations at the OECS Secretariat, with representatives of the Brazilian Government on Monday August 7th 2006. The meeting reviewed a project proposal to facilitate Brazil’s donation of Anti-Retroviral Drugs (ARVs) to 500 patients in the OECS.

The meeting looked at the feasibility aspects such as logistical arrangements, the quantum of the ARVs, the

shipment of the ARVs from Brazil and the distribution of the drugs to OECS Member Countries.

Delegates also talked about the possibility of following up and monitoring the impact of Brazil’s contribution to help ensure that the objectives are met.

Laura Segall, an advisor to Brazil’s Aids programme for International Co-operation says the meeting was very objective and both sides are committed to satisfying the specific needs of each OECS Member Country in areas such as first line medicine. She added that Brazil is working on making the ARVs available in the shortest possible time.

The Brazil Government Advisor acknowledged the capacity of the OECS Secretariat’s machinery to facilitate the

distribution of the ARVs.

“The Brazilian delegation was very impressed by everything that we saw here. We heard very clear and objective presentations of how your pharmaceutical logistics work and this is something that was very important for us on this visit to see how organised and how hard Caribbean Countries are working on this as well. We were very impressed with the level of commitment and the amount of work that is being put into the HIV/Aids struggle here.”-Segall

Segall also confirmed that Brazil’s pledge may be a two year commitment in the first instance and noted that a joint evaluation between the OECS and Brazil regarding the impact of Brazil’s contribution will inform the continu-

ation of such assistance. The OECS HIV/AIDS Project Unit (OECSHAPU) and the OECS Pharmaceutical Procurement Service Unit (OECS/PPS) were part of the Secretariat team at Monday’s meeting with the Brazil delegation. Delegates from CARICOM, the Clinton Foundation, the Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS PANCAP and UNAIDS were also involved in the discussions.

In June of this year the OECS Secretariat hosted a conference involving numerous stakeholders in the area of Antiretroviral or ARV Treatment for persons living with HIV and AIDS to scan the situation in the OECS and inform ways on improving ARV supply and management.

Ambitious National Health Strategic Plan

Chief Medical Officer Dr. Stephen King has described the National Health Strategic Plan as very ambitious and comprehensive. According to Dr. King, officials of the Pan American Health Organization who have been involved in the process, have lauded the amount of work that has gone into this exercise. The CMO congratulated all the participants who were instrumental in developing the strategic health plan and expressed his deep passion for it.

“I am very passionate about it, because I am a St. Lucian, I live in this country and I know that if we do not do it, we are going to be that much poorer as a people and I think it is so important; it cannot be left in the

hands of any one set of politicians; this must be in the hands of the people, that is why the plan is important so that people can hold politicians accountable for it.”

The final draft of the National Strategic Health Plan which, will guide the health sector over the next five years, was submitted to Cabinet on Monday. The plan serves as a road map and details the objectives and values in health. Dr. King said that health officials and the Cabinet of Ministers will soon meet to discuss the plan.

“It is going to involve us walking Cabinet through it to a certain extent, so we are anticipating a session with the Cabinet of Ministers to explain to them and to answer all their questions and queries that they have.”

100 More Nursing Students

The Government of St. Lucia announced this week that it will soon begin to recruit the remaining approximately 100 local nurses to complete the complement of 300 nursing scholarships originally offered by the Cuban government earlier this year. 182 students went to Cuba in July in the first batch of scholars for the programme. The Government also announced on

Monday that local nurses undergoing the scholarship studies in Cuba have been given an added opportunity to return home with more than just an Assistant or General Nursing certificates. The Cuban Authorities have agreed to allow those students who qualify to extend their studies by two years in order to graduate with a Bachelor’s Degree in Nursing.



Parents Support Cuban Student Nursing Programme

Parents of St. Lucian students on the Cuban Nursing Scholarship programme have expressed their support and appreciation for the programme. The parents made their views known following a special meeting, with officials of the Ministry of Health and Education, which had been called to discuss the welfare of the students in Cuba. Scores of parents turned out at the NIC Conference Centre on Tuesday for the meeting which had been promised by the Minister for Health, Honourable Damian Greaves, following his visit to Cuba last week.

The Minister’s visit to Cuba, as well as the meeting with the parents, had become necessary following some initial apprehension among students and parents caused by questions of equivalency raised here by the President of the local Nurses Association. It was stated that the students would not be graduating as registered nurses following their three year programme but that they would be nursing assistants. Further to that, some media houses claimed that the students were facing intolerable living conditions in Cuba.

The Minister briefed the parents on the latest developments regarding the programme and reconfirmed his public statement last week, that at their end of their three years of studies in Cuba, the students, like those at the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College, would be eligible to sit the Caribbean Nursing examination, in

order to become qualified nurses. Minister Greaves called on parents to work closely with the Ministry in finding ways of lending support to the students. He also reiterated government’s commitment to improve the quality of health care in Saint Lucia and expressed appreciation to the Government and People of Cuba for the Cuban Scholarship Programme.

The meeting also provided a platform for parents to air their views and concerns. The general sentiment from the parents was that the programme was a good opportunity both for the personal development of young Saint Lucians and also good for the development of the country. Two of the parents spoke to the GIS after the meeting.

Sister Sheba of Micoud said: “You must never really base and rely on things you hear outside; you must also look for the main sources and what I have heard here today, sounds ok; it looks like there is future and progress for our children and so we should give all the support we can to our children and to those in authority to make things work smoothly in the best interest of our children and our country.”

Nathaniel Reynolds of Castries spoke about the two departments of government involved in the programme: “I think right now the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education have realised their shortcomings and they are trying to solve those issues and those problems which I welcome very much.”



PRIVATE PHARMACIES VITAL TO UHC

The involvement of private pharmacies is seen as a vital component of the Universal Health Care System. According to Chief Medical Officer Dr. Stephen King, phase two of the UHC will focus on engaging private pharmacies in the dispensation of free drugs under the Diabetes and Hypertensive pilot program. Dr King says the importance of getting the private sector on board cannot be over stated.

“We think it is important for a couple of reasons, one from a principled point of view, UHC wants to harmonize public and private sector because we appreciate that you require this country’s health service to be delivered by the both; and that is important to harmonize them so that we can achieve mutual health goals in the national interest.”

One other reason for engaging private pharmacies in the Diabetes and Hy-

pertensive Pilot Program is that it will increase accessibility to the services. However despite these advantages, Dr. King has indicated that health officials are aware that there will be implications for including the private pharmacies in the arrangements and that this would therefore require intense discussion and negotiations. He said: “For the time being what we have been doing is using the public pharmacies in the dispensation of the free medications; if we are going to move into private pharmacies it means that we obviously have to compensate these pharmacies for the resources that they would expend in terms of even dispensing of the free medication.”

Meanwhile the final draft of the National Health Strategic Plan 2006-2011 was submitted to Cabinet on Monday. The Chief Medical Officer has described it as a very ambitious and comprehensive plan.

More Government Attention To Older Citizens

The Government of St. Lucia is placing the concerns of older citizens a notch higher on the national agenda. Hon. Jon Odum, the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Health, who has responsibility for older persons confirmed this last Wednesday while addressing a consultation on the finalization of a National Policy for older persons. The consultation was made possible through funding from the Pan American Health Organization and the United Nations.

According to Mr. Odum, the national policy must reflect all issues and concerns of older persons. “We have to critically examine the document at hand to see whether those important principles independence, care participation self fulfilment and dignity enshrined in resolution 46-91 have been embraced in this document. Whether it is appropriate to our situation, whether it is realistic, achievable.”

Meanwhile it has been announced that the Welfare Unit of the Ministry of Health is to be expanded to more adequately cater to the needs of older persons. Accordingly the welfare unit is soon to be reorganized and renamed the Division of Ageing and Welfare Services. Mr. Odum says: “Merely providing a monthly allowance for older persons assisting them with their medical needs and burying them when they die is not enough, especially when it is only a small proportion of them who benefit from these services.

The Parliamentary Secretary has called on the St. Lucian society to respond to a call by the United Nations for government and civil society to work together in promoting the rights of all older persons regardless of age, gender or social economic status.

First Ever Fisheries Census

For the first time in Saint Lucia's Agricultural history, a Fisheries census will be undertaken alongside the Agriculture census. The initiative has received the blessings of the Food and Agricultural Organization - the FAO. The Census will be undertaken as a joint collaboration between the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the FAO.

The census is scheduled to start in January 2007 and in light of this, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, on Tuesday, hosted a one day workshop for users and producers of agricultural and fishing sector information. During the exercise technical assistance was provided by Mr. David Marshall of the FAO. He explained that given the importance of the fisheries sector in the economy, it was reasonable to include it in the census.

“ Fisheries is another item which is not so common in censuses. We normally keep fishing out of a census of agriculture because it has again particular characteristics. But where there is a lot of fishing going on in the country and where it is important, if the country wishes to include questions specifically on fishing then FAO would say yes, it's your prerogative, you can include what you like. And if it's important for you then of course you should include some questions on fishing.”

He added that Aqua-culture will also be a new component under the census. “ In the previous programme FAO recognised that aqua-culture was a kind of farming. It's fish-farming, it's very different from fishing. Aqua-culture is about the breeding, the feeding, the capturing of fish. It's if you like – like a farmed environment. It's often carried out as part of an agricultural activity.”

Meanwhile, Acting Permanent Secretary Mr. Danley Auguste says the census will provide a blue print of



Selling fish at a local fisheries complex (top) and fishing boats berthed at the Complex

the significant changes which have occurred in the agricultural sector over the last ten years, particularly in the banana industry.

“ So that would give us information based on which we will program the

development of the sector and I dare say the development of the sector over the few years to come. It will give us some indication of where we are going, where we should go, what we should concentrate on and what is happening

within the sector vis a vis what is happening within the country as a whole.”

The Government Statistical Department will collaborate closely with the Ministry of Agriculture during the census period.

Banana Industry Free Of Black Sigatoka

The island's banana farmers have been given the good news that their banana farms are free of the dreaded black sigatoka infestation. The Banana Emergency Recovery Unit – BERU announced this week that a thorough survey conducted by the Unit had revealed that the banana sector was not affected by Black Sigatoka. But there was further good news as the survey also revealed that there was a decrease in the level of the yellow sigatoka disease.

Black Sigatoka is regarded as the most potent banana disease. It is an air-borne fungus that affects banana production in virtually all the major banana producing regions of the world.

Isolated from this risk by the Caribbean Sea, the Windwards banana industry suffers from a much milder strain of the Sigatoka disease (the Yellow Sigatoka) that requires far less spraying of fungicide to keep it under effective control.

Programme Manager of BERU Mr. Hilary La Force says the Unit will remain proactive and is looking at preparing for the possible identification of the black sigatoka disease on the island at some point in the future. “ But in the meantime every effort is being made to ensure it does not come in, using strict quarantine measures to avoid its entry but if it gets into Saint Lucia, we have already began to put an action plan in place to deal with its management which can be

pretty expensive of course, because it's more expensive than controlling the yellow sigatoka, it's a major cost to banana production in St. Lucia.”

Where the Yellow Sigatoka is concerned, La Force says a stringent monitoring system has assisted in keeping the infestation in check. “ The last three years have been the best. The extent to which the management of that disease has been carried out, has been very, very good. Managing the infestation does not only involve the treatment, but involves monitoring and the BERU has engaged a company called Agrico to do the monitoring. They provide the disease levels at any one time and make recommendations for treatment.”



Mr. Hilary La Force

WIBDECO Diversifying

WIBDECO, the Windward Islands Banana Development Company, has begun a process of consultation that will lead to the diversification of its product and supply base. In a GIS interview, Chief Executive Officer, Bernard Cornibert, said while bananas will remain the core product, WIBDECO needs to explore and

seize other investment and marketing opportunities.

A group of United Kingdom consultants has already been commissioned to undertake an analysis that will guide the company in that direction. “ We need to look at a range of other products that we can handle and that need not necessarily be, although we are looking at very seriously, other agricultural products and note that I

said the word products, rather than produce, because by products rather than produce, we could be looking at not fresh produce but processed goods or products.”

Mr. Cornibert said the company is looking at the possibilities for investment in order to expand its product base but attention is also being given to expanding its supply base.

“On the supply side we need to look at our supply base at the moment until a few years ago, it was just

the Windward Islands, not only were we a one product company, dealing only in bananas, we had essentially a single supply source which was the Windward Islands. We have diversified that a little bit, we are taking a lot of bananas from the Dominican Republic so our supply base is somewhat diversified.”

The WIBDECO official says the move to the Dominican Republic has attracted some debate but it was a necessary one in order to help the company's viability.

As Castries/Gros Islet Highway Improvement Progresses

Appeal For Public Understanding



Work on the Castries Gros Islet Highway- the proposed Union Roundabout (top left), the Vigie Roundabout (top right) and the near the Castries Comprehensive School (bottom)

The Government of St. Lucia continues its thrust towards drastically improving the road networks in St. Lucia. With the completion of the West Coast Road project and the ongoing road works on the East coast, the Castries/Gros-Islet Highway is also in for major transformation.

The Castries-Gros Islet Highway Improvement Project when it is complete is expected to greatly ease the pressures associated with the flow of traffic between the city and Gros Islet. Now it its first phase, this project, is being undertaken by the Government of Saint Lucia and implemented by the Ministry of Communications, Works, Transport and Public Utilities through a loan from the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development.

The contract for the project was

signed on 23rd February 2006 to the tune of EC\$24 134 441.46 and commenced on 21st March 2006. The intended date for the completion of the project is 18th April 2007.

The road works will include the widening of the road Carriageway between Jn Marie and Sons (at Vigie) and Choc. The Vigie roundabout will also be re-constructed and two new roundabouts will be built, one near Friendship Inn (in the vicinity of the Gablewoods Mall) and the other at Choc near its junction to Union.

Not only is the easier flow of traffic a consideration under this project, but also the safety of pedestrians. It is for this reason that four pedestrian bridges will be built along the highway as well as additional bus stops and new footpaths.

The project will also seek to upgrade and strengthen the existing pavement

along the section of the route between Vigie and Choc Bay, a carriageway length of 3400m.

So far works have been progressing smoothly although there has been some constraints with regards to the free-flow of traffic. As far as traffic management is concerned the MCWT&PU, the Police, The Engineer and the Contractor have been meeting to discuss possible improvements to the traffic management. Whilst all measures have been put in place to alleviate problems, including public notices and posting of traffic signs along the route, the public's cooperation is essential. The traffic manager has complained about cones and flashing warning lights being stolen and that some motorists are still ignoring some of the new measures.

In the next few weeks The Ministry

of Communications, Works, Transport and Public Utilities intends to step up their public awareness campaign about the Castries/Gros Islet Highway project. This will be done through regular updates in the weekend press as well as the Nationwide Supplement in the Voice Newspaper and PSA's and Traffic reports daily on Radio St. Lucia and NTN.

The Ministry would like to thank the members of the public for their cooperation and patience during this phase of the project and would like to solicit their continued understanding as the contractors work expeditiously to finish the project, which, when completed, will greatly alleviate most of these normal pressures, making the Castries/Gros Islet Highway a step towards the further modernization of St. Lucia.

Bordelais Talent To Be Utilised

The Management of the Bordelais Correctional Facility is leaving no stone unturned to ensure that the many talents and skills of inmates are channelled positively. According to Director, Hilary Herman the facility is in the process of expanding its farm and wood-work projects. The institution has

just started a pig rearing project, and will be extending its carpentry services to providing furniture for schools in the north of the island.

"We are looking at brining on a new programs manager who will develop the programs we now have on paper, to implement them. We are just starting, there is so much that we would like to do, again

resources are limited but it will take some time. There is a lot of hope here".

Hilary says the inmates at the Bordelais Correctional Facility posses a wealth of talent waiting to be tapped into. However inadequate resources are a constarint.

"But we try to encourage it; a lot of these things have to be really helped

with outside agencies; most of what we get is from the faith based community, which is voluntary so its ad-hoc at best, so we really need to establish programs that will have continuity to do all of those things."

The Bordelais Correctional Facility has a prison population of 498 inclusive of male and females.

CWCSL HOLDS FIRST ROAD SHOW

Officials at Cricket World Cup Saint Lucia Incorporated say they have been able to disseminate quite a bit of information to residents in the south of the island during the first in a series of road shows which was held in Vieux Fort on Sunday. Issues pertaining to Saint Lucia's staging of matches in the 2007 Cricket World Cup were discussed in detail and those who came to the Philip Marcellin Ground were also entertained by some live cricket action.

Octina Emmanuel, the Events Manager at Cricket World Cup Saint Lucia Incorporated, said that CWCSL was satisfied with this first road show.

"The hype for cricket seems to be very vibrant in the south. Persons were asking things about ticketing of course as anything else and on accommodation. There was the accommodation unit from the Ministry of Tourism there and we were able to answer quite a few questions persons had in terms of putting up their homes or their apartments for rent."

She said the next road show will

be in Soufriere on September 24, but before that there will be a fun walk on September 17 which the Local Organising Committee hopes will be a big

event. The walk starts at the Cricket World Cup office at Colony House and ends at the Beausejour cricket Ground.

Other road shows to be put on soon

are slated for Micoud and Dennery with the ultimate aim of visiting all communities on the island before the World Cup comes around next year.



Action in one of the cricket matches



An Information Booth



Prime Minister Kenny Anthony with Fortuna Belrose (left) and Jennifer Gaston (right) of Cricket World Cup St. Lucia



The Cricket World Cup mascot poses with Ernest Hilaire CEO of CWCSL(left) and some Vieux Fort residents (right)



Sports Minister Applauds Saint Lucian Secondary School Athletes

Minister responsible for Education, Human Resource Development, Youth and Sports, Hon Mario Michel has saluted members of Saint Lucia's team that finished joint champions with Grenada in the recent Windward Islands Schools games held here.

The Minister was full of admiration

for the athletes when he addressed them during an appreciation award held at the Prime Minister's official residence last Wednesday.

"We are here tonight to toast you, to celebrate you and to say to you thank you for the effort that you put in to bring pride and joy to Saint Lucia. I was honoured and happy and pleased

and elated to be at the national stadium for the entire day of the track and field championship, and I enjoyed myself thoroughly."

The Minister urged the students who will be available for next year's tournament scheduled for Dominica to start training and focus on winning the championship on their own.



THIS WEEK ON NTN

Sat. August 26th to Fri.
September 1st 2006

NTN – PROVIDING
INFORMATION YOU NEED

**Bel Fund Providing a way
out for the Unemployed**

Sat. August 26th, 11:30 a.m.

**Hon. Marcus Garvey – his
life & works** - Sun. August
27th, 11:30 a.m.

La Woz Seans - Mon. Aug.
28th 8:00 p.m.

**Government's Commitment
to the Manufacturing Sector**

- Tues. Aug. 29th, 7:30 p.m.

Constitutional Reform -
Wed. Aug. 30th, 7:30 p.m.

**2nd Brian Bernard
Memorial Lecture** – Thurs.
Aug. 31st, 8:30 p.m.

Fanm Pa Fanmi Nonm – Fri.
Sept. 1st, 9:00 p.m.

Remember to tune in for:
GIS News Breaks and Kweyol
News daily from 6:30 p.m.

Issues & Answers/Mondays at
8:00pm:

Interview/Tuesdays at 6:15pm

Konsit Kweyol/Tuesdays at

8:00pm (Kweyol Discussion):

Your Right to Know/

Thursdays at 6:15 p.m. (Min.
of Ed. Prog).

Take 2/Fridays at 6:15pm

(Week in Review)

Weflechi/Fridays at 6:40pm

- (Week in Review—Kweyol)

For the complete programme guide,
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www.stlucia.gov.lc

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