



# **ANOTHER CHAPTER OF OUR LIVES TOGETHER**

## **THRONE SPEECH**

Delivered by

**Her Excellency Dame Calliopa Pearlette Louisy,**

GCSL, GCMG, D.ST.J., PH.D, LL.D (HON)

Governor General of Saint Lucia

On the Occasion of the

**Opening of the Sixth Session of the Tenth  
Parliament of Saint Lucia**

Tuesday, 26 April, 2016

Old Government Building, Laborie Street, Castries.

**Mr President, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members!**

By God's good grace, we assemble this morning to mark the commencement of the Sixth Session of this Tenth Parliament of Saint Lucia. I invite you, Honourable Members, to recommit to another year to work together in the service of all Saint Lucians.

We must all believe that our country is great and we are called to celebrate its achievements, while still being ambitious and visionary in the possibilities of the future. We must believe that we have been blessed by the Almighty to be a people of peace, progress, passion and prosperity. We must remain a country of courage, of compassion, of grace and unfailing courtesy and generosity, united in our ambitions to pursue the collective good.

### **SPORTS - NURTURING THE COLLECTIVE GOOD**

In many respects, that collective and individual action is beautifully demonstrated in the area of sports here at home. Without a doubt, our nation is still very much exuberant over the recent successes of the West Indies Women's and Men's Cricket Teams in becoming the world champions in the twenty over form of the game as well as the Under- 19 male team which also became champions in the 50 overs format. In the case of the senior men's team led by our very own, Captain Darren Sammy, they achieved the additional distinction of being the only team to have won this title twice. On both occasions, the team was led by our Darren Sammy.

Understandably, our focus has been on our two champions, Darren and Johnson. But our young Saint Lucian cricketers have also done us proud. Once again- and for the third time in succession- our boys were victorious at the Under 15 Windward Islands Tournament. We salute them!

Individual successes were also realised over the past year by a number of Saint Lucian athletes. Jeanelle Scheper continued to perform well and picked up a gold medal in high jump at the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) Division I Level. Our beloved Laverne Spencer, now into her eighteenth year representing Saint Lucia, participated in high jump at the 41- nation Pan American Games in Toronto, Canada and brought home the gold medal for Saint Lucia; our first gold medal at that event. But there are many other Saint Lucians who continue to participate commendably in professional sport.

We of course look forward to their representation, and the lifting of our flag at Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, this summer for the Games of the Thirty-First Olympiad.

My Government commits to continued support of the aspirations, hopes and dreams of our young people through sport. It continues to raise the bar in the quality of sport facilities, but this must be complemented with greater organisation by sports associations and participation by the citizenry. My Government will continue its efforts to expand access to sporting and recreational facilities through investments at the community level throughout Saint Lucia. As my Government has repeatedly emphasized, our country must be developed in a fair, balanced, and equitable way. In fulfilment of that mission, no community must be left behind in the provision of sporting facilities and amenities. We must, however, work harder to restore “club culture” in our communities for it is in these clubs that leadership is nursed and the rudiments of social co-operation are learned and acquired.

**Misyé Pwézidan, Misyé Speaker, Manm Paleman!**

Lagwas di DyéToupwisan mennen nou ansanm jòdi-a pou ouvè sizyenm sèsyon di li dizyenm Paleman péyi-a. Mwen ka envité tout Manm Paleman pou kontinè twavay diwan lanné-a ki ka vini-an an lentéwé, épi o sèvis, tout Sent Lisyen.

Dyé benni nou épi an péyi enkwayab. Annou sélébwé'y. Annou sélébwé siksé-nou; annou kontiné pousé péyi-a pli an pli douvan pou jwi bokou pli siksé. Pou moutwé wékonnesans-nou pou gwan bennédiksyon sala, annou anbwase lapé, pogwé, siksé . Annou wè ki péyi-a kontiné kon an péyi ki pa kwapon, ki pa lach, ki ni konpasyon; an péyi ki ka apwésyé jantiyès, politès èk jénéwòzité; an péyi koté lézabitan ka aji ansanm an lentéwé yonnalòt. Sé pa kèkchòs ki difisil ditou. Si'y posib an spò, i posib an lòt sèksyon lavi péyi-a. Gadé mannyè péyi-a sélébwé siksé Darren Sammy épi Johnson Charles; mannyè péyi-a ka aplodi lè Laverne Spencer genyen an méday lò o nivo entènasyonal. Ek la ni plisyè dòt – gwan moun kon jenn manmay – nou ka sélébwé chak fwa yo pòte lonnè bay péyi-a.

Sé pou wèzon sala, Gouvèdman ka fé fòs kò'y pou asiwé ki chak konmin ni an plas koté sa ki entéwésé an spò sa dévlopé abilité-yo, talan-yo. Pofité sé dévlopman sala, paski tout sé démach sala sa sèvi kon bèso pou antwennen sé moun-lan ki kay kondwi péyi-a an sé tan-an ki ka vini-an.

## **DEMOCRATIC WILL OF THE PEOPLE**

Mr President, Mr Speaker, political representation is a major preoccupation this year.

I open today what is likely to be the last session of this Parliament prior to the next General Elections. Our country will, in time, proceed to the polls to allow for the expression of the democratic will of the people to select their political representatives.

This upcoming General Elections would represent our tenth such event since attaining Independence in 1979 and our seventeenth since attaining Adult Suffrage in 1951. Thus far, since Adult Suffrage, both the Saint Lucia Labour Party and the United Workers Party have been victorious in eight polls. Further to this, the

peaceful transfer of the reins of power from one party to another has occurred five times since Independence and six times since Adult Suffrage.

We have therefore, if only by virtue of this metric, achieved a mature and stable democracy.

The electorate therefore expects behaviour that reflects our maturity as a nation and as a people.

Our democracy traverses deeper than institutions such as Parliament. It goes beyond political leadership, or the commonly coined “card-carrying” party membership. Each citizen must be responsible in its actions towards the other. Democracy also requires expression of views that does not cause unfair injury to the other. And so, the way we speak on talk shows, what we write on blogs and other social media threads all impact the richness, diversity and quality of our democracy.

### **THE BALLOT REMAINS FUNDAMENTAL**

Once the day arrives, there may well be those who will cast a ballot for the seventeenth time, and many would be exercising this right for the first time.

Whatever the case may be, this process represents a fundamental pillar of our democracy and the responsibility of the ballot should never be taken lightly no matter if it is new or habitual.

The ballot still remains the fundamental, expression of each citizen’s political will. As such, I urge all eligible voters to exercise their franchise not only in the interest of some perceived personal gain, but in the interest of our collective and common dominion.

Misyé Pwézidan, Misyé Speaker

Toupatou ou pasé sé jou sala, séélèksyon ki ka palé. An palan di sa, jòdi-a mwen ka ouvèsa ki pitèt sé dènyé sèsyon Paleman sala avan élèksyon kwiye. Alò, jou-a kay vini lè tout sa ki ni dwa voté kay mété ti kwa-yo pou chwézi wépwézantan palemantè-yo. Elèksyon sala kay li dizyenm dépi endépandans an mil nèf san swazant dixnèf (1979), èk li dizyétyenm dépi sifwaj inivèsèl an mil nef san senkant é yan(1951). Sa vlé di ki éléksyon pa anyen ki nèf. Konsa nou ka èspéwé ki chakan di nou kay konpòté kò-nou konm i fo, avèk sivilité, onnètèèk wèsponsabilité. Sonjé, pawòl ni wasin. Konsa chak pawòl ki di, swé asou radiyo, adan papyé-nouvèl, asou Facebook ében entènèt-la kay détèminé kalité démokwasi-a nou kay ni an péyi-a.

## **SAFE AND JUST SOCIETY**

Mr President, Mr Speaker, there are of course abnormal, anti-social agents that continue to undermine democratic society and the free will of its people to enjoy life. The greatest of these is undoubtedly violence. And indeed such manifestations do not preclude the unfortunate behaviour of the self-induced violence of suicide.

The recent spate of suicides has left us deeply wounded, shaken, and bewildered. Collectively, we must share in the pain of the families whose loved ones chose to end their lives so tragically.

My Government believes that violence in all its forms destroys people and their freedoms. It is therefore committed to seeing reductions in homicides, suicides, fatalities caused by vehicular and other accidents.

We must all continue our efforts to see the prevention of crime, sexual abuse, and intimidation, and violence in all its ugly manifestations. Our desire is for a safe and just society.

## **OVERHAUL OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM**

Meanwhile, my Government has heard the widespread concerns over the number of remand prisoners at the Bordelais Correctional Facility. Over the past few weeks, the Judiciary has made a determined effort to reduce the number of remand prisoners. In a recent Press Statement, the Court advised that “At the end of 2015, the remand population at the Bordelais Correctional Facility was at 353 persons with 297 before the High Court while 58 were before the Magistrates Court. This represented a 9% decrease of individuals on remand from 2014”.

In a bid to reduce the remand population even further, the Supreme Court indicated that an additional judge was appointed temporarily in February 2016 to assist in the Criminal Division. “The additional judge was able to dispose of 43 matters by the end of March, 2016.” Recently, the Government agreed to finance the appointment of a fourth judge to the Criminal Division of the Supreme Court for a period of six months to work exclusively on remand cases.

These measures notwithstanding, my Government believes that the Criminal Justice System requires an overhaul. If the system is broken, we must fix it.

It is clear that despite the monumental efforts of the judiciary and the state, the expected benefits of the reforms of the past few years have not always yielded the benefits championed for those reforms.

Honourable Members will recall that several years ago, we took the bold step to establish a Criminal Division of the Supreme Court. We enacted a new Criminal Code and a new Evidence Act and we established new procedures in criminal trials. But have these initiatives really worked? Are we delivering justice in criminal cases in full accordance with our constitutional prescriptions? What explains the high number of remand cases? Are we unwittingly allowing defence counsel in criminal cases to exploit loopholes or weaknesses in the design of the procedures to frustrate the delivery of justice in criminal matters? These are burning questions.

My Government believes that the time has come to review the structure and operations of our Criminal Justice System and to that end it will work with the judiciary to appoint a team of experts to conduct a comprehensive review of the system in all its facets. The team will focus on our laws, both substantive and procedural on the structure and the staffing of the system. We must ensure that our citizens are satisfied that they have a system that is fair, just and efficient.

### **A NEW JUDICIAL COMPLEX**

The recent closure of our major court building for repair and renovations also compounded the delays in handling judicial matters these past few months. For several weeks, the courts were disabled and displaced. Currently, our Courts are scattered and assigned accommodation in unusual locations throughout the city. My Government wishes to thank the judiciary for its patience and understanding as we cope with what is a very unusual situation.

We cannot forget that Saint Lucia is the headquarters of the Eastern Caribbean States(OECS) Supreme Court. The Headquarters Agreement imposes a duty to provide the court and its judges with suitable accommodation and we must therefore resolve this issue of accommodation for our courts once and for all.

In the coming year, my Government will intensify its preparations to develop a new Judicial Complex to house the headquarters of the OECS Supreme Court. This complex shall house the Court of Appeal, the High Courts, Family Courts and Magistrates Courts. It will also provide accommodation for other agents of the Courts including, for example, the Crown Prosecution Service.

Following discussions with the Judiciary, it has been agreed that the Complex will be constructed on a “greenfield” site on the Millennium Highway where enough land is available to accommodate all its structures. My Government is grateful to the landowner for facilitating the acquisition of the site for the court.



My Government is of the belief that the judicial branch of our Government requires modern, efficient physical arrangements to support the delivery of justice to our citizens.

Misyé Pwézidan, Misyé Speaker, i ka sanm konsi an go nwèsè vlé anvlopé péyi-a, pou étenn limyè-nou toutafè. Tout sòt kalité kwim ka pwan kou oliwon nou. Sa ka annékòs an pèwèz, an létjéti an tje nou tout. Sé an vyol pa isi, an haché pa la; an vòl pa isi, an fiziwe pa la. Moun ozabwa, ek i sanm nou koumansé dezèspéwé. Sé fo nou trouvé mannèw pou genyen about malèz sala, sé movèzté sala, kalité violans sala, osi vit ki posib, paski sa ka mennasé libète epi sékouwité péyi-a.

An menm ditan-an, i ka sanm akonsidiwé sistenm jistis péyi-a an desandan. Tout bagay ka maché lantman, lantman. Délè sé konm si menm kalmason ka boujé pli vit pasé sistenm-lan. Ki mannyè ou pé jistifyé an sitwasyon koté ou ni twa san senkant twa pwisonnyé a Bodlé, ki ka atann an disisyon pou sav si yo kondanné ou pa? La ja ni plisyè démach pou anméliowé sitwasyon gwav sala, mé si sé pa yonn, sé lòt. Fwanchman, péyi-a pa sa kontiné asou menm son sala. Sé fo nou wanjé sistenm-la, di tèt o pyé, osi vit ki posib. Sinon, bagay kay pli twis, pli ta, èk silon Educator, bagay kay vini mové.

Pami sé démach-la Gouvèdman ka antanmé pou pòté an soulajman pou li moman sé an ògmantasyon an kantité jij an sistenm jistis-la, sitou pou tann sé kès sé pwisonnyé-a ki ja trouvé wanvoyé si souvan èk pou si tèlman lontan. An sé mwa-a ki ka vini-an, Gouvèdman kay koumansé twavay asou an Kay Jistis nèf asou Millenium Highway-a pou lojé Lakou dapèl sé péyi OECS-la, kay lodyans magistwa èk jij, épi twibinal pou tann kès kont manman, papa èk ich (sa nou ka kwiye an

anglé, Family Court-la). Mé nou pa ni tan pou kalanjé asou sé démach sala. Sé fo nou pousé douvan avèk tout vitès.

## **OUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE AGREEMENT**

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, last year was a very important one for our planet. At various points during the year, technicians and political leaders gathered to negotiate and debate agreements that will define how we share and use our global commons. They gathered in Sendai, Japan to define a new international framework for disaster risk reduction. They assembled in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to agree on the funding that should be mobilised to finance global development. Then they went to New York and articulated the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals to which all nations would aspire between now and 2030.

Finally, in the most complex of all the negotiations, the 195 Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change spent two weeks in Paris, in the aftermath of the tragic terrorist attacks in that city, negotiating an historic, new Global Climate Change Agreement.

In the middle of these various negotiating theatres, Saint Lucia and the Caribbean region stood tall and played an influential role in shaping the outcome of these discussions. However, it was in the discussions that led to the finalization and adoption of the Paris Agreement that we really saw the manifestation of that famous quotation from Margaret Mead *“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”* Saint Lucia’s Minister for Sustainable Development, Energy, Science and Technology led the negotiations on behalf of the CARICOM region in Paris. He was chosen by the French Government as a member of a very small group of ministerial facilitators to help reach agreement among countries on the thorny

issues in the negotiations. He was sought after daily for interviews by all the international news media.

Most importantly, however, he helped to galvanize the support of young people, artists and journalists all over the Caribbean to amplify our region's voice for strong decisive action on climate change. In the end, a small group of committed citizens from Small Island Developing States helped to change the opinion of world leaders on the importance of limiting the global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius – One Point Five to Stay Alive - and on the need to adopt an ambitious agreement that sent a resounding signal that the world was serious about saving the planet and protecting the lives and livelihoods of the people who live in island States, low-lying countries and other vulnerable regions.

Saint Lucia's leadership on Climate Change has continued into this year, and as recently as Friday last week, on Earth Day, our country became one of the first in the world to both sign and ratify the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. There is still much work to be done, but a very important step has been taken and our country is proud to have played a significant role in this regard and to be looked on internationally as one of the leaders on environmental advocacy.

Never doubt that small as we are, we can change the world. We can do so by our intellect, our prowess, our passion for excellence and our commitment to honour principle even at the cost of standing alone for what we believe to be right.

## **SUSTAINABLE ENERGY**

Mr President, Mr Speaker, our efforts in climate change are very closely linked to the work we are doing in sustainable energy. The primary cause of the rapid increases in global temperatures is the release of high levels of carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas, from the burning of fossil fuels to produce energy. If we are to

check the increase in the temperature of planet Earth, we must dramatically reduce on our use of fossil fuels for energy.

Saint Lucia produces only approximately one thousandth of one percent of the total greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere. However, my Government believes in leading by example. This is why we have set ourselves clear targets to reduce our production of greenhouse gases by 16% by 2025 and 23% by 2030. These goals are consistent with our pledge to increase the contribution of renewable energy to the generation of electricity to 35% by the year 2020. By transitioning away from fossil fuels, we will not only play our part in contributing to a cleaner, safer planet, but we will ensure energy security for our country and protect our economy from the unhelpful volatilities in the world oil market.

To achieve energy security, my Government is pursuing critical investments in renewable energy in three areas – geothermal, solar photovoltaic, and wind.

Mr President, Mr Speaker, I am sure there is a certain level of cynicism that many Saint Lucians attach to any report about geothermal development in our country. This is not new. We have heard it for many years, for decades even. However, what is different this time around is the manner in which we have approached the challenge. My Government assembled a coalition of partners to work with us to determine whether this was a goal worth pursuing. We mobilized support from the World Bank, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of New Zealand, and the Clinton Climate Initiative to undertake geotechnical studies. We included LUCELEC in the discussions from the outset, since they will be responsible for purchasing the geothermal power and transmitting and distributing it to consumers. We also teamed up with one of the most reputable geothermal developers in the world as our preferred developer.

The initial findings are encouraging and interesting. They suggest that there is significant energy potential in our geothermal resources. Even more importantly,

however, they indicate that it may be possible for us to produce geothermal energy without affecting or compromising the World Heritage Status of the Pitons Management Area, in which the Sulphur Springs fall.

It is still early in the life of this project, but if we keep to the current schedule, we will dig the exploratory wells in 2018 and be in a position to generate geothermal energy sometime around 2024.

Simultaneously, we are pursuing developments in wind energy and solar photovoltaic energy. The data from the test tower in the vicinity of the Bordelais Correctional Facility suggest that we are on target to develop a 12 Mega Watt wind farm in this area. At current consumption levels, this will meet twenty percent of our peak demand for electricity. We expect construction on the wind farm to start somewhere toward the end of 2016 or the beginning of 2017. With respect to solar energy, Saint Lucia Electricity Services Ltd. (LUCELEC) has initiated the process for inviting tenders for the construction of a 3.2 Mega Watt utility-scale solar photovoltaic farm in Vieux Fort South. This will add another 5 percent to the contribution of renewables to our national electricity matrix.

Misyé, Pwézidan, Misyé Speaker,

Lanné pasé, anchay dévlopman pwan kou o nivo entènasyonal-la èk ti péyi Sent Lisi nou-an té la pami tout sé go pitja ségo peyi-a. Si janmen nou té vlé pwèv ki Sent Lisi pa manchòt, nou touvé pwèv sala an gwan kontwibousyon fèt pa Minis-nou pou Dévlopman Diwab, Enèji, Syans èk Tèknoloji an go Konfèwans-la ki té tjenn a Pawi, an Fwans, pou négosyé an Awanjman nèf ki kay mennajé sé go chanjman klimatik-la ki kay pwann kou oliwon latè-a, sitou asou mannyè sé chanjman sala kay afèkté lavi èk mòd lavi lézabitan sépiti zil latè-a.

Vwéman, pititès pa maladi. Sent Lisi moutwé konminoté entènasyonal-la ki, tout piti kon nou piti, tout mwayen kon nou mwayen, nou sa chanjé sa ka pasé asou latè-a. Nou sa fè sa, gwas a entelijans-nou, abilité-nou, pasyon-an nou ni pou èksélans, épi mannyè-a nou sa doubout pou kò-nou, épi tjenn pwomès-nou menm si lézòt hédi kò-yo dèyè.

Pwensip-nou sé pa pawòl tousèl èk anyen di fèt. An ling di chanjman klimatik pa èkzanp, nou ja koumansé pwan démach pou bésé asou kantité lwil péyi-a ni pou sèvi pou podwi ilèktwisité. Nou ka kontiné twavo ki té ja koumansé plisyè lanné pasé pou sondé tè-a oliwon Souf-la an Soufouyè pou détèminé si la ni asé vapè pou podwi ilèktwisitéékonomikman. Mé nou ja détèminé ki, fòs van-an an wèt Bodlé-a, pé podwi ven pousan ilèktwisité-a nou kay bizwen-an. Epi an Vyé Fò, LUCELEC ja koumansé démach pou bati an lisin ki kay sèvi sòlèy-la pou podwi ilèktwisité.

## **BUILDING NATIONAL PRIDE**

Mr President, Mr Speaker, building a society that is strong, resilient and ready to take on the world requires a people with conviction, imagination, and confidence. It requires citizens who are at peace with themselves and with each other. Put simply, the society must know itself. Building national pride, defining oneself is not an activity of vanity or parade. It is essential to building character and self-worth in our people. Each person must have sense of place, sense of self, sense of history, so that they may have sense of direction. In the triangulation of life, one must have these self-identifiers upon which we can take our mark along the journey.

The efforts of achieving this call for strong institutions which project the national patrimony, the national inheritance, and the positive culture of a people. It requires building an image with a mix of inward and outward perspectives. It is an exercise in learning, and relearning, in discovering and rediscovering, in defining and redefining.

We have seen efforts in this regard take form over the past few years in the areas of cultural and heritage development. We can now sing in our own mother-tongue, our national anthem. We are projecting confidence and vigour in embracing our Kwéyòl language. Through the expression of film such as produced by Kendal John, we are discovering who we are.

My Government is committed to improving the infrastructure available for productions and development of the Creative Industries. It will, in the coming year, pursue the efforts that are underway to establish a national complex for the development of culture and the performing arts. It is time that our artists are given a home. We will deepen consultation on this to ensure that this new National Cultural Centre will meet the requirements of the current and future practitioners and institutions who will make use of it.

Just last week, through the Saint Lucia National Trust, a national dialogue commenced at the Folk Research Centre on fashioning a National Museum System. To support these efforts, my Government has vested the property known as the Married Women's Quarters at Vigie for the purpose of supporting the National Museum. It is way beyond time for our children to learn their culture and history.

### **ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SIR ARTHUR LEWIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**

Mr President, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members,

The Sir Arthur Lewis Community College is continuing its journey to becoming a University College in keeping with my Government's commitment to raising the standard and quality of in - country education in general and tertiary education in particular. The transformation to a University College acknowledges the need to expand tertiary education provision to a wider segment of the population and to enhance the quality of the human resource which will undergird our national development efforts.

It is anticipated that legislation establishing the University College will be laid before this Honourable House during the 2016-2017 academic year to enable the first entrants to register in August 2017 for the institution's own Bachelor's Degree in Business, Education, Humanities, Social Sciences and Nursing. It will of course take a few years for the institution to be fully established as it consolidates its programme offerings and improves the quality and level of its administrative structure, its physical plant, its staffing and support services. The cost of operating an institution of that nature will be significant. The College is in the process of restructuring its operational and financial management systems to meet these needs, but collectively we as a community will need to determine how these future costs will be met.

## **REVIEW OF THE REVISED TREATY OF CHAGUARAMAS**

Mr President, Mr Speaker, I now turn to one regional matter that Saint Lucia will place on its agenda in the coming months.

Saint Lucia, in common with other Caribbean States, committed on July 05, 2001 to the "Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas Establishing the Caribbean Community Including the Caricom Single Market and Economy." Since the signing of the Revised Treaty, the world has changed dramatically. The world that we knew is, frankly, no more.

At the heart of the arrangements governing trade in our region is what has been described as a "Common External Tariff". This tariff is essentially a legally binding agreement to allow all member states to impose identical or uniform rates of duty on items imported from outside of the community that is, from third countries, in a bid to protect regional domestic production and trade within the Community.



My Government believes that the time has come to review the Common External Tariff to determine whether protection should continue to be available to some products manufactured in our region. Saint Lucia cannot continue to protect some regional products to the detriment of its people. My Government is also of the view that the rates of duty ascribed to some products need to be revised and that greater flexibility should be given to member states in adjusting rates of duty on certain products in periods of economic stress or adjustment.

My Government hopes to place these issues on the agenda of the appropriate and relevant institutions of Caricom in the coming weeks, as part of the review of the Common External Tariff scheduled to start by July this year.

### **OTHER LEGISLATIVE MEASURES**

Mr President, Mr Speaker, it will be observed that My Government has not, so far, announced new legislative measures or intentions for this new session of Parliament. Honourable Members will undoubtedly agree that the legislative plate of the Drafting Department of the Attorney General's Chambers is filled with proposed legislative measures from previous Throne Speeches delivered to this Chamber. In any event, with General Elections on the horizon, the Government elected by the common will of the people will have the opportunity to offer to the nation its legislative agenda on the opening of the new Parliament after General Elections.

### **FIXED DATE FOR GENERAL ELECTIONS**

Mr President, Mr Speaker, I commenced this address by referring to electoral matters. It is fitting that I come to a close on that subject.

It cannot have gone unnoticed that with each passing electoral cycle, political campaigning to remain in office or be elected to office seems to commence far ahead of the eventual dissolution of Parliament. The uncertainty over election dates does not fully explain this phenomenon but it can also encourage it. Some have argued

that the system is manifestly unfair as the incumbent party has the advantage of surprise. These days, that argument can hardly stand scrutiny as electoral preparations have become rather public.

There can be no doubt that impending elections can add to uncertainty and indecision by investors, domestic or foreign. Investors often prefer to wait on the outcome of General Elections to make investment decisions. Of course, it does not follow that if fixed election dates are introduced the tendency to early campaigning for General Elections will cease. But the argument about “fairness” cannot be totally dismissed.

It was once thought that fixed election dates were inconsistent with the parliamentary system of governance that we inherited from Westminster. This view has now been discarded, by none other than the United Kingdom Parliament; the cradle of Westminster conventions and practices. That country’s parliament has now enacted what it has described as a “Fixed-term Parliaments Act.”

My Government has noted this development with considerable interest and will also consider the enactment of legislation to introduce fixed election dates.

Misyé Pwézidan, Misyé Speaker

Si sé pou nou dévlopé pèyi-a pou doubout asou kont kòy pami lèzòt, sé pou nou konnèt ki moun nou yé, koté nou sòti, ki koté nou vlé wivé. Sé pou nou konnèt fòs-nou èk fèblès-nou. Sé pou nou dévlopé konfyans-nou, limajinasyon-nou, konviksyon-nou. Sé pou nou kiltivé kilti-nou, apwésyé patwimwann nasyonal-nou, chéwi léwitaj nasyonal-nou. Annou aplodi pwogwé-a nou ja fè-a. Annou bati asou fondasyon sala. Annou ankouwajé tout sa ki ka éséyé bati sé enstitusyon-an ki kay mennen lonnè èk siksé bay pèyi-a, bay pèp-la.

## CONCLUSION: A JOURNEY TOGETHER

Mr President, Mr Speaker, in proroguing one session of parliament and opening a new session, we signal that we commence another chapter of our journey in our lives together, as a nation and as a people.

One of our distinguished poets, Adrian Augier reminds us that,

“The eventual journey of our lives together should be more than a trip, a passage, a mere physical movement through space and changing times. It must also be a spiritual movement, gathering experience, growing in knowledge, acquiring new wisdom and understanding.

As a nation, our collective journey is a process of advancement toward our full potential. Such is the insistence of our motto: The Land, The People, The Light. Such is our statement of ascending faith, of abiding confidence, of determination that we should always rise, aspire, and journey forward and upward toward enlightenment.”

As we stand in tribute to our island, let us, as Adrian says,

“seek out the very best in ourselves and in our neighbour, to acknowledge our progress as one people, as a nation in the world of nations, and in so doing, shine our light so bright that it sustains us in this moment and serve to inspire all coming generations.”

Mr President, Mr Speaker, Members of Parliament, Ladies and Gentlemen, on that note and with the poignant and touching words of Adrian Augier resonating in our minds, it is now my pleasure to formally declare open this Sixth Session of the Tenth Parliament of Saint Lucia.