NationWIDE

THE OFFICIAL NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SAINT LUCIA

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Commonwealth Heads mix with Majesty in Malta!



Commonwealth Heads of Government gathered in Malta last weekend for their 2015 Summit, where they engaged in discussion of mutual issues confronting the large group of former British colonies that represents a significant share of territory and people in the world. Perhaps the biggest achievement for the Caribbean was CARICOM's securing of the position of Commonwealth Secretary General in the person of Dominica's candidate, Baroness Scotland, who has been congratulated by the OECS Commission on behalf of the entire grouping (Stories on Pages 2 and 9). Prime Minister Dr Kenny D. Anthony and other CARICOM and OECS leaders exchanged with Queen Elizabeth II as the nominal head of the Commonwealth before leaving for Paris for the most important Climate Change meeting so far in this Century. The UN's Conference of Parties (COP-21) is still going on, but will hopefully end with positive results to save the planet from destruction. This issue brings you full coverage of all the happenings in Paris to help better understand just how much depends on what's decided this week in Paris (See Pages 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10). The PM is now back home following all the rave reviews that followed last weekend's hosting of the 8th Joint Saint Lucia-Taiwan Trade Partnership Expo that showcased Saint Lucian manufacturing talent and creativity at its quality best. In the meantime, road works continued at home and other infrastructural developments were taking place across the country to ensure 2015 ends in fine spirits for communities island-wide. Enjoy the following pages of full colour coverage of what the Government of Saint Lucia has been doing and saying at home and abroad in the name of people and country. And don't forget to watch NationwideTV on NTN and browse the nationwide Website at *stlucianationwide.com*

Happy Reading! Happy Viewing! Happy Browsing!

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PM back from Malta Commonwealth Heads Summit



Prime Minister Dr Kenny D. Anthony is finally back home after attending the historic 2015 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Malta, where he and other Commonwealth leaders participated in the annual meeting that's always attended by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II of Britain. The Malta Summit saw the election of former UK Attorney General Baroness Scotland as the new Commonwealth Secretary General. In photo, Prime Minister Anthony (third from left in middle row) and other Commonwealth leaders with the Queen (sitting) during the Malta conference.

PM back home from Paris COP-21

Prime Minister Hon. Dr. Kenny D. Anthony is back home from Paris, following his productive participation in the global climate change summit, COP21.

During his time in Paris, Dr. Anthony addressed a plenary session to reiterate the unified position of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on climate change. Saint Lucia's Prime Minister is the CARICOM Lead Head of Government on Climate Change.

Along with CARICOM Chairman, Prime Minister Freundel Stuart of Barbados, Dr. Anthony also met with President of the United States of America, Barack Obama, and Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon.

Among the outcomes from the meeting with President Obama was a pledge of US$30 million to support expansion of the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF) and similar initiatives in the Pacific and Africa, to help vulnerable populations rebuild stronger after climate related disasters.

Said Prime Minister Anthony, "We are not the cause of climate change. Those who have a historical responsibility for the problem have a moral responsibility to fix it. They must help us adapt to the unrelenting and inevitable consequences already unleashed by the greed and abuse of the resources of the planet."

Dr. Anthony also praised the young people of the Caribbean, as well as the region's artistic community, who have been staunch advocates of the thrust towards setting and realising a number of goals related to COP21.

Chairman of the CARICOM Task Force on Climate Change, Saint Lucia's Minister of Sustainable Development Senator Jimmy Fletcher, remained in Paris to continue negotiations over the next 11 days, towards what is hoped will be a legally binding framework for action towards attaining global targets for climate change. (More on COP 21 on Pages 5, 6, 7 and 8)

Editorial

Hopeful Anxiety!

Saint Lucia was abuzz with hope and anxiety at home and abroad this past week. The Prime Minister joined his fellow Commonwealth counterparts at the 2015 Heads of Government Conference in Malta, where the Dominica's candidate, Baroness Scotland, became the new Secretary General of the world grouping of former British colonies on all of the world's five continents.

The PM also led the Saint Lucia delegation to the two-week-long global environmental conference in Paris devoted to Climate Change. There, he addressed some 197 world leaders on behalf of CARICOM, also making a case for all small island developing states (SIDS) to have their concerns addressed.

The Paris conference is only halfway through, but the usual optimism remains. Yet, the cold realities continue to confront the planet and all who inhabit it – humankind, animals and plants. The very air we breathe is affected. The water we need is disappearing.

Developed countries are not immune, as they do suffer from heat waves and cold blasts, air pollution and other Greenhouse Gas effects.

But it is the developing countries that suffer most – and SIDS the worst. Our vulnerability as islands is not being taken seriously enough by those developed countries that pledge a lot and deliver precious little, or nothing.

Each year, Saint Lucia and other Caribbean states attend all the regional and international conferences and watch and listen, while arguing and pleading for those who created (and continue to contribute to the Climate Change problems) to start to take real action to help victim nations address the effects.

The developing nations' pleas for Climate Justice have been falling on deaf ears. But with the projections all pointing to a worsening of the global effects if the world doesn't act now, there is a sense that the COP-21 may yield sensible results through meaningfully greater developed-country contributions to the Green Fund and a decisive cooling down of global temperatures.

The world anxiously awaits the end of the Paris Global Climate Change Summit with the hope that strong actions will replace loud words.

Over nine million Venezuelans to vote for a new legislature tomorrow

Legislative elections will be held tomorrow to choose the members of the Venezuelan Parliament for the term 2015-2020. The National Assembly (Venezuela's unicameral parliament) is currently composed of 165 candidates.

In the upcoming legislative elections, 167 seats in the National Assembly will be renewed. Of that, 164 candidates will be elected in the 24 states and 3 by the indigenous communities.

The Venezuelan Electoral Council has announced that during the month of November, elections will be observed by representatives of organizations and countries such as the Union of South American Nations (Unasur), Southern Common Market (Mercosur), Council of Latin-American Electoral Experts (CELA), Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), Bolivarian Alternative for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), the Mercosur Parliament (Parlasur) and Latin American Parliament (Parlatino).

Authorities and technicians from countries that have signed cooperation agreements with the CNE – such as such as Russia, India, Philippines, Mali and South Korea, UK, Argentina, Ecuador, United States, Colombia, Honduras and Dominican Republic, among others – will also observe.

For tomorrow's parliamentary elections the register of eligible electors is 19,496,296.

Venezuelans living abroad do not participate in the parliamentary elections, as it is a regional constituency election.

The CNE has stated that the new members of the National Assembly should take up their respective posts on January 5, 2016, as stipulated in the Venezuelan Constitution.







Public facilities soon to be constructed at George Charles Boulevard and Ravine Poisson

Story and Photo by Marius Modeste

The Saint Lucia Social Development Fund (SSDF) held the official contract signing ceremony for the construction of the George Charles Boulevard Public Facility and the Ravine Poisson Public Sanitation Facility Replacement last Friday (November 27).

The agreements were signed with R & F Construction Ltd and Integrated Development & Construction Ltd and in both instances the SSDF obtained funding from the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) to provide public sanitation facilities for the host communities.

Acting Prime Minister and Parliamentary Representative for Castries East Hon. Philip J. Pierre said the facilities are necessary to help improve the overall well being and health of the residents.

The New construction of 900 square-feet building at Marchand will be on 4,235 square feet of land acquired by Government. It will house six toilets – two each for male and female and one each for differently-able persons.

There will also be six laundry tubs two Male and female change rooms and showers, a 2,000 -gallon water storage tanks and pump apparatus for each facility, to harvest rain water for the first time.

For the first time too, a public facility will have Hot and Cold water installations, along with 108.08 square feet of Wheelchair Access Ramps.

Each "anti- vandal and low maintenance" sanitary facility will have one caretaker and will be managed by the Castries Constituency Council with twenty-four hours service.

Welcoming the building of the new facility for Marchand, Castries East MP Hon. Philip J. Pierre said, "I am happy today to be able to deliver on a 14-year-old promise to address a problem that existed long before I became parliamentary representative.

He called upon the community to take care of the facility and not let anyone destroy it "and not be misled by those who do not want to see the community improve."

Minister of Social transformation the Hon. Harold Dalsan said, "The new Ravine Poisson Public Facility will replace the over-fifty-year-old current structure, which is inadequate for the high number of users."

He added that the new structure will have the same facilities as that at Marchand and will be built on 3,268 square feet of land at a cost of $496,694.31.

Minister Dalsan went on to say: "The two structures will cost over one million dollars, most of which is grant funds, so please take care of it. Jobs will be created here, as we seek to serve the daily users."

A total of over 70 residents will use the Marchand facility and 300 are expected to benefit from the Ravine Poisson facility.

The facilities will be equipped with hot and cold water, and access for persons with disabilities has been considered in the designs.

Mr Dalsan said that the needs assessment conducted by the SSDF indicated the communities chosen for the projects.

According to Joachim Henry, Executive Director of SSDF, work is expected to start as early as next week and construction is expected to be completed within the next six months.



SSDF Executive Director Joachim Henry (left) and Castries South East Constituency Council Chairman Eustace Monrose (centre) said at the contract signing ceremony that the Ravine Poisson facility will help improve the overall well being and health of residents. At right is CEO of Integrated Development and Construction Ltd Sebastian Albertini.

Fond Cacao residents welcome new road under construction

Government is getting full praise for attending to the needs of one part of Babonneau where residents have been complaining about the condition of their road. Some of the residents of Cacao in Babonneau, who have lived there for as many as 20 years, recalled that this was the first time that their road has been attended to since they have been residing in that community.

On Thursday 26th November 2015, the Ministry of Infrastructure, Port Services and Transport hosted a community meeting to discuss the imminent construction of one (1) km of concrete road and road furniture in Fond Cacoa, Babonneau.

In attendance were Parliamentary Representative Hon. Alvina Reynolds, Permanent Secretary Mrs. Allison A. Jean and Engineer of the Ministry of Infrastructure Ms. Mary Augustin.

Permanent Secretary Mrs. Allison A. Jean reminded the residents that the new road was being built to enhance access and motorability and implored the residents to take ownership.

She also informed the residents that there are more needs to be met than the available resources allows the Ministry of Infrastructure to attend to, and therefore, residents must assist in maintenance of what they are now receiving. Addressing the residents, Parliamentary Representative Hon. Alvina Reynolds expressed on behalf of the residents' her appreciation for this new road project.

She clearly recollected that at her last Town Hall meeting with Fond Cacao Residents, the issue of the road was their main concern; and ever since she made strong representation to her colleague Minister to consider their request for rehabilitation of the road.

The residents expressed very favorable testimonials of the new road construction, from how they can now purchase a new vehicle, to hopes of seeing the Mini Buses returning to the community; they anticipate increases in property values and a means for improving their social and economic conditions. Rehabilitation of the Fond Cacao road commenced on Monday November 30 and the new road is being built through a finance-and-build arrangement at a cost of $1.64 Million.



Residents of Fond Cacao in Babonneau were very grateful for the efforts of the Government of St. Lucia and the Ministry of Infrastructure, Port Services and Transport to provide improved road conditions in their small community.



Works on the Cacao Road have started and residents are looking forward to completion…

Road repairs under way in Cedar Heights

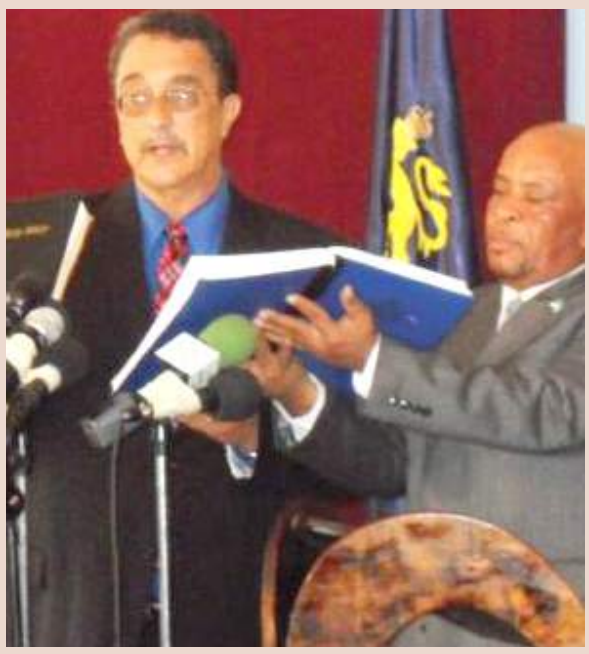


The Ministry of Infrastructure, Port Services and Transport commenced road repairs in Cedar Heights, Vieux Fort, on Thursday (3rd December), which will last for six weeks. Consequently, residents and motorists are advised to pay attention to the warning and directional signs. Motorists are advised to drive with due care and caution.

FLASHBACK:

When PM was sworn-in a third time, four years ago!

Four years ago -- at exactly 12:38pm on November 30, 2011 -- Hon. Dr. Kenny D. Anthony was sworn in (for the third time) as Prime Minister of Saint Lucia. He thanked the people of Saint Lucia for the trust and confidence they placed in him and the Saint Lucia Labour Party by putting them back into the seat of governance. Speaking immediately after taking the oath of office Prime Minister Anthony said that there were many challenges ahead for his government, challenges that no single political party can face alone. In a plea to the people of Saint Lucia, he asked for strength and wisdom to manage the task of running the country, noting that "No matter the difficulties that lay ahead, together we can face them and resolve them." Photo shows the PM being sworn-in by the then Cabinet Secretary.



Nationwide News in Brief

Government and opposition MPs keeping a close watch on proposed new East Coast Highway

Government and opposition MPs are keeping a close watch on the proposed new East Coast Highway that will link Gros islet to Vieux Fort.

Stantec Consulting, a Canadian firm, made a recent presentation to Parliamentarians whose constituencies would be impacted by the proposed road.

The Parliamentarians also had an opportunity to question the proposals presented and to also make suggestions.

The Parliamentarians in attendance included Hon. Emma Hippolyte, Hon. Alvina Reynolds, Hon. Guy Joseph and Hon. Edmund Estephane – representing Gros Islet, Babonneau, Castries South East and Dennery, respectively.

The presentation made by Stantec Consulting Ltd. highlighted the work and consultations held so far.

The presentation also showed alignment/route options to achieve the project objectives.

Minister for Infrastructure Hon. Philip J. Pierre, expressed his satisfaction that the results of the study presented thus far adequately satisfied the requirements which were outlined when the project was conceptualized.

Gros Islet road back to normal after 'sink hole' is filled!

The road to Gros Islet has finally been reopened, much to the satisfaction of motorists and pedestrians plying the Castries to Gros Islet highway.

For a couple weeks traffic to Gros Islet was diverted from Morne Giraux through other routes to the northern town and surrounding areas after being closed to vehicular traffic following the collapse of a culvert.

The collapsed culvert, near the JQ Mall at Rodney Bay, had caused difficulties for everyone traveling from Bay gardens to Gros Islet Town, Bueausejour and Cap Estate.

The road was quickly repaired by the ministry of Social transformation and reopened from 6pm yesterday, opening the way for a resumption of the free flow of traffic between Castries and Gros Islet.

World AIDS Day 2015 observed here

World AIDS Day was observed here on Tuesday and regional health officials called on Saint Lucians and other Caribbean people to continue to strive to make the Caribbean AIDS Free.

The Caribbean reports the second highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the world, after Sub-Saharan Africa.

In 2013, 250,000 adults and children were estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS in the Carib-bean and 12,000 new infections were projected for that same year.

Regional health officials say that despite this, the Region has recorded success in reducing deaths due to HIV/AIDS and in prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

They note that although significant gains have been made that have helped the region to turn the tide against this globally devastating disease, challenges still remain --and efforts must continue to be made to sustain and improve upon the progress that has been achieved.

Saint Lucia and Caribbean urged by UN to aim for 'Zero AIDS/HIV'

The theme for World AIDS Day 2011 to 2015 has been "Getting to zero". This means zero new HIV infections, zero AIDS-related deaths and zero stigma and discrimination.

Countries are encouraged to ensure that the rights of people living with HIV and AIDS are not violated and that discrimination on the basis of HIV and AIDS is not only reduced, but ultimately eliminated.

The officials say, however, that the only way to do reduce AIDS infections in the Caribbean to zero is to make sure that everyone knows their HIV status and ensures that their status is managed properly, to prevent the spread of new infections.

Government and Opposition Parliamentarians discuss joint approach to AIDS/HIV fight

A group of Parliamentary Representatives from the Government and Opposition here has been discussing and agreeing on how to eliminate AIDS and HIV across the Caribbean.

The local parliamentarians participated in a special session here last Friday, ahead of yesterday's observance of World Aids Day, focusing on what they can do to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030.

In her presentation, Health Minister Alvina Reynolds underscored that St Lucia has continued to make great progress, as it is is one of seven Caribbean countries in line to be certified as having eliminated mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

Dr Edward Greene, the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for HIV in the Caribbean, appealed to Parliamentarians to adopt a bipartisan approach to the elimination of AIDS and HIV in Saint Lucia and the Caribbean.

The Parliamentarians agreed to use World AIDS Day yesterday to advocate for this year's theme "Ending AIDS for Sustainable Development"

Among those who participated in the discussions were: House Speaker Peter Foster, Deputy Speaker Dr. Desmond Long, Opposition Leader Dr. Gale Rigobert, former Prime Minister Stephenson King, Education Minister Dr. Robert Lewis, Tourism Minister Lorne Theophilus, Senator Dr. Stephen King and Senator Dr. Kentry Jn. Pierre.

Poultry farmers always aiming for higher standards

Poultry farmers in Saint Lucia who are members of the Poultry Industry Cooperative Society have set their sights on exporting to overseas markets.

However, the President of the Cooperative, Isaac Alphonse, says an inhibiting factor is appropriate certification.

He says there are certain standards to be met before producers can export and until they are certified meet the requirements of the importing countries, they will not be able to do so.

As far as he was concerned, Saint Lucia produces chicken that is second-to-none in the Caribbean and some of what is produced in the United States, albeit smaller.

Alphonse noted that local chicken is also free of antibiotics and growth hormones.

Responding to critics who have consistently claimed that local producers are unable to supply the Saint Lucia market, the President said the critics would say anything.

He disclosed that local producers currently have the capability to satisfy forty percent of the Saint Lucia market, but want to develop the sector gradually with the collaboration of importers and the government.

Currently there are an estimated 110 to 115 poultry producers and about seventy are members of the Poultry Industry Cooperative Society

DPP says no one has been cleared in IMPACS probe!

Director of Public Prosecutions, Victoria Charles-Clarke, says no one has been cleared, vindicated or exonerated in the IMPACS probe.

Responding to claims she had cleared those accused of extrajudicial police killings, the DPP said she never said or indicated anyone was cleared or that there would be no prosecutions.

Mrs Charles Clarke said all she said was that she had not been furnished with the evidence, which she has now requested. The DPP, who summoned a news conference last week to reveal her position on the IMPACS report, says there's a lot of "misconception and misinterpretation" of what she had said.

Clarifying this is not the end of the Road for the IMPACS report, the DPP said the process is still in train. She insists she never indicated that anyone has been cleared, because there has been no finding.

Human Rights Lawyer says DPP should have done better!

The fallout continues to roll out from the disclosures by the island's Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) regarding the IMPACS Report.

Human Rights lawyer Mary Francis says DPP Victoria Charles Clarke tried to pass the buck by blaming procedural lapses, but this amounts to delaying justice for the families of the victims – some of whom she represents.

The human rights advocate says the families of the victims have been awaiting justice for over five years and the DPP's failure to do anything with or about the report given to her eight months ago is regrettable.

Ms Francis says she called in October for the DPP to say something about the report, but the DPP ignored all similar calls.

The human right lawyer says she fully understands and accepts that the DPP's position is an independent one, but she feels the DPP should also recognize her office should be accountable as well, to the people.

Ms Francis says she will continue to press for the families of the victims to get justice from the IMPACS Report.

Awards mark end of 2015 Police Week

Police officers of all ranks and police stations in different parts of the island are in good spirits this week after being awarded for their performances in the past year.

Last Sunday, The Royal Saint Lucia Police Force held its annual awards at the Official Residence of the Prime Minister at Vigie. During the ceremony police officers, departments and stations were recognized and awarded for exemplary duty and service in 2015.

The awardees for the night included: Support Staff of the year – Nestor Louis (from the Police Garage); Band Officer of the year – Errol Fontenelle; Special Reserve Officer of the year – SRP 48 Williams; Special Police Constable of the Year – SPC 259 Cherubin (from the Traffic Unit);

Constable of the year – WPC 239 Nysa Augustin (from the Vulnerable Persons Team); and Corporal of the year – WCPL 562 Sylvina Augustin-James (from the Community Relations Branch, Vieux Fort).

The Sergeant of the year is Sgt 708 Shervon Mathews (from the Complaints Unit); Inspector of the year is Inspector Terry Bradley (from the Babonneau Police Station); Gazetted Officer of the year is Acting Superintendent Sylvia Desir (from the Office in charge of Discipline).

The Commissioners Award went to Constable 666 Chester Simeon from the Drug Unit and 688 Dayne Williams from the Special Services Unit.

The Police Department of the year was the Traffic Department and the Station of the year is the Soufriere Police Station. The awards ceremony also marked the end of Police Week 2015 here.



The Paris 2015 Global Climate Change Conference

Hollande tells Climate Change conference he wants to be a voice for small countries

The United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21) opened in Paris Monday with an unprecedented gathering of 150 world leaders. UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon called on the Presidents, Prime Ministers and Heads of States to deliver a universal, meaningful and robust agreement.

"You are here today to write a script for a new future, a future of hope and promise, of increased prosperity, security, and dignity for all," Ban said in his opening address.

He noted that the national climate plans submitted by more than 180 countries ahead of the summit cover close to 100 percent of global emissions.

"This is a very good start but we need to go much faster, much further if we are to limit the global temperature rise below two degrees Celsius," the UN Secretary General said.

"The science has made it plainly clear that [even a two degree increase] will have serious consequences for food and water security, economic stability and international peace and security.

"That is why we need a universal, meaningful and robust agreement here in Paris."

Negotiators from the 15-member Caribbean Community (CARICOM) are intent on striking a deal to keep the global temperature rise at 1.5 degrees of pre-industrial levels.

Across the region over the past several weeks, countries have been rolling out their "1.5 to Stay Alive" campaign to raise awareness about the effects of climate change, while building momentum for the region's negotiating position at COP21.

Several Caribbean leaders, including Gaston Browne of Antigua and Barbuda; Perry Christie of The Bahamas; Freundel Stuart of Barbados; Dr. Keith Mitchell of Grenada; Dr. Timothy Harris of Saint Kitts and Nevis; and Dr. Kenny Anthony of Saint Lucia were present at today's opening.

"We have never faced such a test. A political momentum like this might not come again. Neither have we encountered such a great opportunity," Ban told the leaders.

He continued, "You have the power to secure the well being of this and succeeding generations.

"I urge you to use up your ministers and negotiators to choose the path of compromise and consensus and if necessary, flexibility.

"Bold climate action is in the national interest of every single country represented at this conference.

"The time for brinksmanship is over. Let us build a durable climate regime with a clear rule of the road that all countries can agree to follow.

"Paris must mark a decisive turning point. We need the world to know that we are headed to a low emissions, climate resilient future and there is no going back."

The host of COP21, French President François Hollande, said he has been travelling to small countries which are the worst affected by climate change -- and he wants to be their voice.

He said, "Biodiversity and the very diversity of our planet are at stake. From this we can conclude that the agreement must be universal, differentiated and binding."



The much anticipated United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change began with UN Secretary General telling world leaders that the conference must mark a decisive turning point.

Hollande met with Caribbean leaders in Martinique, in May.

Secretary General of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Dr. Didacus Jules said it was unprecedented given that France would be the chair of COP21.

"He (President Hollande) wants this to be a success and used the opportunity to champion the voices of small island states given the French Republic's presence in the OECS.

"We felt that it was really a useful forum for having the voice of the Caribbean in this wider sense heard," Jules said then.

"That's one of the reasons that we are now pressing hard with the French authorities to champion the cause of small island states so that the larger countries, those who are the biggest causes of the impacts on the environment take heed to what the scientists are saying."

Noting that an agreement must be reached by December 12, President Hollande said developed countries must take responsibility.

"They are the ones who for years emitted the largest amounts of greenhouse gasses," he said.

He continued, "Emerging countries must accelerate their energy transition and developing countries must be supported in adapting to the impacts of climate change hence the need to release and secure financing to promote technology transfer.

"The third condition for an agreement in Paris is that all our societies in their vast plurality and diversity get moving. All local leaders, investors, economic and social actors must understand that things have changed. This is the key to overcoming this climate challenge."

Mr. Hollande said to resolve the climate crisis, good wishes and declarations of intent will not be enough.

"We are on the brink of a breaking point. Paris must be the start of a far reaching change.

"We can no longer consider nature as a commonplace inexhaustible pool of resources there for us to use as we wish," he said.

"On this first day of the conference we are up against a challenge. This challenge is the sum of our selfishness, our perceptions, our resignation.

"This challenge is built on indifference and powerlessness but it is not insurmountable. Everything depends on us.

"The hope of all humanity rests on your shoulders. This is why we have met."

According to Hollande, "This is why Paris is an exceptional occasion. We are going to decide in a few days the future for several decades.

"The greatest danger is not that we aim too high and we miss. The greatest danger is that we aim too low and that we hit it," Mr. Hollande added.

Caribbean leaders make case for small islands in Paris

Caribbean leaders addressed fellow global leaders gathered in Paris at the United Nations climate change conference earlier this week and stressed that the unique characteristics and special circumstances of small island states must be fully recognized and included as a cornerstone of the new agreement expected next week.

The leaders said the voices of the most vulnerable and those with the least capacities must be taken into account in the final document.

"If I am found to speak with passion, it can only be explained by the fact that I represent a Small Island Developing State which, like others, is characterized by its unique circumstances and special vulnerabilities," Saint Lucia's Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony said.

He noted that emissions reduction pledges so far submitted indicate that the planet will warm by 2.7 degrees Celsius by the end of the century.



The Caribbean leaders stressed that the voices of the most vulnerable and those with the least capacities must be taken into account in the final agreement, they stressed.

He said, "The devastating effects of climate change on our countries are well known and documented, yet despite irrefutable evidence and scientific data there appears to be a sinister attempt to downplay and negate the unique vulnerabilities of our stake in the outcome of COP21."

Barbados Prime Minister Freundel Stuart voiced concern that the collective mitigation actions defined in the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) submitted are not enough to achieve the 1.5 degrees Celsius global goal that is the aspiration of Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

He said, "This shortcoming challenges us to take a sober look at our current predicament and in the coming days define the path to success for the planet earth and for all of its peoples.

"Barbados' Intended Nationally Determined Contributions commits us to doing our part as a small island developing state while also trying to make the required adjustments to cope with current and future climate challenges."

Prime Minister Dr. Timothy Harris of Saint Kitts and Nevis said his country, like other SIDS, has experienced many climate-related changes such as sea level rise, extreme weather events, prolonged and severe droughts and disruption to its reefs, coastlines and agriculture.

He explained, "The dangers of climate change are real and present. The threat is existential.

"Greenhouse gas emissions from small island states like Saint Kitts and Nevis are negligible, yet we continue to be adversely and disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change.

"As responsible global citizens we are already acting locally to reduce our national carbon footprint even further."

Grenada's Prime Minister and Chairman of the OECS Authority Dr. Keith Mitchell said COP21 represents a defining moment in world history.

He described the situation as historic as the world moves towards saving the planet and preserving life on earth for all its inhabitants and generations to come.

"A defining moment to address the scourge of the impacts of climate change has come. It is a moment to commit to a paradigm shift and to set the path for a different future - a future characterized by low carbon emissions and climate resilient development consistent with a sustainable development pathway," he said.

He added, "We must have sufficient ambition as called for by the undisputed science to guarantee that the increase in global average temperature must remain below 1.5 degrees above the pre-industrial levels. We must commit to this as the overall goal of the new agreement."

Grenada has been identified among the most vulnerable countries with the least capacity to cope with the ravages of climate change.

The Paris 2015 Global Climate Change Conference

Saint Lucians star with Caribbean artistes in Climate Justice theme song released for Paris conference



The song stresses the need for greater climate justice and for a shared commitment to combat climate change.

Saint Lucia made a special and different contribution to the climate change Conference of Parties (COP21) that opened in Paris Monday.

To accompany and support the efforts of Caribbean delegates in the difficult negotiations of the next two weeks, Caribbean artists have released a theme song that calls on the world to recognize and respect the legitimate claims of small islands in the face of climate change.

With lyrics written by Kendel Hippolyte and music composed and produced by Ronald Boo Hinkson, this song stresses the need for greater climate justice and for a shared commitment to combat climate change.

This project has brought together several of the Caribbean's greatest and most conscious artists, as part of a regional campaign spearheaded by Panos Caribbean in collaboration with the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre and other regional partners.

Artists performing on the song include Banky Banx from Anguilla, BelO from Haiti, E.sy Kennenga from Martinique, David Rudder from Trinidad, Aaron Silk from Jamaica, Jessy Leonce, Ace Loctar, Shayne Ross, Taj Weekes and Deridee Williams from Saint Lucia.

"How the song all came together is still astounding", said Kendel Hippolyte.

"Each person gave time, talent, their art, and their hearts for Caribbean civilization - because that's what we're fighting to save."

Over the past few weeks, under the motto "1.5 to Stay Alive," artists, media workers, civil society organizations and government officials have worked together to raise awareness of the importance of the negotiations now taking place in Paris and of their major implications for the Caribbean.

One of the messages conveyed in this campaign, which was launched by Saint Lucia's Minister of Sustainable Development Dr. James Fletcher in October, is the need for the COP21 to deliver a legally binding agreement, a transparent and verifiable agreement that limits carbon emissions and ensures that global temperatures do not rise more than 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

The campaign, also seeks to highlight the fact that it is the poorest countries, communities and people that are the most vulnerable to climate change, and that the fight against climate change is also the fight against poverty and for social justice.

The song is available for listening and downloads for public broadcast ath-ttps://soundcloud.com/panos-caribean

Prime Minister Anthony says he left Saint Lucia's business in capable hands in Paris!



Prime minister Dr. Kenny Anthony

Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony has met with U.S. President Barack Obama, according to PM Anthony's Facebook page post dated Wednesday said:

Greetings everyone from Paris where, as you may know, am attending COP 21.

Yesterday, together with Prime Freundel Stuart of Barbados and three other leaders from Small Island Developing States, I met President Obama to discuss our concerns and issues.

Prime Minister Stuart and I were representing CARICOM. It was a good meeting!

On this issue, President Obama's heart is in the right place. He told us that he understood our concerns as he too is "an island boy" -- a reminder that he spent a considerable part of his childhood in Hawaii.

Among other things, I told the conference that "We are not the cause of climate change. Those who have a historical responsibility for the problem have a moral responsibility to fix it. They must help us adapt to the unrelenting and inevitable consequences already unleashed by the greed and abuse of the resources of the planet."

I leave Paris for home tomorrow and the negotiations will be left in the capable hands of our indefatigable, committed and passionate Minister of Sustainable Development, Jimmy Fletcher.

Together with our team, he faces eleven days of grueling and complex negotiations with big and small. They will need our support and encouragement, distant as we may be from the theatre of the negotiations."

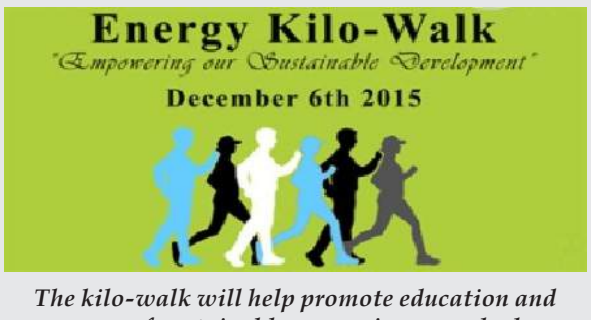
Energy Kilo-Walk tomorrow

The Ministry of Sustainable Development, Energy, Science and Technology will host an Energy Kilo-Walk tomorrow (Sunday).

A new and exciting commemorative activity for Energy Awareness Week 2015, held under the theme "Empowering our Sustainable Development," the kilo-walk will help promote education and awareness of sustainable energy issues and advance the use of sustainable energy locally.

The Energy Kilo-walk is a regional event planned by CARICOM to raise awareness of sustainable energy. As a result, the Ministry intends to utilize the walk as an opportunity to sensitize the population on energy-related matters, in particular, some of the current energy initiatives undertaken by the Ministry.

The walk will commence at the Caribbean Cinemas car park and continue to the Dame Pearlette Louisy School, up through Morne Serpent, Grande Riviere, Corinth, back unto the Castries/Gros Islet Highway and end at Caribbean Cinemas.



The kilo-walk will help promote education and awareness of sustainable energy issues and advance the use of sustainable energy.

Participants will reassemble at the car park where they will be treated to prizes, entertainment, educational material on energy, and a mini exhibition of energy products.

The event will begin at 6 a.m. and end at 12 p.m. Registration is free. For information contact Bethia Thomas at 451.8746 or bethia.thomas@govt.lc

Martinique hosts Wider Caribbean Pavilion at COP 21 in Paris

Martinique leads a 150 m² pavilion along with the Caribbean countries of CARICOM.

Being one of the regions most affected by global warming, Caribbean countries want to draw attention to the emergency situation Caribbean countries and the region's population (40 million of inhabitants) find themselves in.

For the countries participating in the Caribbean Pavilion, the purpose is to be actors of change by highlighting innovative initiatives implemented in their region.

A program of side events/conferences and memorable cultural times are also scheduled in the Pavilion.

Leading players of climate action such as the French Development Agency, Energy Agency of Martinique, Caribbean Development Bank, Caribbean Community Climate Change Center, CARICOM, Interreg IV Caraibe, OECS and Regional Council of Martinique are taking part in the Wider Caribbean Pavilion.

The Paris 2015 Global Climate Change Conference

UK joins new international clean energy initiative



The US and French Presidents with other world leaders in Paris...

On Wednesday in Paris, Prime Minister David Cameron joined world leaders to launch Mission Innovation at the UN Climate Change Conference.

Mission Innovation is a flagship international initiative which aims to accelerate clean energy investment and innovation in order to provide reliable and affordable energy for all.

The Prime Minister attended the launch event alongside Presidents Obama and Hollande, President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker, ministers and 16 other heads of government as well as Bill Gates.

Commenting on Mission Innovation, the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change Amber Rudd said:

'It's clear we need to take urgent action to tackle climate change and move to a low carbon future to ensure our long-term economic security, that's why I want a global deal in Paris which will help to create a level playing field for businesses and drive innovation.

Investing more in R&D by both governments and the private sector is critical to ensure we harness and support the creativity, ingenuity and entrepreneurship of our universities and businesses in tackling the challenge of making clean affordable energy widely available.'

Mission Innovation will help to identify where research, investment and development funding is most needed to bring down the cost of clean energy so that it offers good value for money to hardworking families and businesses at home and abroad. As part of our efforts to tackle climate change, supporting further innovation is vital to promoting economic growth and strengthening our energy security. This is also a significant step that will facilitate our transition into a global low carbon economy.

The costs of low carbon technology have fallen significantly in recent years – the costs of solar alone are down 80% since 2008 – but more must be done to drive the costs down further to enable countries to raise their mitigation ambition in the future.

Under Mission Innovation, 20 countries will undertake to double their state-directed spending on clean energy research and development over the next five years. As part of our commitment to the goals of Mission Innovation; the UK has set out plans to double our central government spending on clean energy technology research, development and demonstration programmes that support Mission Innovation's objectives.

Participating countries will work together to increase collaboration on transformational projects.

In addition, a group of 29 venture capitalists led by Bill Gates have also pledged to invest substantial amounts in potentially transformational early stage technologies.

UK programmes will include support for a range of research and development projects from early stage, disruptive ideas through to partnerships with private sector investors to test and prove new technologies in real world applications as an enabler of widespread deployment. We expect that our programmes will accelerate technology development that will have benefits for developed and developing countries alike. As part of that, around £100m of our total spend in 2020 will be particularly focused on projects that will help address the energy needs of developing countries and promote low carbon development. ***(More on Page 8)***

US President and Caribbean leaders meet at Paris Climate Change Summit



The Heads of State of small island countries convened with US President Barack Obama on climate negotiations.

US President Barack Obama underscored the impact of climate change on the world's most vulnerable countries in a meeting with the Heads of State of small island countries on Tuesday.

The 40-odd countries in the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) negotiating group at the COP 21 climate conference face rising sea levels that threaten to submerge their livable land.

The meeting with President Obama, attended by the leaders of Saint Lucia, Barbados, Kiribati, and the Marshall Islands, among others, was intended to elevate the role of the countries in the Paris negotiations.

AOSIS countries have been pushing for more ambitious action to stem greenhouse gas emissions at the Paris conference. Current projections suggest that some countries may disappear entirely within decades without action.

"These nations are not the most populous nations, they don't have big armies," Obama said. "But they have a right to dignity and sense of place."

Obama also said he had a special connection to the island countries given his time in Hawaii and Indonesia as a child.

"I'm an island boy," he said, conceding that some of the resolutions arrived at in Paris must be legally binding on the international community.

Caribbean nations have been pressing for a legally binding agreement to emerge from COP21. Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Chairman, Prime Minister Freundel Stuart of Barbados and Lead Head of Government on Climate Change, Dr. Kenny Anthony of Saint Lucia, also represented the region in a meeting between United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and leaders of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Monday.

Chairman of the CARICOM Task Force on Climate Change and Saint Lucia's Minister of Sustainable Development Sen. Hon. Dr. James Fletcher, and CARICOM Secretary-General Ambassador Irwin LaRocque joined the heads at the meeting.

What's the carbon footprint of an email?

By Joshua Melvin (AFP)

A long list of seemingly harmless everyday actions contribute to emissions of carbon dioxide (CO2) and other climate-altering greenhouse gases.

Driving a car and flipping a light switch have a clear "carbon footprint" -- much less obvious is the harm caused by sending a simple text message or opening a bottle of water.

Here is the environmental impact of some common activities:

Digital footprint

Sending even a short email is estimated to add about four grammes (0.14 ounces) of CO2 equivalent (gCO2e) to the atmosphere.

To put this into perspective, the carbon output of hitting "send" on 65 mails is on par with driving an average-sized car a kilometre (0.6 of a mile).

The culprits are greenhouse gases produced in running the computer, server and routers but also those emitted when the equipment was manufactured.

It gets worse when you send an email with a large attachment, which puts about 50 gCO2e into the air. Five such messages are like burning about 120 grammes (0.27 pounds) of coal.

Receiving a spam message - even if you do not open it - has an environmental impact of 0.3 gCO2e.

Paper or plastic?

The global carbon footprint from spam annually is equivalent to the greenhouse gases pumped out by 3.1 million passenger cars using 7.6 billion litres (two billion gallons) of gasoline in a year.

Here is something to keep in mind the next time you type in a non-essential Google enquiry: A web search on an energy-efficient laptop leaves a footprint of 0.2 gCO2e. On an old desktop computer, it is 4.5 gCO2e.

And that text message? It comes at a cost of about 0.014 gCO2e.

Plastic grocery bags each have a carbon footprint of 10 gCO2e, but the paper ones are even worse at 40 gCO2e each.

Store-bought bottled water has nearly 1,150 times the emissions attached to it than a glass poured from the tap.

Leisure time

A 500-millilitre (one-pint) bottle is responsible for 160 gCO2e compared to 0.14 gCO2e for tap water.

A large cappuccino comes with a footprint of 235 gCO2e, partly because of the emissions from raising the cow which produced the milk. For a cup of home-made black tea or coffee for which just enough water was boiled, the figure is 21 gCO2e.

The bigger the TV, the bigger the cost in greenhouse-gas emissions.

Watching two hours of tube on a 24-inch (61-centimetre) plasma screen pumps out 440 gCO2e - about the same as driving a car for 1.6 km.

The footprint is 68 gCO2e and 176 gCO2e respectively for two hours watched on a 15- or a 32-inch LCD screen.

A mile of cycling fuelled by a meal of bananas would be responsible for 65 gCO2e, compared to 260 gCO2e for a mile powered by cheeseburgers.

The Diplomatic Courier

Small Islands at risk of sinking!



PM Perry Christies says The Bahamas could vanish due to sea level rise if urgent action is not taken to reverse Climate Change.

Prime Minister Perry Christie is warning that unless urgent actions are taken to reverse the devastating impacts of climate change, the Bahamas might soon be no more.

"With 80 percent of our land within one metre, or five feet, of mean sea level, business as usual with regard to climate change threatens the very existence of the Bahamas as we know it," he said.

Hurricane Joaquin developed from a tropical storm into a near category five hurricane in 39 hours, slamming into the Bahamas in October, and leaving an estimated 100 million dollars in damage to the central and southern islands.

Prime Minister Christie said the damages amount to almost 10 percent of the country's national budget.

"After experiencing Hurricane Joaquin where the sea rose and took weeks to recede, it is beyond doubt that the issue we face is with the rise of the sea level. It threatens our very existence," Christie told the gathering at the UN climate change conference (COP21) underway in Paris.

He added that the experience with the hurricane also shows that existing insurance structures are inadequate and often rely on legalisms which deny legitimate claims.

The Bahamas and other Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are seeing unprecedented droughts, extreme weather events, accelerating sea level rise and other life threatening impacts, and based on the science, more intense impacts are to be expected over time.

Christie said the Bahamas is now more vulnerable to climate change than in the history of that country, adding that already, with the global rise in temperature of less than 1 degree, the Bahamas is experiencing more intense storms and flooding.

"Recognizing that mitigation alone will not protect us, we have made concerted efforts to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change. We have strengthened building codes, built new coastal defenses, and relocated vulnerable communities all through use of our own national resources.

"We have also outlined the actions that the Bahamas will take in its efforts to assume responsibility for the country's greenhouse gas emissions.

"Among them is the development of indigenous renewable energy resources with the goal of increasing the percentage in the energy mix to a minimum of 30 percent by 2030.

Nassau is confident that these actions will minimize the country's already nominal contribution to emissions and hopes to convert these contributions to legally binding commitments that will be captured in an annex to the Paris agreement."

Christie added that the Bahamas is facing growing public and international pressure to adapt to the impacts of climate change and is at the same time expected to pursue a low carbon pathway and increase energy security.

While he agrees that these are all very noble pursuits, he pointed out they are very "expensive and resource intensive."

The Bahamian leader furthered that COP21 must adopt, at the end of next week, an international legally binding agreement under the convention that is in the form of a protocol and is applicable to all parties.

"We must also agree on a long term goal of keeping the average global temperature rise below 1.5 degrees Celsius. The 2 degrees goal which many espoused will lead to the loss of many countries and a 1.5 degree goal is not only desirable, it is achievable and feasible," he said.

"Let us send a clear message to the world that we will fight for countries like the Bahamas to stay on the map into the next century.

"The existential threat to the survival of a number of small island developing states must be explicitly recognized in the Paris Agreement."

OECS Commission congratulates New Commonwealth Secretary General

The OECS Commission has extended congratulations to Dominican-born Baroness Patricia Scotland, on her historic elevation to the post of Secretary General of the Commonwealth.

In extending congratulations on behalf of the Governments and people of the Member States which constitute the OECS, Director General Dr Didacus Jules referred to the feelings of great pride experienced by the people of the region in this achievement by one of its illustrious daughters, and the great expectation by the OECS that under her leadership, the Commonwealth would experience an enhancement in its already positive global impact.



New Commonwealth Secretary General Baroness Scotland.

The Director General noted that while acknowledging that as Secretary General, Baroness Scotland's responsibility would extend to the entire Commonwealth, it would not be unreasonable to expect that under her leadership, the organization would pay even greater attention to the plight of the more vulnerable of its members.

In this regard, he expressed optimism that the Commonwealth will continue to vigorously promote and champion the cause of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Small Vulnerable Economies (SVE's) in general, a cause which in his view, Baroness Scotland would be uniquely placed to understand and to identify with.

The Director General expressed the wish that in this and other areas of mutual interest, the OECS and the Commonwealth would enjoy a close working relationship.

International Day of Persons with Disabilities is A Day for All!



On Thursday, the United Nations and the world celebrate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

The ILO and other international organizations in Geneva have come together to join persons with disabilities in declaring this day A Day for All.

A Day for All invites us to recognize the contributions of disabled persons to our workplaces, our families, our schools and our communities. It also asks us to reaffirm our commitment to welcoming and celebrating disability as part of human diversity. Disability is a fundamental expression of human diversity.

Firstly, because people with disabilities are the world's largest minority, representing some 15 per cent of the global population. And secondly, as persons of disability come from all countries, economic backgrounds and ethnicities, they are arguably the most diverse of all minority groups.

On this day we are reminded that there are still millions of women and men with disabilities who face exclusion from mainstream social, economic and political life. Yet we know from experience that when attitudinal and physical barriers are removed, people with disabilities can be as productive and reliable as those without disabilities.

Many workers' and employers' organizations have long taken a pioneering stand in championing the interests of disabled workers, and recently at the ILO 11 major international companies became the first signatories of the new ILO Global Business and Disability Network Charter.

The Charter expresses their commitment to promoting and including persons with disabilities throughout their operations worldwide.

It has a broad remit: be it from making the company premises and staff communications progressively more accessible to all employees with disabilities, to combating stigma and stereotypes faced by persons with disabilities.

While much has been achieved over the past years and persons with disabilities have gained recognition of their rights by countries around the globe, and with them their rightful place in society, there is also much work ahead. A majority of disabled persons still face barriers to enjoying decent work and a better life.

Today, we renew our commitment to achieving full and equal rights and participation in society for all women and men with disabilities. Working together, we can break down the barriers to decent work, so that every day will be A Day for All.

Activist vows to step up efforts against the death penalty

Human Rights Activist, Mary Francis, has vowed to step up efforts locally to get the death penalty scrapped here.

Francis, who is an Attorney at Law, returned home recently from a Caribbean Regional Conference on the Abolition of the Death Penalty held in Guyana and sponsored by the European Union and the British High Commission.

Francis has observed that the Caribbean is one of the few remaining regions of the world where the Death Penalty is retained, despite the fact that a de facto moratorium on execution of persons convicted of murder presently exists.

"The message to Saint Lucia and other Caribbean Governments is that the right to life cannot be promoted by taking life and on this issue they must show leadership," she has asserted.

Among the conclusions of the Guyana conference was that the death penalty, which is irreversible, brings a risk of executing innocent people.

Participants also agreed that the death penalty is often used in a disproportional manner against the poor, minorities and members of racial, ethnic, political and religious groups.

In addition, they concluded that the death penalty is incompatible with human rights and human dignity

The Diplomatic Courier

Prime Minister attended Major Meetings in Malta and France



The Prime Minister being guided to his seat at the CHOGM 2015 in Malta.

Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Economic Affairs, Planning and Social Security, Hon. Dr. Kenny D. Anthony left the island last week for Malta, where he attended the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

Under the theme of 'Adding Global Value', the meeting ran from November 27-29. Dr. Anthony was accompanied by Permanent Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister, Dr. Cadelia Ambrose.

After the Commonwealth gathering, Dr. Anthony traveled to Paris, France, for the open session of the Conference on Climate Change (COP21) from November 30.

The Prime Minister addressed the Leaders' Summit on Saint Lucia's expectations for the Paris Climate Change Agreement, as well as represented the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in several bilateral meetings with President Barack Obama, United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki Moon and other world leaders.

Prime Minister Anthony, who is CARICOM's Lead Head on Climate Change and Sustainable Development, will be accompanied by Minister for Sustainable Development, Energy, Science and Technology, Senator Hon. Dr. James Fletcher. Dr. Anthony was due to return to Saint Lucia yesterday.

Argentine delegation hosted regional workshop on Regulation of Agricultural Biotechnology



(Left to Right) Dr Veronica Caride - National Director of Agri-food - International Relations of the Argentine Republic, H.E. Luis Beltrán Martínez Thomas - Ambassador of the Argentine Republic in Saint Lucia, Hon. Alva R Baptiste - Minister of External Affairs, International Trade and Civil Aviation of Saint Lucia, Dr Darius Gabriel - Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Production, Fisheries, Cooperatives and Rural Development of Saint Lucia.

On Thursday 26th November 2015, a two-day workshop on the Regulation of Agricultural Biotechnology in Saint Lucia was inaugurated.

This workshop, funded by the FAO and cosponsored by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Production, Fisheries, Cooperatives and Rural Development of Saint Lucia, presented experts from the Argentine Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (MAGyP), the Argentine National Food and Health Quality Service (SENASA), the Argentine National Institute of Agricultural Technology (INTA) and the Argentine National Institute of Seeds (INASE).

The workshop was the first of its kind and is headed by Dr. Veronica Caride, the National Director of Agrifood - International Relations of the Argentine Republic.

Its primary aim was sharing with delegates representing various governments throughout the Caribbean, from Saint Lucia, Grenada, St. Vincent, Dominica, Antigua and Barbuda and Saint Kitts and Nevis, the regulatory framework of the Argentine Republic as it would relate to bio-safety and biotechnology.

The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Production, Fisheries, Cooperatives and Rural Development of Saint Lucia, Dr Darius Gabriel, gave the welcome address and was followed by words of thanks by the Ambassador of the Argentine Republic in Saint Lucia, H.E. Luis Beltrán Martínez Thomas, for all of the effort placed into the workshop.

The floor was then handed over to the Minister of External Affairs, International Trade and Civil Aviation, Hon. Alva R Baptiste who emphasized the importance of the Regulation in Agricultural Biotechnology and Bio-Safety in developing economies as like Saint Lucia.

Caribbean journalists receive training in responsible coverage of children's issues

The OECS Commission, in Collaboration with USAID, OECS Juvenile Justice Reform Project, UNICEF Eastern Caribbean Area, CBU and UNDP, held a media workshop at the Halcyon Rex Cove in Antigua from November 20 to 24, where journalists from the Caribbean region received training in Responsible Coverage of Children's Issues.

Guidelines were given on how to interview children in criminal situations so as not to create any greater risk of harm and stigmatization.

The Ministry of Social Transformation, Local Government and Community Empowerment was represented.

The OECS was represented by media practitioner Mr. Raymond O'Keiffe and OECS Juvenile Justice Reform Representative Mrs. Lyndel Archibald.

Mrs Archibald provided feedback on the training Workshop.

Participants noted there was a need for policy to guide the media in terms of reporting on child issues, and so, the CBU has been engaged to develop a policy document.

The meeting was to get feedback and to develop the framework for a tangible document that the media can work with.

In accordance with the Convention of the Right of the Child, journalists were taught how to protect the identity of children on such issues as Child Sexual Abuse, Child Discrimination, Social Media Exploitation and Neglect.

The Communication Specialist for UNICEF Patrick Knight noted the importance of the workshop.

He said, "The Convention of the Rights of a Child, which was signed 25 years ago, points out the role of the media in the promotion and development of children rights.

"So, when the Caribbean Broadcasting Union approached us with this idea, we thought this was great.

"The media can also work as advocates to protect children's rights."

Media Practitioners were also issued strategies to follow when interviewing a child.

Some of these include: Did the child agree to the photograph or recording? Did you obtain consent? Did the images and sound bites use to illustrate your story appear too sexual? Is the information factual or accurate?

Reporter for Antigua Ms. Elisa Graham emphasized the need for journalist to follow these guidelines so that change can occurs.

"Most of us are just thinking about getting the story, but now we realize it is about child's rights. We learnt skills that would assist us as media practitioners in reporting on children issues.

"We should also report on the positive issues and try to develop the child and all of that so definitely the workshop is very helpful."

Media Practitioners welcome the opportunity to support the Caribbean Media Workers and the Caribbean Broadcasting Union to produce this guide for journalist and broadcasters.

A veritable platform for two-way trade!

Following are remarks by Ray Hua-Wei Mou, Ambassador of the Republic of China (Taiwan) in Saint Lucia, at the Saint Lucia-Taiwan Partnership Trade Exhibition and Charity at the Johnson Centre, Rodney Bay, November 27 2015.

Good Morning, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to the annual Saint Lucia-Taiwan Partnership Trade Exhibition opening ceremony.

This is the 8th consecutive year for Saint Lucia and Taiwan to cooperatively hold the Trade Exhibition since 2007.

The main purpose for Saint Lucia-Taiwan Partnership Trade Exhibition is to create the platform to introduce more of Taiwan products to the Saint Lucian consumers and to promote two-way trade.

With this event, Saint Lucian businessmen and their Taiwanese counterparts will interact with each other to see what mutual benefits they could work out.

I am happy to announce that under joint effort of our two governments, the number of exhibitors in the trade show this year has reached the historical high by over 60.

For that I thank the Ministry of Commerce for its time, manpower and devotion under the leadership of Minister Hippolyte.

Moreover, to make the 2015 Trade Exhibition more meaningful, the Taiwan Embassy cooperates with the Ministry of Social Transformation, Local Government and Community Empowerment to hold fund raising activities for the Community After-School Program during the trade show.

We will have several community youth groups to demonstrate their talents each day during the Exhibition and also set up a "Community After-School Program Booth" to help the public understand the purpose of the program and to encourage them to give a helping hand. For that sake, the Embassy has agreed to donate $5,000 to the program.

In closing, I would like to, once again, extend my heartfelt appreciation to the exhibitors, government officials and all parties involved in making the 2015 Saint Lucia-Taiwan Partnership Trade Exhibition a success.

Thank you for your time, your effort, your participation and cooperation. I wish you all have a great time. I thank you.

Cuba imposes travel permit requirement for doctors to limit brain drain

The Cuban government announced Tuesday that it is reimposing a hated travel permit requirement on many doctors, requiring them to get permission to leave the country in an attempt to counter a brain drain that it blames on the United States.

It is the first major reverse in Cuba's policy of allowing unrestricted travel for its citizens, put in place in 2013 as President Raul Castro allowed new freedoms as part of a broad set of social and economic reforms.

The government announced that health professionals in specialties that have been drained by large-scale emigration in recent years will now be required to get permission from Health Ministry officials in order to leave the country.

The new policy was announced hours after the end of a meeting Monday between US and Cuban negotiators in Washington to address a crisis in Cuban migration, which has reached its highest levels in at least two decades.

Cuba complained that the US said it had no plans to change Cold War-era policies that give automatic legal residency to Cuban immigrants.

Many Cuban doctors cite low pay, poor working conditions and the possibility of well-compensated jobs in other countries as their primary reasons for emigrating.

The Cuban government places the blame on the U.S. policy of granting automatic legal residency to Cuban immigrants, with special fast-track benefits for doctors who abandon government medical missions overseas. (Jamaica Observer)

British Caribbean Chamber of Commerce welcomes UK aid for Tourism and Fishing

The British Caribbean Chamber of Commerce in Saint Lucia has welcomed Prime Minister David Cameron's announcement at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Conference in Malta, of an allocation of more than £5million (EC $20M) towards improving the fishing industry in Saint Lucia and the rest of the Caribbean.

The 25 'small island' Commonwealth recipients will include St Lucia and is aimed geared to help the maritime economy, including tourism, shipping and fishing.

Speaking at the Commonwealth Summit in Malta last Friday, Mr Cameron confirmed that he wanted to help 'make the most of natural maritime advantages' and the Prime Minister unveiled these funds as part of a £26million (EC $105M) regional package.

Meanwhile, John Kennedy, President of the British Caribbean Chamber of Commerce in Saint Lucia, welcomed the announcement.

He said the role of his chamber is to highlight the need to support a strong bilateral bond between the United Kingdom and Saint Lucia through commerce, investment and enterprise.

But for commerce to succeed, he said, there needs to be business development and a business base, as people need to have something to sell to create wealth.

Mr Kennedy said Saint Lucians already know how to fish and what will be really useful is some capital to help develop that sector, and to open new markets.

He said he knows, from his own Company's experience, based near Canaries, that "there is untapped potential in this industry and Canaries is one of the poorest communities on the Island."

Capital input wisely deployed, he says, "will bring new opportunities that can be life-changing for that community."

Mr Kennedy said the British Caribbean Chamber of Commerce in Saint Lucia will continue to lobby for other initiatives, as part of its general campaign to get new capital steams into the Saint Lucian economy.

Clothes Line colours help women break silence on abuse!

The Division of Gender Relations of the Ministry of Health, Wellness, Human Services and Gender Relations last weekend hosted its Clothes line Project at the Vieux Fort Independence Square.

The project is a visual display that bears witness to the violence against women and children. The Clothesline Project comprises T-shirts designed by survivors of abuse and those who have lost loved ones to it. The shirts are hung on a clothesline display to: Honor survivors and memorialize victims, help with the healing process for survivors and people who have lost a loved one to violence, as well as to educate, document, and raise society's awareness about the crimes of violence against women and children.

What the Shirts Represent

The Shirts on the 'Clothesline' represent a wide spectrum of abuse. Although each shirt is unique, a common color coding is generally used to represent the different dimensions of violence against women and children:

- WHITE for women and children who have died as a result of domestic violence
- YELLOW or BEIGE for women and children who have been battered or assaulted
- RED, PINK or ORANGE for women and children who have been raped or sexually assaulted
- BLUE or GREEN for women and children survivors of incest
- PURPLE or LAVENDER for women and children attacked because of their sexual orientation/identification

History of the Project

The Clothesline Project originated with 31 shirts in Hyannis, MA, in 1990 through the Cape Cod Women's Agenda. A small group of women - many of whom had experienced violence in their own lives - designed the visual monument to help transform staggering statistics about violence against women and children into a powerful educational and healing tool. They decided to use a clothesline after discussing how many women in close-knit neighborhoods have traditionally exchanged information over backyard fences while hanging laundry out to dry.



Clothes on a line can speak loud volumes from silence!

The Clothesline Project breaks the silence about violence against women and children by giving a voice to survivors, victims and advocates.

Since 1990, hundreds of Clothesline Projects have emerged worldwide, resulting in tens of thousands of shirt designs bearing witness to violence against women.

PERSONS ATTENDING THE EVENT SHOULD BRING ALONG A PLAIN TSHIRT ON WHICH THEY CAN CREATE A PERSONAL MESSAGE AGAINST ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

The Clothesline Project is an activity for the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence observed annually from November 25 International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women to December 10 World Human Rights Day.

Gros Islet hosted another successful Health Fiesta



Constituents from across Gros islet attended the fair, which offered free health services for all who turned up.

In commemoration of four years in office, the Parliamentary Representative for Gros Islet, Commerce Minister Emma Hippolyte, hosted a health promotion campaign (Health Fiesta) in keeping with the long standing commitment towards a healthy St. Lucia -- and a healthy Gros Islet -- on last Sunday.

The third annual Health Fiesta was preceded by a church service at the St. Joseph the Worker Catholic Church, with lots of persons receiving sental services, testing for Hypertension and STD's, nutrition counseling and facilities to donate blood to the Blood Bank.

The organizers have thanked all who came out for the free screening, as well as the Ministry of Health, the St. Lucia Planned Parenthood Association, the St. Lucia Diabetic and Hypertensive Association, students of the American International Medical University (AIMU), the St. Lucia Blind Welfare Association, the Blood Bank and United and Strong (U&S).



Community health services featured last Sunday in Gros islet.

CARPHA calls on Caribbean Citizens to Avoid Being Bitten By Mosquitoes!



The Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) is again urging persons to take every precaution to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes.

Earlier this month, CARPHA had confirmed five (5) case of Zika virus in a territory of the Caribbean Community.

Zika is a viral disease, transmitted by the Aedes aegypti mosquito, the same insect vector for Dengue and Chikungunya.

This is the first time Zika has been detected in CARICOM, leading CARPHA's Executive Director, Dr C James Hospedales, to emphasize the need for prevention and control measures to be taken in order to prevent transmission of the virus.

CARPHA's continued appeal to avoid being bitten is even more critical for women who are pregnant, as the Ministry of Health in Brazil investigates a link between the mosquito-borne Zika virus and an increased incidence of microcephaly.

Microcephaly is a condition where the size of an infant's head is smaller than normal, because of slowed or incomplete brain development. While this may happen for a wide range of reasons, including inherited factors, it sometimes occurs as a result of exposure of the baby in the mother's womb to certain infections, contracted in the first few months of pregnancy.

Zika virus is now suspected to be one of the infections that can increase the risk of this condition.

CARPHA is therefore reminding all persons, and especially women who are pregnant, to protect themselves from mosquito bites by wearing long-sleeved clothing or long pants, using insect repellents, and sleeping under mosquito nets.

It is also important to destroy all breeding sites for mosquitoes in and around the home.

While there is no evidence to date that Zika has spread to other Caribbean countries, Dr Hospedales, is calling on its Caribbean Member States to continue to strengthen their surveillance programmes. He said "Member States must remain vigilant and step up their vector control."

Given that a diagnosis of Zika can only be confirmed by laboratory testing, CARPHA has also provided Chief Medical Officers throughout the Region with guidelines for clinicians to follow when sending samples of suspected cases of the virus to the Agency for testing.

Dr Hospedales added "Although we do not recommend any restrictions on travel due to Zika virus outbreaks, to reduce the risk of contracting the virus infection, travelers should minimize exposure to mosquito bites by taking preventative measures."

Dr Hospedales reiterated that the best way to protect yourself from this disease is to avoid mosquito bites and to prevent mosquitoes breeding in and around the home environment.

In this regard, CARPHA is again urging the public to inspect their homes and yards weekly, and eliminate potential mosquito breeding sites indoors and outdoors by keeping water drums and barrels tightly covered, and throwing out stagnant water from flower vases, old tyres, and other containers that might act as breeding sites.

The symptoms of the Zika virus are very similar to that of Dengue and Chikungunya and include fever, muscle and joint pain, conjunctivitis, headache, nausea, and rash.

There is no vaccine or treatment for Zika, however, symptoms which last approximately four to seven days, are treatable.

To relieve fever and pain associated with the virus, it is recommended that persons drink lots of fluids and take pain relievers such as paracetamol.

Aspirin and other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) should be avoided to reduce the risk of haemorrhage.

Within the next two weeks, CARPHA will launch a mobile game called Zap-a-'quito, to assist in educating the public, particularly children, on the Aedes aegypti mosquito and its potential breeding sites.

An action pictogram to aid managing your yard and home environment can also be downloaded from the CARPHA website at: http://carpha.org/What-We-Do/Public-Health-Activities/Chikungunya and used as a checklist.

Positive IMF conclusion praised!

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) says the St. Lucia economy is recovering and the short-term growth outlook is positive.

But it has also warned that the government still needs to reduce the high public debt and improve competitiveness to improve medium-term growth prospects and reduce high unemployment.

That assessment was contained in the report of an IMF mission led by Leo Bonato that conducted the Article IV consultations here.

"On the back of strong tourism inflows and lower oil prices, the St. Lucian economy has returned to growth after experiencing a recession in 2012 and close-to-zero growth in 2013. GDP growth reached 0.5 percent in 2014 and is expected to accelerate to 1.6 per cent in 2015, driven by tourism and transportation services," it said.

However, the IMF mission added that long-standing structural impediments weigh on economic prospects.

"The economic recovery has not yet spread to the entire economy and, according to the latest available data, the unemployment rate remains high at 25 per cent, with youth unemployment above 40 per cent.

"Although unemployment has increased following the global financial crisis, most of it is structural in nature and cannot be solely reduced by demand-supporting policies.

"Supply bottlenecks, low productivity, labour skill mismatches, and high costs limit medium-term growth prospects well below what is necessary to reduce unemployment on a durable basis."

The team from the Washington-based institution added that high public debt remains a significant vulnerability. It currently stands at around 80 per cent of GDP – high by international standards – and the IMF noted that ever-increasing interest payments limit the budget resources available for other uses, including high-impact social and infrastructure spending.

Authorities here have therefore been advised that a sound plan to put public debt on a sustainable path should be a key priority.

"The authorities are committed to the ECCU-wide debt target of 60 per cent of GDP by 2030. Achieving this target requires a medium-term plan designed to strengthen confidence and to provide buffers for risks, including from natural disasters.

"In staff's view, an adjustment of four per cent of GDP over the next four years could accomplish these objectives," the IMF said.

"With additional revenue measures already implemented over the past few years, there is greater scope for expenditure reductions.

"To contain the adverse growth impact of the adjustment, savings should be found in areas other than hard infrastructure and skills attainment," it added, noting that while the wage freeze agreement negotiated with public sector unions through 2017 is useful, continued efforts to contain wages, salaries, and benefits will be needed until the sustainability of debt is assured.

The IMF said there is also scope to achieve savings on non-targeted subsidies, social expenditures in the capital budget, transfers to statutory enterprises, utilities expenses, and by streamlining tax expenditures.

The Fund also referred to the Citizenship by Investment Programme, which St. Lucia expects to be a significant revenue stream.

It has advised government that if it wants to make the most of the new opportunity, it must take a prudent approach.

"Appropriate governance provisions are essential and the Citizenship by Investment Act and its associated regulations contain a number of welcome aspects in this regard.

"Going forward, the authorities should consider ways to minimize the risks of fiscal dependence on citizenship revenues, which can be volatile and subject to sudden stops," it said.

"The annual cap on approved citizenship applications could be a strong device for containing these risks."

The IMF said the revenues from the programme should be used to lower public debt or to improve growth-enhancing infrastructure

Talk Show host alleges million-dollar money laundering racket in St Lucia

During his "90 Minutes" show on the government owned Radio Saint Lucia yesterday (Friday, December 4), local broadcaster Shelton Daniel revealed what he described as a million US dollar drop off of funds at a hotel in the north of Saint Lucia by a suspected money launderer.

"I know about a major drop off of funds that was done at a hotel in the north of Saint Lucia and these funds were brought to Saint Lucia by a retired or still functioning banker who is widely suspected of being a money launderer. I won't tell you money launderer for whom. This man is an American citizen not an American native. He went to the United States in the 1960s," Daniel said.

Although not directly accusing the opposition United Workers Party (UWP) of any involvement, he claimed this event took place "just before the last UWP convention".

Daniel identified the banker in question as belonging to "a certain religion, a religion that is shared by a very prominent public figure in Saint Lucia", without revealing whether it is a public servant or a politician.



Shelton Daniel



Guy Joseph

"But the money was smuggled into St Lucia by another associate of his... That person has been coming into and out of Saint Lucia by boat, a holder of multiple passports, one of which was seized by a foreign government when that individual was arrested in that foreign country but he somehow managed to escape and he has been moving between the Caribbean islands coordinating the money laundering operations and by slipping in and out of Saint Lucia illegally he is able to engage in his activities as the coordinator," he continued. Daniel claimed this "coordinator" brought in the money but the American banker came in and arranged the hand over.

"The drop off took place at a hotel in the north of the island. The public figure who is the point man and facilitator here in Saint Lucia who belongs to the same religion, he was not there. Ordinarily he would have sent a close relative of his, a female, to pick up the money but she didn't go this time for some reason, she sent her husband and another person with the husband and they picked up the money. I'm told it was about a million US dollars," he told listeners. Daniel reiterated that this "occurred just a day or two before the last UWP convention".

"In fact, one of those that picked up the money is a medical practitioner and from that time on we began to see and hear people who were supposed to go and fight and challenge and all of that, they seem to have become very tame all of a sudden. Suddenly, the tone in a lot of media houses seemed to be rather cooperative, rather one-sided. Some money was spread around; spread around to buy people, to buy their silence, to buy their support, to buy their collusion and their collaboration and confederacy and whatever other words you want to use," he continued. Daniel claimed out that that, while "some money has been spread around the place", it is the source of the money and the purpose of the money that is "frightening".

"This million is just chump change, commission that is being paid to certain people in Saint Lucia to serve as the agents and facilitators of something much bigger, something with international implications and something that, if it takes its hold in Saint Lucia, I'm telling you, people, crapaud smoke our pipe," he concluded.

Daniel's allegations come on the heels of a visit reportedly paid to South Florida last month, when the political leader of the UWP, Allen Chastanet, and Guy Joseph, a UWP member of parliament and former minister for communications, works, transport and public utilities in the previous administration, are said to have met with Antonio Assenza, president of Asphalt & Mining (St Lucia) Company Limited (A&M).

A&M was recently the subject of a public address at a political rally by Saint Lucia Prime Minister Dr Kenny Anthony, who asserted that, shortly before general elections were due to be held in 2011, Joseph approached then Prime Minister Stephenson King and offered him a bribe of $5 million if King would sign, as prime minister, a US$140 million contract with A&M for the redevelopment of Hewanorra International Airport. According to Anthony's St Lucia Labour Party (SLP), Assenza was actively involved in various negotiations in relation to the airport project.

Specifically, a letter was reportedly sent to Assenza (described therein as the "President" of A&M) by BB&T Debt Capital Markets and SPP Capital Partners LLC, two companies based in New York, which were supposed to raise the financing required for the airport project. SPP Capital Partners LLC was described as advisors to Assenza's company.

The SLP claimed that the letter in question clearly indicated that Assenza signed a relevant agreement not only on his behalf but also on behalf of the Saint Lucia Air and Sea Ports Authority (SLASPA), a Saint Lucia government statutory authority, something that the SLP described as a "most unusual occurrence".King refused to sign the proposed contract or accept the proffered bribe, and Joseph has denied that the incident took place at all. However, this is not the first time that Joseph and A&M have featured in local controversy.

Following general elections in Saint Lucia in 2006 that resulted in the UWP assuming office as the country's new government, Joseph was appointed minister for communications, works, transport and public utilities. At some point thereafter, A&M was awarded two substantial so-called "direct purchase" contracts allegedly at the behest of Joseph as the responsible minister without any advertising or any competitive bidding.

One contract to rehabilitate the Babonneau Highway in Saint Lucia was valued at EC$12.24 million (US$4.5 million), while the other to rehabilitate the Desruisseaux Road was valued at EC$10.55 million (US$3.9 million). Both contracts were later revealed to be significantly overpriced. ***(Courtesy: Caribbean News Now)***

December Festivals kick off this weekend!

The December Festivals are a series of traditional and historical festivals which bring Saint Lucians together in the spirit of community through artistic creativity with the use of light – a symbol of rebirth.

One of the highlights of the December Festivals is the Lantern Festival - a unique and extravagant expression of creativity through lanterns. The Lantern Competition

The Lantern Competition, part of the annual Lantern Festival, will take place at the National Cultural Centre this coming Saturday, December 5th, from 2:00 p.m.

The competition is a showcase of skills which will be judged in three categories – Traditional, National and Contemporary/Modern.

Participants 17 years and under are adjudged in the junior division while anyone 18 years or older will be considered a senior.

Participants are awarded with special consideration given to the skill level employed in the creations.

Pre-judging will take place between 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon on competition day.

Since 1993, the lantern workshops have given participants an opportunity to acquire the skills required to create exquisite lanterns from the simplest of materials and to be part of an age old tradition. The initiative was started by Julian Calderon and Cedric George, through the Ministry of Education and Culture, who visited schools and engaged students creatively.

Today, the workshops have moved into the wider community and encourage participation from people of all ages who wish to express themselves through this traditional art form.

This year, five venues were identified and the sessions began on Saturday November 7th and continued every Saturday during the month of November, until the 28th.

Festival of Carols

On Sunday December 6th, the walls of the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception will resound with music as soloists and groups raise their voices in singing.

Performances from JUSTUS, Michael Robinson, Vision, Irvin "Ace" Loctor, Heart and Soul, Ave Maria Primary School Choir and Shirley Ann Cyril-Mayers are among those expected to inspire the congregation.

The Festival of Carols brings a wide cross section of the society together in the spirit of joy and singing.

The festival is slated to start from 7:30 pm at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception.

Tourism Minister says pride in country will help keep the City clean

Tourism Minister Lorne Theophilus says a lot more can be done to keep Castries clean. However, he believes the issue of keeping the city clean is not only a function of the agencies that are responsible for its upkeep.

"We need to look at the source of the un-cleanliness and it is basically what is being done by our very own people," Theophilus told the Saint Lucia Times online.

According to the Minister, there is need to instill greater respect for this country. He also stated that Saint Lucians need to respect themselves as well.

Theophilus believes that in this way, citizens will do what is necessary to contribute to keeping the capital city clean.

"We have Saint Lucians who, on regular basis, leave our jurisdiction and travel overseas and the things that they would not do overseas, they feel very comfortable doing within their very own country.

"So, it calls for a greater sense of pride in our very own people and in our country," he asserted.

Theophilus observed that a greater sense of pride would greatly assist the agencies responsible in what they need to do to keep the City clean.

Stray dogs, garbage, indiscriminate urination around Castries and dilapidated buildings – especially the CDC apartments on Jeremie Street -- have been cited as contributing to making the city lose its appeal to both locals and visitors. (St Lucia Times Online)

Team Brunel breaks old and sets new ARC Course Record!

VO65 Team Brunel (NED) has broken the ARC Course Record sailing from Las Palmas de Gran Canaria to Rodney Bay, Saint Lucia in an elapse time of 8d 7h 39m 30s. This is the third consecutive year that the Course Record has been beaten: a year ago, super-maxi Farr 100 Leopard by Finland took over two days off the previous record set by Caro, a Knierim 65 in 2013. 'Near-perfect' conditions for this year's crossing have seen Team Brunel propelled towards Saint Lucia and into the ARC history books for breaking the record in the rally's 30th edition.

The 15 strong crew on the round the world racing yacht consists of 5 professional sailors and 10 experienced amateurs who were chasing a bucket list adventure and they have not been disappointed! From the day ARC 2015 set sail from Las Palmas de Gran Canaria,

Team Brunel has sprinted to the sun-soaked shores of Saint Lucia, with an average VMG of 13.5kts since the start and top wave surfing speeds of double that at times.

Persistent north easterly winds due to the well-established Azores High have allowed them to zig-zag the rhumb line route for much of their crossing. Interestingly, the total distance covered on their transatlantic route is greater than the two previous record holders at 3342NM.

But their ARC experience has not been without drama and



Team Brunel sailed into Rodney Bay in record time to the welcome of local officials and fans...

on Sunday, On Board Reporter Koen Lockefeer announced a potentially disastrous mainsail tear had occurred during a routine gybe.

After a night reefed down, it was all hands on deck for a race ready repair the following morning, "Johnny and Tomas started to organize the ripped sail part, climbing up the end of the swinging boom. They tied the top and bottom end of the sail together with lashes between the sail battens as if the ripped middle part had never been there. All hands on deck again to hoist the sail to max height, about as high as 1.5 reef and carefully sheet in the main again.

To everyone's joy the boat started speeding off again … As the old sailor's wisdom states: before you can win a race you first have to finish it. The broken mainsail and subsequent repair were a very close escape from not finishing at all."

Team Brunel were welcomed to Saint Lucia at 16:24 local time (20:24 UTC) and greeted by representatives from the Saint Lucia Tourist Board and IGY Rodney Bay Marina. The crew were presented with an ice-cold rum punch and welcome basket of island gifts to celebrate their arrival.

Celebrations continued around Rodney Bay thereafter. Team Brunel's nearest ARC rivals, Durlindana 3 (ITA) arrived on Thursday 3rd December.

In the ARC Multihull division, trimaran La Caravelle (FRA) has consistently led the fleet and was expected to arrive yesterday (5th December).

Boats in the Cruising Division will enjoy life at sea for a while longer; over the coming days many will celebrate their own milestones reaching half-way and are enjoying calmer conditions after a breezy departure from Las Palmas just over a week ago.

However, the Team Brunel crew will no doubt be embraced by their fellow arrivals from the ARC+ fleet. Departing from their stopover in Mindelo, Cape Verdes five days earlier than the ARC fleet left Las Palmas, and with a shorter distance to sail to Rodney Bay, 18 of the 59 ARC+ boats have made land fall so far.

National Lotteries Authority hosted hearty cheque presentation after another happy year!



Management and staff of the NLA, Cage (St. Lucia) and Canadian Bank Note joined with vendors last Sunday to celebrate another successful year

The National Lotteries Authority continues its efforts to promote youth and sports development by providing financial assistance to clubs and organizations island-wide.

Donations of over $200,000 were presented to various sporting organizations at a special ceremony held last Saturday.

The funds will be used for local sporting events, youth programs and projects undertaken in the various communities.

Chairman of the National Lotteries Authority, Michael St. Catherine, assured the sporting organizations of their commitment towards the youth and development in sports.

He said, "All in all, 2015 was a good year. It was a year where we saw many of our projects because you know we don't only concentrate on youth activities, but very involved with the ministry undertaking many infrastructure projects.

"A lot of these things are ongoing because of the work of the National Lotteries Authority.

"So, 2015 was a good year and we thank you for participating and giving us your support in 2015."

The funds were made possible by the Canadian Bank Note and Cage Saint Lucia.

Representative of Cage Saint Lucia, Lindsey Joseph expressed pleasure in being part of the mandate to develop youth and sports in Saint Lucia.

He said, "We would like to encourage those sporting organizations who have been querying to make use of those funds, sending proposals to the National Lotteries Authority.

"We will like to also encourage our customers and players to play responsibly. Your contributions go a long way but we would you to do it in a very responsible manner."

In addition, representative of the Canadian Bank Note, Allison Jules, made a special appeal to the sporting organizations to continue working hard.

The National Lotteries Authorities commended their partners for the financial assistance and expressed hope that in the future, more support will be given to schools.

Saint Lucia-Taiwan Joint Partnership Trade Expo 2015

ANOTHER LEVEL!

The 8th Annual Joint Saint Lucia-Taiwan Trade Expo held last weekend has certainly drawn very positive reviews.

From journalists to manufacturers to members of the public, all who went hailed the expo as an annual showcase of just how good Saint Lucian manufacturing talent and quality are.

Exhibitors put on their best show – as usual. First-time spectators were left in positive shock. Business persons got new perspectives. And the Taiwanese exhibitors got new openings into the OECS market.

One repeated observation is that the expo again showed just how much potential there is for tapping into local industry and talent, manufacturing quality goods from purely local products, creatively producing what most Saint Lucians hardly felt was possible with what we have.

Another is that the expo again showed how easy it is to beat unemployment by being creatively self-employed.

After eight displays, the Saint Lucia-Taiwan Expo is ready to shift gears.

The increasingly wide range of products displayed every year need markets – and not only at home.

The Ministry of Commerce and its related entities have done a good job, with the Taiwanese, to identify, gather and expose what we have.

Now's the time to take the progress to another level – one that will tap deeper into all this creative talent and let it all help sell Saint Lucia to the rest of the world as not only a unique tourism destination, but also a hub for products from products never imagined. May the next two expos realize that dream!