

# Commerce means Business

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4

APRIL/MAY/JUNE 2014



## MINISTRY OF COMMERCE, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, INVESTMENT AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

### *Mission Statement*

*“To actively promote and facilitate, in close collaboration with the Private Sector, the establishment of a dynamic investment and trading environment, which anticipates changes in global circumstances, whilst strengthening and enhancing the productive capacities and competitiveness of Industry and Commerce, encouraging good business practices and promoting consumer interest.”*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Gender Mainstreaming Workshop	3-4
VAT Sensitization Workshop	5
WTO Trade Facilitation Workshop	6
Bakers to Provide Better Quality Products	7-8
CTCS Stakeholder's Consultations	9-10
Online Import Monitoring Module	11-12
SBDC Model	13
SEDU's Participating in St. Lucia Jazz & Arts Festival 2014	14-15
GMOs	16-17
Molding Young Consumers	18-19
Let's Meet the Staff	20
What's in CIC	
QMS	21

# Editor's Note

## *Welcome to Commerce means Business!!*

Welcome once again to another issue of "Commerce means Business," a publication of the Ministry of Commerce, Business Development, Investment and Consumer Affairs, produced by the Commercial Information Centre (CIC).

In the Ministry's thrust to achieve its mandate aimed at providing services which translate into the provision of an enabling environment which fosters the development of the private sector, various work programme activities are planned, initiated and reviewed each quarter to ensure the successful realization of the Ministry's mandate. In this fourth issue of Commerce means Business, we therefore provide information on some of these main activities undertaken by the various departments of the Ministry, in the months of April, May and June 2014.

One of the over-arching objectives of the Ministry is to facilitate the ease of doing business by implementing procedures which make transacting business hassle free and more modernized. It is on this notion that the Ministry recently launched the Online Import Monitoring Module aimed at reducing the processing procedures for issuing import licenses. In addition, with the Ministry's focus on growing existing micro, small and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs) by equipping them with the necessary entrepreneurial training and development skills, a VAT sensitization session, as well as, a local baker's training workshop was undertaken to assist MSMEs. Information on this and more are featured in this issue of Commerce means Business.

We then wrap-up with our usual staff profile and a brief on some of the publications available at the Commercial Information Centre for referencing by commercial information users. In addition, we included a new section entitled "Quality Management Systems" (QMS), where we will continuously be highlighting the principles and elements of QMS and the importance of having an efficient and effective QMS in place to improve service delivery.

The Ministry of Commerce, Business Development, Investment and Consumer Affairs is pleased to present this publication to our readers with the hope that we can continue to satisfy your appetite for knowledge and information, through our quarterly publication of Commerce means Business.

*Lydia Dariah - Information Officer/Editor*

**Commercial Information Centre**

*Happy Reading!!*

## *CDB/ITC Regional Workshop on Gender Mainstreaming in Caribbean Trade Policies and Programmes*

The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) in partnership with the International Trade Center (ITC) conducted an inaugural Regional Workshop on Gender Mainstreaming in Caribbean Trade Policies and Programmes, from June 16-19, 2014, at CDB's Headquarters in Barbados.

The workshop was part of CDB's work in supporting inclusive growth and sustainable development through regional cooperation and integration efforts in its Borrowing Member Countries. More specifically, the workshop was in line with CDB's gender policy, *"to be a leading catalyst promoting gender equality in the region by working with borrowing members and other development partners in the responsive and collaborative manner and to analyze the economic and social causes of gender inequality, in order to, reduce poverty and vulnerability and to assist all women and men to achieve their full potential"*.

According to the Report of the UN Economic and Social Council (1997) Gender Mainstreaming is a strategy for making women's and men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. (UN Economic and Social Council, 1997) It therefore requires an understanding of the differential impact our work has on men and women, in order to ensure that both men and women benefit. It is therefore good for development and good for business.

Mr. Guillaume Simon, Commerce & Industry Officer of the Ministry and Ms. Yvonne Agard, Executive Director of the Saint Lucia Coalition of Service Industries (SLCSI) were Saint Lucia's representatives at the workshop.

The workshop objectives included examining key concepts of gender; women and gender in development; gender analysis; entry points for gender mainstreaming and key components for an effective strategy for gender mainstreaming; promoting gender equality through trade policy formation and implementation, as well as, the benefits of a gender-sensitive export strategy.

CDB and ITC were very pleased to support this regional collaboration effort which produced the following outcomes:

- **Caribbean Position Paper on Gender Mainstreaming**
- **Personal Plans of Action and Joint Action Plan Matrix**
- **Agreement on the Establishment of the Caribbean Gender and Trade Community of Practice**

CDB intends to continue its collaboration with ITC and other partners in following up on the workshop outcomes aimed at mainstreaming gender in Caribbean trade policy approaches.

It is imperative therefore that Member States always take cognizance of gender sensitivity related issues when planning policies and programmes in fulfillment of their respective national development agenda.

*“It is indeed very likely that there is a strong correlation between the Caribbean’s economic growth and the unleashing of female talent.”* (Quote Adopted from Augusto Lopez Claros, Director of Global Indicators Group, World Bank)



*By: Mr. Guillaume Simon  
Commerce & Industry Officer  
Commerce & Industry Department*



## *Sensitization Workshop*

The Small Enterprise Development Unit (SEDU) of the Ministry in collaboration with the VAT Office held a sensitization workshop on the Value Added Tax (VAT) System for entrepreneurs of recently established businesses, on June 24<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014, at the Training Room of Ministry of the Public Service.

The workshop was aimed at providing entrepreneurs who established businesses from October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012, when VAT came into effect, with an understanding of the VAT system in order to allow them to better implement the necessary accounting procedures into their operating system.

Ms. Lisa Goodman, Customer Service Supervisor and Mr. Ron James, Auditor of the VAT Office facilitated the workshop.

The workshop examined the basic concepts of VAT; VAT rates; how VAT works; VAT and Pricing; VAT and the unregistered business; Accounting for VAT; Penalties for non-compliance with the VAT Act; Cancellation of registration and changes in business status. Practical examples of the calculation of VAT using the formula approach were done, in order to, provide participants with greater clarity with the VAT concepts.



Approximately twenty-seven entrepreneurs of various sectors attended the two day workshop and expressed satisfaction with the content and delivery of the presentations with the hope that similar workshops can be held.

SEDU is continuing with its sensitization efforts by facilitating similar workshops aimed at assisting micro and small enterprises. An upcoming workshop on Conflict Management and Mediation is scheduled for July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2014 at the Ministry. These entrepreneurial training workshops form part of SEDU's business and entrepreneurial development work programme, geared towards the economic development of Saint Lucia's micro and small enterprises.



*By: Lydia Dariah  
Information Officer  
Commercial Information Centre*

## *WTO Trade Facilitation National Workshop*



The Government of Saint Lucia through the Ministry of Commerce, Business Development, Investment and Consumer Affairs with support from the World Trade Organization (WTO), conducted an update of the self-assessment of Saint Lucia's needs and priorities, for implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, at the Royal Saint Lucian Hotel from June 2-5, 2014.

The workshop was officially opened by Honourable Emma Hippolyte, Minister for Commerce, Business Development, Investment and Consumer Affairs and chaired by Mr. Titus Preville, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Chairman of the Trade Facilitation Task Force.

The overall objective of the assessment was to determine where Saint Lucia stands in the implementation of the new WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and to prepare Saint Lucia to take full advantage of the special provisions available to developing countries. These special provisions allow for longer implementation periods and access to technical assistance and capacity building support based on Saint Lucia's needs.

The WTO Trade Facilitation Committee has sought clarification on GATT Articles V, VII and X, by seeking proposals from the Member States. Within this context, developing countries are provided technical assistance for assessing their level of compliance with respect to such proposals so as to identify their technical assistance needs and prioritize measures where they derive the greatest benefits.

Participants of the workshop which included government officials and private sector representatives were placed in groups during the four day exercise to undertake the assessment. The findings from the assessment were presented on the final day and concluded with the following recommendations being made:

- Development of implementation plans
- Devise strategy to work with national donor coordinator to find donors and capacity building, to establish a work plan and begin delivery of technical assistance
- Continued review and update of needs assessment findings
- Presentation of findings to stakeholders
- Categorisation for notification upon coming into force



*By: Ms. Natalia James  
Commerce & Industry Department*

## ***Bakers to Provide Better Quality Products***

The East Caribbean Group of Companies (ECGC) based in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, suppliers of Cream of the Island Flour to Saint Lucia for about thirty years, sponsored a Local Bakers Training Workshop which was held at the Auberge Seraphine Hotel on June 3-4, 2014.

Present at the workshop included Hon. Emma Hippolyte - Minister for Commerce, Business Development, Investment and Consumer Affairs; Mrs. Mary Isaac - Acting Director of Consumer Affairs; Mrs. Pariet Herman - Deputy Director of Consumer Affairs; Mrs. Sylvia Cadasse - President of the Local Bakers Association; Mr. Osmond K. Davy - Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of ECGC; Mrs. Rachel Haslam - Sales & Production Executive at ECGC; Mrs. Glender Francois - Marketing Officer at ECGC; Ms. Lanel Black - Quality Assurance Officer at ECGC and Mr. Ali Medjahed Facilitator/Baker

In delivering brief remarks, Mr. Davy, CEO, welcomed participants and thanked Mrs. Cadasse, proprietor of Mannee's Bakery, for allowing Mr. Medjahed to use her business facility during the two day workshop to carry out the demonstrations under the auspices of ECGC. Hon. Emma Hippolyte—Minister for Commerce, also welcomed participants and expressed her delight that ECGC chose Saint Lucia for the workshop. The Hon. Minister saw this opportunity as one that provides training and human resource development within the baking industry. She also charged the Ministry with the responsibility of seeking technical and financial assistance for the industry by preparing a Business Plan to tap into an existing facility that can be accessed through the Caribbean Regional Communication Infrastructure Program (CARCIP).

In light of the myriad of chronic illnesses that affect our citizens such as diabetes, hypertension among others, the Minister beseeched participants to focus on introducing more wholesome products to the market. Prior to this workshop, the Minister had previously dialogued with bakers to ascertain what factors impinge the success of this invaluable industry. At that caucus, the Minister called for frequent discourse between the Baker's Association and the Ministry in an effort aimed at enhancing and improving the quality of service provided.

In the Ministry's quest at taking this industry to a professional level was enhanced by Mr. Ali Medjahed, a renowned baker from the Grenadine Island of Mustique, who placed emphasized on quality and variety and highlighting that there is a niche market for Croissant in Saint Lucia. Mr. Medjahed, who hails from France but resides on the aforementioned Grenadine Island, urged participants to stick to precise weights and formulas. During the two day facilitation, Mr. Medjahed informed participants of the tremendous financial reward that exists in their chosen field once prudent management is practiced.

The seminar concluded with a practical component which took place at Mannee's Bakery in Corinth which was also attended by one participant from Dominica and three from Antigua - importers of ECGC's products.

*By: Mr. Damian Monroe  
Information Assistant  
Consumer Affairs Department*

## Highlights of the Baker's Workshop



## *Caribbean Technological Consultancy Services Network (CTCS) Stakeholder's Consultation*

As part of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) - Caribbean Technological Consultancy Services (CTCS) Network's Team continuing efforts to improve its Technical Assistance (TA) activities targeted at Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, a CTCS Stakeholders' Consultation was held in Guyana during the period May 26 – 28, 2014.

The CTCS Network is operated by the Private Sector Development Division (PSDD) of the Caribbean Development Bank in collaboration with regional and national institutions, laboratories, industrial enterprises and private consultants.

CTCS contributes to strengthening private sector capabilities by linking people who have business and technical experience with businesses which need consulting advice and assistance. Interventions are carried out in three (3) principal modes:

- Direct Technical Assistance (facilitated by consultants)
- Workshops
- Job Attachments



The three (3) day meeting which was facilitated by Mr. Kenneth Harvey – CTCS Network Programme Coordinator, brought together Local Coordinating Institutions (LCIs) from twelve (12) of the nineteen (19) countries eligible for assistance under the programme. This group included representatives from Suriname a new CTCS Network partner. Mrs. Junia Emmanuel-Belizaire, Commerce and Industry Officer of the Ministry represented Saint Lucia at this Consultation.

The meeting focused on a number of areas which called for formal presentations and group discussions by LCIs on the following:

1. An overview of MSME Sector in their country and challenges facing the sector;
2. Identification of new areas of development which will require enhanced and/or new CTCS delivery mechanisms and focus;
3. Increased efforts to investigate synergies and possible harmonization of CTCS Network Services and those being delivered by other international, regional and local entities operating with the respective countries;
4. Establishment of a standardized Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism for effectively benchmarking and monitoring CTCS interventions;
5. Increased participation and input by LCIs in the design, preparation and oversight of proposed national CTCS activities and requests for direct Technical Assistance of MSMEs.



Discussions also ensued following a presentation by Mrs. Denise Noel-De Bique, CDB Gender Equality Advisor who delivered on the topic, *"Integration of Gender Equality in all CTCS Network Activities"*. Mrs. Noel-De Bique encouraged LCIs to be gender sensitive during their discussions and emphasized the importance of gender considerations when planning and implementing developmental activities within countries.

The meeting concluded with the LCI Coordinators being given the task of reviewing and in some cases revamping their respective Local Networks. This is being pursued in an effort to present an integrated approach for the implementation of in-country activities funded by CTCS Network or other international, regional or local agencies.



*By: Mrs. Junia Emmanuel-Belizaire  
Commerce and Industry Officer  
Commerce and Industry Department*

## *Online Import Monitoring Module*

The Ministry of Commerce, Business Development, Investment and Consumer Affairs on May 21, 2014 launched the Online Import Monitoring Module.

The Online Monitoring Module is the automation of the Import License process as outlined in the External Trade Act, Cap. 13.11 of the Revised Laws of Saint Lucia with the ASCUDYA World (Automated System for Customs Data) software administered by the Customs Department. This initiative is part of the Ministry's work programme aimed at improving the business environment in Saint Lucia.

This undertaking also supports the National Investment Policy which promotes a "whole of Government approach" in facilitating private sector growth and development through the collaboration of the Customs Department and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Production, Fisheries and Rural Development, as well as, the Brokers Association and the Saint Lucia Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture.



Hon. Emma Hippolyte, Minister for Commerce, Business Development, Investment and Consumer Affairs officially launched the Online Monitoring Module.

In the Minister's opening remarks she indicated that from 2007 to 2014 Sainted Lucia ranked and maintained the number one position in CARICOM in the Ease of doing Business Report issued by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (The World Bank).



What this means therefore is that we must aggressively pursue reform measures that will improve our business environment and allow us to maintain that competitive and distinctive position.

The Online Import Monitoring Module is an example of one such initiative aimed at simplifying and making it much more cost effective for importers to process import licenses for goods which need such licenses for entry into Saint Lucia.

The Online Import Monitoring Module was piloted over the last three (3) months and the results indicate that the online platform is working seamlessly and is now ready for official launch. The Online Monitoring Module has reduced the number of procedures and time required in processing restricted imports and will soon facilitate the online payment of fees, thereby improving effectiveness and efficiency.

The Minister also publicly commended Mr. Rody Alcindor, Systems Administrator of the Customs and Excise Department and Mr. Kenneth Goolaman, Chief Import Monitoring Officer in the Ministry who worked assiduously to make this online system a reality. Ms. Gisele Jn. Baptiste, Information Systems Manager of the Ministry was also acknowledged for her perseverance on this project.

*By: Ms. Nancy Francis-Charles  
Director, Investment Coordination (Ag.)  
Investment Coordination Unit*

## *Small Business Development Centre (SBDC) Model*

Following the launch of the Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) signing ceremony on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2014, an inaugural meeting of stakeholders of the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Network was held on Monday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014, at the Ministry of Commerce, Business Development, Investment and Consumer Affairs.

The esteemed Minister for Commerce - Hon. Emma Hippolyte delivered remarks at the meeting while the proceedings were led by Mr. Titus Preville, Permanent Secretary, who welcomed representatives to the historic meeting which included Mr. Luis Alberto Rodriguez, OAS Ambassador and Ms. Barbara Mooney, U.S. SBDC Consultant.

All stakeholders who also participated in the signing ceremony in March 2014, were present at this inaugural meeting which included representatives from academia, financial agencies, government ministries and other statutory departments. It is expected that additional partners / agencies will also be signing on to the network during the course of this year.

The meeting sort to provide the collaborating partners with the necessary impetus to chart the way forward in determining how the network can best capture and report on economic impact, in order to spur national competitiveness. A review of the terms of the MOU and the purpose of the SBDC were also undertaken. An introduction of the Economic Impact Assessment Model was done, followed by the review of forms to be used by the SBDC.

At this meeting, the chair highlighted the upcoming high level SBDC study tour which was scheduled for June 2014. The delegation would comprise the Permanent Secretary, the Minister, the Director of SEDU, a representative of St. Lucia Development Bank (SLDB) and Sir Arthur Lewis Community College (SALCC). The meeting concluded on a favourable note with stakeholders looking forward to the lessons to be learnt and implemented from the upcoming study tour.

*By: Mr. Egbert Stevens  
Business Development Officer  
SEDU*

## SEDU's Participation in Saint Lucia Jazz & Arts Festival 2014



SAINT LUCIA  
JAZZ & ARTS  
FESTIVAL

The Small Enterprise Development Unit (SEDU) of the Ministry participated in the Saint Lucia Jazz and Arts Festival 2014 at four venues this year namely, Baywalk Mall, La Place Carenage, Derek Walcott Square and Pigeon Island National Landmark.

The theme for this year's festival was -

**"Innovation and Creativity, One People of Diverse Talent, Inspiring Today for Tomorrow."**



The broad aim of SEDU was to highlight and promote the economic union of the region and to sensitize micro entrepreneurs on the strategies necessary to survive in the new market environment. Consequently, SEDU has continued to demonstrate its unwavering support for small businesses in pursuit of fulfilling the strategic agenda of the National Industrial Policy, through its Market and Product Development Programme.

The specific objectives of the Jazz exhibition were therefore as follows:

- To expose clients to the local, regional and international markets during the Jazz and Arts Festival;
- To stimulate interest and trade in locally manufactured products and services, as well as, other products in the CSM environment;
- To promote local products among local, regional and international consumers;
- To sensitize clients of the market opportunities and strategies needed to survive in a CSM environment;
- To promote SEDU's role in the development of the small and micro business sector.



### Client Participation:

Invitations were extended to micro and small business persons within the Arts and Craft, Aromatherapy, Health and Wellness, Fashion and Agro-processing Sectors to participate in the exhibition. The event featured twenty-three (23) entrepreneurs who showcased their products and talents at the four (4) venues.

Four clients of micro and small enterprises (MSEs) were stationed at the Baywalk Mall, from Monday May 5<sup>th</sup> to Sunday May 11<sup>th</sup>; three (3) clients, including artist, Mr. Naja Misaki Simeon were also present at La Place Carenage's Tea Time Jazz on Wednesday, May 7<sup>th</sup> to Thursday, May 8<sup>th</sup>; nine (9) clients were at Jazz-on-the-Square on the Derek Walcott Square from Wednesday, May 7<sup>th</sup> to Friday, May 9<sup>th</sup> and fifteen (15) clients showcased at the Pigeon Island National Landmark's main stage Jazz event.

Revenue generation records show that nineteen (19) of the twenty-three (23) clients realized returns of EC\$500 to EC\$1500 and more, during the days of the exhibition and eleven (11) of the clients recorded contact with patrons, ranging from twenty-five to over a hundred persons.



Approximately seventy-five to one hundred percent (75% - 100%) satisfaction was expressed by the clients at the various venues, with the best responses given from entrepreneurs at the La Place Carenage and Pigeon Island National Landmark.

About sixty-three percent (62.5%) of respondents at the Pigeon Island National Landmark thought that their expectations were met. This market development exercise proved satisfactory overall and the feedback was generally positive.



SEDU therefore looks forward to continuing to support the Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) through its Product and Market Development programme.

*By: Mrs. Roycelyn Howell  
Business Development Officer  
SEDU*

## *The Latest International Buzzword - GMOs*

The Consumer Affairs Department's (CAD) Mission Statement asserts in part: *"To vigorously promote consumer interests through policy guidelines and appropriate legislation..."* In light of the health and environmental issues and concerns that permeate the minds of consumers regarding what they consume, CAD would like to draw consumers' attention to the latest international buzzword – Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), not forgetting the declaration by the late Grenadian Prime Minister (Hon. Maurice Bishop) who said: *"Once the metropolitan countries sneeze, we in the Caribbean catch pneumonia."* Consumers must therefore be aware of what GMOs entail, their benefits and effects if not used, transferred and handled properly.

In referencing a pamphlet published by the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Energy, Science and Technology – captioned: *"Saint Lucia On The Road To Biosafety"* - it explains: *"All living things are made up of cells. Inside these cells are genes, which code for the traits we show such as height, eye colour, shape, and resistance to diseases and similar characteristics. Long ago farmers and scientists cross-bred plant and animal species to make new species.*



Today, through advances in modern biotechnology, genes can be isolated from cells and transferred into other cells to produce modified species with new traits in the organism. These species and their products are designed to be useful in improving medicines, vaccines, agriculture and food. The productions of these species occur by a process called genetic engineering or bioengineering. The organisms so produced are called Genetically Modified Organisms or GMOs. GMOs which can reproduce are called Living Modified Organisms or LMOs.

This technology is relatively new. There are certain risks associated with the use, transfer and handling of these modified organisms. In 2003, the nations of the world adopted a protocol called the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to address the management of these risks. Biosafety is the process of management of LMOs/GMOs so that they are safely used, transferred and handled to avoid adverse impacts on the natural environment and humans.

The protocol seeks to guide countries in collaborating to minimize any possible risks from the use, transfer and handling of LMOs. As a result, Saint Lucia has developed a framework to guide the country in Biosafety management with particular reference to the importation of GMOs, their products, and LMOs.



This framework requires the establishment of:

*An administrative system which will deal with the receipt of notifications of GMOs /LMOs entering the country.*

*A regulatory system which will address the legislative framework needed to govern the Biosafety management system in the country.*

*A public participation system which will establish mechanisms and procedures for involvement of the public in decisions regarding the use of GMOs/LMOs.*

*A risk management/risk assessment system, which will ensure that mechanisms are put in place to ascertain that LMOs/GMOs to be used in Saint Lucia will undergo rigorous analysis to minimize any possible risks to humans or the environment."*



The aforementioned leaflet further informs:

*"The National Biosafety Implementation Project is a United Nations Environment program Global Environment Facility (UNEP-GEF) sponsored venture. It is executed by the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Energy, Science and Technology in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Production and Rural Development and many other agencies. Implementation of Saint Lucia's National Biosafety project commenced 2012.*



*Just For You. The project urges everyone to take an active interest in its progress. Respond to the Biosafety enumerators who question you. Participate in consultations for which you are a target group member. Give your views on the formulation of the various systems in the implementation the project. Share your ideas on the risks most worth taking for the country, as far as modern biotechnology is concerned. Play your part! " (Source: brochure—Saint Lucia on the Road to Biosafety)*



Consumers – CAD urges you to take charge in our quest to become a nation of discerning and assertive consumers. Consumers – you have the power!

*By: Mr. Damian Monroe  
Information Assistant  
Consumer Affairs Department*

## *Molding Young Consumers*

Young minds are easier to mold is a saying that has been heard of and holds true. Given this adage, last year the Information Staff of the Consumer Affairs Department of the Ministry took the opportunity to piggyback on Reading Month (May 2013) activities at the various primary schools, with a view to instilling the principles of consumer protection among the youth.

This year the department continued its Reading Month engagements with Grades 4, 5 & 6 students of Saltibus Combined; River Doree Anglican Primary; Babonneau Primary; Blanchard Combined; Bocage Government; Anse La Raye Primary and Plain View Combined.

Officers of the department gave the students an insight into the workings of the Consumer Affairs Department, its affiliations with other local, regional and international agencies and assisted them in reading a booklet compiled by Mrs. Merlicia Williams-Davy (Information officer) captioned - The Little Consumer.

The narrative drew the attention of student to a mother (Ma Son) and her two sons (John and Joe) whom she always sent to shop on late notice, assuming that her sons knew how to go about transacting business.

Ma Son was oblivious of the fact that her children were not versed with consumer principles, terms and jargons and did not know what to look for when conducting business. The students learnt that John and Joe's inexperience when it came to consumer matters came to the fore when they purchased an expired item to the annoyance of their mother, who ordered them to return it immediately.



The students realized that the two boys were not consumer savvy and that their mom had to impress upon them what approach they would employ upon arrival at the business place to lodge their complaint.

Also, the story gave students a glimpse of the eight Consumer Rights – one of which is the Right to Redress. This right provides for compensation in the event that a consumer is not satisfied with the response from a business place upon querying about an item/product that is not “merchantable” and cannot be put to the use that it was intended for.

Like John and Joe, thanks to Ma Son, students found out about the existence of the Consumer Affairs Department of the Ministry of Commerce, where consumers can lodge their complaints and seek Redress.

The aforementioned students, via story (The Little Consumer), became cognizant of the problems caused when receipts are not requested, not collected and/or destroyed/tossed away after transacting business.

After lodging their grievance with the owner of the business and presenting their proof of purchase (the receipt) to the owner, who examined and exchanged the product for the brothers, one of the boys took the item out of the bag to ensure that they were not given another perished product. The boy's action caught the attention of the shop-owner, who exclaimed "I see you are a wise boy, is it okay now!"

Based on the enthusiasm of the students who volunteered to come up and read, the officers of the Consumer Affairs Department were very much encouraged by the high level of interest exhibited by our upcoming and budding consumers, who welcomed and embraced the idea of taking consumer protection to them as the Department seeks to bring about a nation of discerning consumers.

Rest assured that in future this activity which is now etched on the calendar of the Consumer Affairs Department's, and will also be taken to Forms 1&2 students at the island's Secondary Schools.



*Mrs. Merlicia Williams-Davy,  
Information Officer - CAD presenting  
student with gift*

*By: Mr. Damian Monrose  
Information Assistant  
Consumer Affairs Department*

## Let's Meet the Staff - Mrs. Merlicia Williams-Davy



**Philippians 4:13 has always been the guiding principle and driving force behind Merlicia Williams-Davy - "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."**

As a child and student of the Balata Government School, Merlicia was never afraid to pursue her dreams. After graduating from the Entrepot Secondary School in 1992, she worked for less than a week at Super J Supermarket and knew instantly that this job was tantamount to career suicide. So she graciously resigned and from then earnestly worked towards her passion in the areas of Information and Public Relations.

Merlicia began her career as a Statistical Clerk with the Statistics Department in 1993 and simultaneously pursued a diploma in Management Studies at the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College, graduating with distinction.

While the field of Statistics afforded her the opportunity to analyze and disseminate information Merlicia was unable to demonstrate her true potential and so she proceeded to the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, where she pursue a degree in Media and Communications with a specialization in Public Relations and graduated with first class honors.

Merlicia continued her career path with job training at the Government Information Service in Barbados and subsequently worked with the Caribbean Child Support Initiative in St.Vincent and the Grenadines. During this time she served as the Treasurer for the International Association of Business Communicators, UWI, Jamaica Chapter.

As the Information Officer of the Consumer Affairs Department, Merlicia is of the firm belief that information is power and can be even more powerful when it is accurate, well-articulated and timely and therefore in performing her duties of informing and educating consumers, she strives to do just. She is also guided by the adage that, *"what's worth doing is worth doing well."*

### What's in CIC



For more than four decades the EU granted ACP states preferential access to its domestic markets. The recently concluded Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) will put an end to the EU's long-standing system of Lome' preferences by progressively removing barriers to trade between the signatory parties.

In this book the author raises the question whether the CARIFORUM-EU EPA represents a new form of political and economic cooperation between the EU and the Caribbean region or whether it is just another manifestation of the old asymmetrical Lome practices.

The book will appeal to anyone interested in gaining a deeper insight into the mechanism of international trade and the EU-CARIFORUM relations in particular and is available at CIC.

# Quality Management System

## What is a Quality Management System (QMS)?

A Quality Management System is a collection of business processes focused on achieving your quality policy and quality objectives - i.e. what your customer wants and needs.

The term Quality Management System typically refers to the requirements of the international standard ISO 9001:2008. An ISO 9001 QMS is all about your customer focus (clause 5:2).



Top management shall ensure that customer requirements (clause 7:2.1) are determined and are met with the aim of enhancing customer satisfaction (clause 8:2:1).

## Understanding Quality Management Systems

A Quality Management System is about understanding your customer's requirements and using that understanding to develop business processes that deliver acceptable products to the customer. Your Quality Policy expresses the focus of your QMS.

These customer satisfying business processes must be monitored and measured to ensure they will deliver the results your customer demand. We call this process control.

Your QMS provides the foundation and often times the impetus for continual improvement, which in turn increase the likelihood of greater customer satisfaction, as well as, greater employee, shareholder, and management satisfaction in the future.

It means understanding what customer satisfaction is and making sure that every employee understands how to satisfy your customers. QMS therefore calls for identifying areas within your company that are not satisfying your customers and taking corrective action to make sure that this never happens again.

## Appointment - Management Representative

As is required under the ISO 9001:2008 Standard and in the absence of a suitable replacement for Deputy Permanent Secretary (D.P.S.) who is on pre-retirement leave, Ms. Lydia Dariah, Information Officer, has been appointed as the Management Representative for the Quality Management System and Ms. Gisele Jn.Baptiste, Information Systems Manager as her alternate.

During this time the responsibilities of the Management Representative will be as follows:

- Act as Management's liaison with the Quality Management Team
- Chair the Quality Management Steering Committee and Management review Meetings
- Authorize material changes and actions to be taken as captured on the change request forms or other quality improvements records
- Vet Quality Management Reports
- Other duties as directed by the Permanent Secretary

## Authority

The Information Officer and the Information Systems Manager will retain their substantive authorities vested in them as outlined by Budget Estimates.

## *Thought for Reflection*



*Life is short...take  
time out for you*

*(Wanda Octave  
2013)*

The Ministry of Commerce, Business Development, Investment and Consumer Affairs welcomes your comments and suggestions towards improving this publication. We would also like to welcome and encourage all staff members to submit articles for our upcoming issues of Commerce means Business.

Kindly email the Commercial Information Centre at [cic@govt.lc](mailto:cic@govt.lc) with your articles and feedback.

Thank you to all those who contributed towards this fourth issue of Commerce means Business.

We look forward to your continued contributions.

**Ministry of Commerce, Business Development, Investment and  
Consumer Affairs**

**4th Floor, Heraldine Rock Building**

**Waterfront, Castries**

**SAINT LUCIA**

**Tel: 1-758-468-4218**

**Fax: 1-758-453-7347**

**Email: [mincommerce@govt.lc](mailto:mincommerce@govt.lc)**

**Website: <http://www.commerce.gov.lc>**

