



**THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
TRADE & COMMERCE
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines**

Diplomatic Courier

Issue 4/2019

September to December 2019



I N S I D E

** SVG establishes diplomatic ties
with three (3) new countries*

** 20 Vincentian Royal Navy Recruits
participated in SVG'S 40th Independence
Anniversary Celebration*

** H.E. I. Rhonda King received The Spirit of the
United Nations Award*

** Photo highlights from SVG 40th Independence
Anniversary Celebrations...and more*



Foreword from the Foreign Minister

Hon. Sir Louis Straker, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trade & Commerce

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Commerce, once considered as a Ministry engaged only in ceremonial activities such as meeting and greeting foreign dignitaries, has within the last few years undergone a metamorphosis. While it remains the gateway and the relevant point of contact for the foreign affairs of our country, it has impacted positively on all the other Ministries and Departments of the Government.

Credit must be given to a hardworking, diligent and resourceful team headed by Permanent Secretary Mrs. Sandy Peters-Phillips, Director of Foreign Policy and Research Mr. Mozart Carr and Director of Trade Mrs. Okolo John-Patrick, as well as all the Heads of our Missions abroad.

In the past few years, we have established diplomatic relations with dozens of countries, which have been very beneficial to our country. We have been beneficiary from the generosity of Japan, who came to our rescue with a US\$10 million Japanese grant for a facility at Bottle and Glass in Barrouallie, a US\$5 million grant for footpath infrastructure throughout St. Vincent by the U.A.E.; a US\$90 million road

building programme from the Kuwaiti Fund and the O.P.E.C. Fund for International Development. All these will follow the tremendous successes we have had in our diplomatic contacts to realize the Argyle International Airport and the US\$40 million given for the construction of the new Port Facility at Bottom Town. Of course, there are but a few of the many generous gifts and soft loans contributing to our economic and social development.

This Ministry has also been the center of activities as we welcomed in quick succession in 2019, the Royal Visit of Prince Charles and his wife; the Foreign Minister of Taiwan, Dr. Janshieh Wu; H.E. Tsai-ing-Wen, the President of Taiwan and H.E. Nana Addo Dan-Rwa Akufo-Addo, the President of Ghana.

Early in my Ministry, I gave marching orders to all of our Heads of Missions abroad that not only have they to look after Vincentians in the Diaspora to meet their needs for passports and other travel documents or to assist them if they get into trouble or for any other matter which affects their wellbeing, but also to mobilize resources from them for the economic and social development of St. Vincent. Certainly, the Diaspora is an important reservoir to dip into to alleviate the unemployment situation through remittances, the building of their retirement homes here and also by other means of investment in manufacturing, trading, ICT or the service industry.

The response has been very positive and we thank Fitz Huggins in Toronto, Howie Prince in New York, High Commissioner Cenio Lewis, Rhonda King, Permanent Representative to the UN and Lou-Ann Gilchrist, the Ambassador to the USA and Dr. Stange, our Honorary Consul General in Northern Ireland for a job well done.

We have received ambulances, fire trucks, wheel chairs, walkers and cane; thousands of pieces of brand new clothing, sporting uniforms, gears, sheets, pillow-cases, beds and mattresses for our health institutions and several other pieces of equipment and supplies useful in our schools and for patients in hospitals, as well as financial support to our students in the form of bursaries.

Through our High Commissioner in London, H.E. Cenio Lewis, we have almost 700 young people in the Royal Navy. Recently, he has brought down a recruitment team from the Health Education of England and almost thirty (30) of our unemployed trained Nurses will find employment in England. He has also succeeded in the Youth Skills Programme, which will provide over two thousand (2000) of our young people in Vocational and Technical Training.

But these are only a few of the activities in the Ministry. There are more to follow. Stay tuned.



H.E. I. Rhonda King received The Spirit of the United Nations Award

On Wednesday October 23, 2019, Permanent Representative of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations, H.E. I. Rhonda King, was one of four recipients of the 2019 Spirit of the United Nations Award in New York.

The award is the brainchild of the NGO Committee on Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns – NY (CSVGC-NY) and recognizes those individuals whose work is an expression of the core principles, spirit and vision on which the United Nations was founded. In 2007, the Committee created the Annual Week of Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns during the United Nations anniversary week. This year's theme is "Spirit of the UN: The Call for a Life of Human Dignity – Reframing the Discussion on the SDGs and Agenda 2030".



Ambassador King is one of two (2) CARICOM nationals who received the award on Wednesday, the other is the Hon. Elliott Harris of Trinidad and Tobago – United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development and Chief Economist. This is the very first time that a Permanent Representative from CARICOM has received the prestigious award.

In her acceptance remarks, Ambassador King thanked Ambassador Katalin Bogay, the Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations for nominating her for the award as well as the CSVGC-NY for accepting the nomination. She noted that *"In the Agenda 2030 there is a unifying truth grounded in Human Dignity, that transcends all religions, ideologies and cultures..."* and *"We, the peoples of the United Nations, are a part of a Transcendent Whole. And to deny that spirit is to be miniscule. We cannot build a world of peace outside ourselves if we are not able to create peace within ourselves — it is our own inner peace that leads to world peace."*

Ambassador King has been St. Vincent and the Grenadines' Permanent Representative to the United Nations since 2013 and has served as the Chair of the United Nations Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) and most recently as the 74th President of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Commerce as well as the staff of the Ministry congratulate Her Excellency on this milestone achievement and wishes her tremendous successes as she continues her journey for the future

H.E. Nester Mendez's working visit to St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), H.E. Nestor Mendez, concluded a two day working visit to St. Vincent and the Grenadines from November 18—20, 2019.

During his visit, Ambassador Mendez conducted a series of meetings with high officials of the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, including Prime Minister Dr. The Hon. Ralph E. Gonsalves, Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Saboto Caesar and Minister of Education, Hon. St. Clair Prince, in which he discussed bilateral opportunities and future cooperation between this country and the OAS. Ambassador Mendez, a national of Belize, highlighted the work of the OAS which also focuses on development matters such as education and youth entrepreneurship. He made mention of the opportunities made available to the Vincentian youth through the OAS undergraduate and graduate scholarships, and also encouraged youth participation in the Talent and Innovation competitions hosted by the OAS through the Young Americas Business Trust (YABT). His message was one of youth empowerment and entrepreneurship, emphasizing not only the need to tap into the creative minds for new ideas, but also to shape the youth to be immersed into the global community through bilingualism capabilities.



LR: Ambassador Mendez, Chief of Staff to the OAS, Ms. LaCelia A. Prince and Prime Minister, Dr. The Hon. Ralph E. Gonsalves

Ambassador Mendez also held meetings with the Director for the Centre for Enterprise Development (CED), Mr. Felix Lewis and Director of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College, Mr. Nigel Scott, reinforcing the same message with focus on the youth. Director of CED, Mr. Felix Lewis shared with the Assistant Secretary General some of the activities and programmes which the Centre has in the pipeline, including a curriculum for entrepreneurship and innovation, an initiative which could potentially see the OAS as a partner to aid its implementation. Mr. Nigel Scott was pleased to hear about the work that the OAS is doing in the field of teacher training through the Inter-American Teacher Training Network (ITEN), and was keen on the SVGCC student body learning more about scholarship opportunities in the hemisphere which would afford the students exposure to a foreign language.

While visiting Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the Assistant Secretary General also took the opportunity to deliver a lecture to the students at the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College, in which he outlined the work of the OAS, its importance to the hemisphere in the areas of development, security, human rights and democracy. In his delivery, the Ambassador strongly advised the students to embrace learning of a foreign language in order to make themselves more agile and versatile global citizens; to channel their creative talents towards innovation and entrepreneurship, and to always be aware of current affairs both in their immediate local environment as well as globally.

Ambassador Mendez was accompanied on his two-day visit by Chief of Staff, La Celia A. Prince, former Ambassador of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the OAS and to the United States of America.

SVG Diaspora Community continues its donation efforts to the Healthcare System of SVG

On November 7, 2019, at a short ceremony held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade & Commerce, the Hon. Sir Louis Straker, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Commerce handed over 12 Fetal Heartbeat Monitors to the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment. Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health, Mr. Cuthbert Knights received the donation on behalf of the Ministry of Health. The donation was made by Supreme Medical Company owned by Mr. Ron Kilius. It is a medical supplies company operated in Toronto, Canada.

Over the years, the Supreme Medical Company has donated medical supplies to the healthcare system of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Between 2018 and 2019 the company also donated 12 fetal heartbeat monitors, fire trucks, ambulances, hospital beds and mattresses as well as wheelchairs.

The SVG Consulate in Toronto, Canada under the auspices of Consul General Fitzgerald Huggins presented an honorary plaque to Mr. Ron Kilius (owner of Supreme Medical company) for his tremendous contribution to St. Vincent and the Grenadines over the years.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade & Commerce and by extension the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, expressed gratitude to Mr. Kilius and the Supreme Medical Company for its generous support to this country.



Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment received the donation from Hon. Sir Louis Straker on behalf of the Ministry. PS Knights was joined by hospital administrative staff at the Milton Cato Memorial hospital



Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the Government of the Republic of India signed an MOU for Implementation of Quick Im- pact Projects (QIP)

On Wednesday November 13, 2019 Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dr. The Hon. Ralph E. Gonsalves and the Ambassador of the Republic of India with residency in Suriname, H.E. Mahender Singh Kanyal, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two countries for grant assistance for implementation of Quick Impact Projects (QIP) in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The grant assistance being allocated from the Government of the Republic of India will seek to fund small projects for socio-economic development throughout the country, particularly for, but not limited to, the creation or upgrading of physical infrastructure such as roads, local community centres, and social infrastructure such as education, health, sanitation or community development sectors.

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the Government of the Republic of India are continuously working towards the successful implementation of short gestation projects that could directly benefit local communities and would give fresh impetus to the bilateral cooperation between both countries.

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines expressed thanks to the Government of the Republic of India for its continuous support to this country and for the fruitful diplomatic relations both countries have enjoyed throughout its existing relations.



St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the 79th country to join India-Led International Solar

St. Vincent and Grenadines became the 79th country to join the India-led International Solar Alliance (ISA). The ISA, is an initiative led by India aimed at combating the threats of climate change and global warming.

Countries which have signed the agreement until now include Bolivia, Palau, France, Australia, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and Japan, The agreement was opened for signature during the COP22 at Marrakech on November 15, 2016.

The International Solar Alliance (ISA) is a group of 121 solar resource-rich countries with headquarters in Gurugram, India. The organisation aims to deploy over 1,000 gigawatts of solar energy and mobilise more than USD 1,000 billion into solar power by 2030, according to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Prime Minister Gonsalves' visit to India was part of a five-day official visit where he met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday September 10, 2019.





Prime Minister, Dr. The Hon Ralph E. Gonsalves, delivered his address to thousands of citizens, Ambassadors and visiting dignitaries who attended the 40th anniversary of independence military parade at Victoria Park, in capital city, Kingstown.



Vincentians enrolled in the United Kingdom Navy also took part in this year's Military Parade to commemorate the 40th Independence Anniversary of St. Vincent and the Grenadines



**ST. VINCENT AND THE
GRENADINES CELEBRATED 40 YEARS
AS A SOVEREIGN NATION ON
OCTOBER 27, 2019. (1979 -2019)**

PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS— LOCALLY



Support from our Diplomatic Allies: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade & Commerce on behalf of the Government and People of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, expressed thanks to the visiting dignitaries and Resident Ambassadors for taking the opportunity to celebrate this milestone with us.



Above: *From Whence We Came*. A look back at the items use as traditional games of the culture of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS — TRADITIONAL CULTURE



Our local Garifunas on street parade for the 40th Anniversary of Independence



Traditional Oven used long ago by our ancestors. This type of traditional oven is made from an iron drum . Some Vincentians still



**ST. VINCENT AND
THE
GRENADINES
CELEBRATED 40
YEARS AS A SOV-
EREIGN NATION
ON OCTOBER 27,
2019.
(1979 -2019)**

*Highlights from
Everything Vincy+ Expo
held in October, 2019.
Traditional Local Products
made here in
St. Vincent and the Grenadines*



Twenty (20) Vincentian Royal Navy Recruits participated in SVG'S 40th Independence Anniversary Celebration



A group of Vincentians in the Royal Navy attended a meeting with Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dr. The Hon. Ralph E. Gonsalves on October 21, 2019. The Naval Officers who attended the meeting with Prime Minister included: LT RN Shabaka Kenyatta (Trinidadian), CPO Garnet Richardson, CPO Glevin Robinson, PO Duanette Mclauran, PO Neshanta Creese, LH Makedia Antoine.



Chief Petty Officers Garnet Richardson and Glevin Robinson presented the Crest of the HMS Dauntless, a Type 45 Destroyer within the UK Royal Navy to Prime Minister, Dr. The Hon. Ralph E. Gonsalves.

During the meeting between Prime Minister Gonsalves and the Naval delegation, discussion on the various experiences were shared and the various roles within the organization.



The 20 Vincentians and one Trinidadian (LT RN Shabbaka Kenyatta) participated in the National Independence Military Parade on October 27, 2019. The Officers are currently enrolled in the British Royal Navy.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade & Commerce, takes this opportunity to thank the British Royal Navy for providing the possibility for the recruits to take part in the 40th Independence anniversary of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Republic of South Korea contributes to SVG's Zero Hunger Initiative



October 28, 2019 commemorated forty (40) years since this country established formal diplomatic relations with the Republic of South Korea. Throughout the years, both countries have cemented a strong friendship and mutual understanding built on trust and respect for the joint benefits of our people in areas of common interest namely Agriculture, Health, Education, Social Development and Infrastructure.

As a small island developing country with its own challenges, it is imperative that we work together with our diplomatic allies to create meaningful relationships that will facilitate a sustainable future.

On Friday October 25, 2019, Ambassador Sung Moonup and his delegation from the Republic of South Korea, attended a Handing over Ceremony where the Government of the Republic of Korea, through the Korean Government Development Cooperation Programme has shown its continued commitment to working with St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Government of the Republic of South Korea has contributed 120,000 USD to the Zero Hunger Trust Fund's "Adopt a Classroom Initiative"; an initiative aimed at reducing the incidence of hunger and undernourishment in St. Vincent and the Grenadines by the year 2020. This contribution was used to source computers, books and other learning material for school children in rural areas and this contribution will make a significant difference in the lives of many students.

The Government and People of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines expressed heartfelt thanks and appreciation to the Government of the Republic of South Korea for their continued support to the Zero Hunger Initiative, and other projects over the years.

ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES ESTABLISHED DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH THREE NEW COUNTRIES



Prime Minister of SVG, Dr. The Hon. Ralph E. Gonsalves, right, and Foreign Minister of San Marino H. E. Nicola Renzi.



Prime Minister of SVG, Dr. The Hon. Ralph E. Gonsalves, right, and Foreign Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic H.E. Chingiz Aidarbekov



Prime Minister of SVG, Dr. The Hon. Ralph E. Gonsalves, left, and Ukraine Foreign Minister, H.E. Vadym Prystaiko.

Three new countries have now been added to the list of diplomatic allies of St. Vincent and the Grenadines with the signing of documents establishing diplomatic relations. These developments occurred on September 24th, 25th and 26th, during the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly currently being convened at the headquarters of the UN in New York. Prime Minister Dr. The Hon Ralph E Gonsalves who led the local delegation attending the Session represented this country at the signing.

On Tuesday September 24th 2019, this country established diplomatic relations with The Republic of San Marino, a micro state surrounded by north-central Italy. The signing of agreement establishing diplomatic relations was done during a bi-lateral meeting between Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves and the Foreign Minister of San Marino Nicola Renzi. Members of both national delegations witnessed the signing and offered congratulations as the leaders displayed the signed documents.

The bilateral meeting between Prime Minister, Dr. Ralph Gonsalves and the Ukrainian Foreign Minister Vadym Prystaiko, took place on Wednesday September 25th 2019. During this meeting, Dr Gonsalves signed the agreement establishing diplomatic relations on behalf of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Prystaiko signing the agreement on behalf of his country.

On Thursday 26th September, 2019 the Kyrgyz Republic (Kyrgyzstan) became the third country to establish diplomatic relations with St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The Joint Communiqué establishing diplomatic relations, was signed by Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves on behalf of this country while the Foreign Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic Chingiz Aidarbekov signed on behalf of his country.

The establishment of diplomatic relations with these new countries is a testament of the principled and progressive foreign policy of the government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines that allows this country to engage nations. The government and people of this country look forward to working with its new allies to advance the principles of the charter of the United Nations and working towards the achievement of global peace and security.

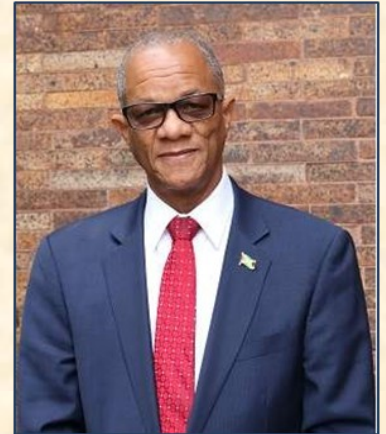
ACCREDITATION OF NEW AMBASSADORS

Between October and December, 2019, this country added several new Ambassadors to its list of accredited diplomats to St. Vincent and the Grenadines



Mr. Magdy Martinez-Soliman is the Resident Representative for the UN Development Programme's (UNDP) Multi-country Office for Barbados and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), which includes St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Mr. Martinez-Soliman presented Letters of Credence to Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dr. the Honourable Ralph E. Gonsalves, on October 15, 2019. Mr. Martinez-Soliman also met with other key officials during his visit to St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Mr. Martinez-Soliman was joined by Programme Manager for Climate Change and Disaster Risk Resilience, Ms. Danielle Evanson, on this official mission.

Mr. Arthur Williams, High Commissioner of Jamaica to St. Vincent and the Grenadines presented Letters of Introduction to Prime Minister, Dr. The Hon. Ralph E. Gonsalves on 25th October, 2019. Mr. Arthur Williams has an extensive career including Tutor at the University of the West Indies, Attorney-at-Law, Jamaica's Representative to the Inter-American Development Bank and now High Commissioner to the St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and the Organisation of the Eastern Caribbean States, Co-operative Republic of Guyana, Montserrat, Permanent Representative to the Association of Caribbean States, Ambassador to the Republic of Suriname and Consul General to the Dutch Caribbean Countries.



H.E. Mrs. Ute König, German Ambassador to St. Vincent and the Grenadines with residency in Trinidad and Tobago, presented Letters of Credence to Deputy Governor General Mrs. Dawn Smith at Government House on Friday October 25, 2019. Her Excellency is a trained lawyer with over thirty (30) years of experience in the German Foreign Service. Her Excellency also previously served as Germany's Ambassador to Nicaragua before being accredited to countries in the Eastern and Southern Caribbean namely, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname. Ambassador König, also serves as Consul General to the British Overseas Territories of Anguilla, British Virgin Islands and Montserrat. St. Vincent and the Grenadines established relations with the Federal Republic of Germany on 12th December, 1980.

ACCREDITATION OF DIPLOMATIC PARTNERS



On October 29, 2019, H.E. Asfaw Dingamo Kame, Ambassador of Ethiopia presented Letters of Credence to H.E. Mrs. Susan Dougan, Governor General of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. While in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, His Excellency met with various government officials including the Prime Minister, Dr. The Hon. Ralph E. Gonsalves. His Excellency is the former Ambassador to India, & Non-resident Ambassador to Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Thailand & Myanmar. His Excellency is accredited to this country with residence in the Republic of Cuba.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the Republic of Namibia established Diplomatic Relations. The signing ceremony of the joint communiqué took place on Thursday December 5, 2019 at Clun Havana, La Habana, Cuba. The signing of the joint communiqué was done by H.E. Ambassador Ellsworth I.A. John, Ambassador of the Embassy of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and H.E. Ambassador Samuel H. Gaogoseb, Ambassador of the Embassy of the Republic of Namibia.



The Republic of Namibia is located in southern Africa with its western border in the Atlantic Ocean; it shares land borders with Zambia and Angola to the north, Botswana to the east and South Africa to the south and east



On Thursday December 12, 2019, H.E. José Manuel Leyva, Ambassador of the Embassy of the Republic of Cuba in St. Vincent and the Grenadines presented letters of Credence to Her Excellency, Mrs. Susan Dougan, Governor General of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Ambassador Ventura will be the resident Ambassador of the Cuban Embassy here in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Ambassador was the First Secretary of the Embassy of Cuba in Brazil and held the position of Counselor at the General Department of Latin America and the Caribbean of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cuba. Ambassador also met with Prime Minister, Dr. The Hon. Ralph E. Gonsalves, Hon. Jomo Thomas, Speaker of the House of Assembly and Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Hon. St. Clair Leacock.

The Republic of Cuba and St. Vincent and the Grenadines established relations on 26th May, 1992.

SVG Diaspora Celebrates SVG'S 40th Independence Anniversary



The Embassy of St. Vincent and the Grenadines under the auspices of H.E. Mr. Ellsworth John hosted an Independence Reception to commemorate the 40th Independence Anniversary of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The Independence reception was held at the residence of the Ambassador, Havana Cuba on Saturday November 2, 2019. Vincentians, Cubans and other members of the Diplomatic Community residing in Cuba joined in the celebrations.

An Evening With
DR. HON. RALPH E. GONSALVES
 PRIME MINISTER OF ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES



PM'S ADDRESS

REFLECTIONS, INTROSPECTIONS, UPDATES
 INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES,
 RENEWAL AT 40.
 SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 28TH 2019
 STARTING AT 6:00 PM
 FRIENDS OF CROWN HEIGHTS EDUCATIONAL CENTER
 671 PROSPECT PLACE
 BROOKLYN, NY.
 (BETWEEN BEDFORD AVE. & FRANKLYN AVE)

An event hosted by Vincentian Diaspora in New York, United States of America.



Ms. June Pamela Barbour, Honorary Consul of St. Vincent and the Grenadines in Jamaica also held a reception for the SVG's 40th Independence Anniversary Celebrations. The reception was well attended by Vincentian students and citizens as well as Jamaicans and members of the Diplomatic Community.



Vincentian students currently enrolled in the Republic of China (Taiwan) dressed in the national colours to commemorate the 40th Independence Anniversary Celebrations.



Reflections on St. Vincent and the Grenadines at 40

Written by: H.E. Andreas N. Wickham
Ambassador of SVG in Caracas Venezuela

As the nation celebrates the 40th Anniversary of the reclamation of its Independence following the two hundred plus years of British colonialism, we do so with a greater appreciation and understanding of the roles played by our forebears and the ultimate sacrifices made by them, to bequeath to the post-independent generations an authentic Vincentian identity molded out of resistance, struggle and resilience and heralded as a proud component of a great and noble Caribbean civilization.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines and its people have traversed centuries of human history, dating from the pre-Columbian period to modern day. We have lived through the relatively peaceful communal existence of our earliest inhabitants, the Callinago and Garifuna peoples; British invasion and occupation; resistance in the face of native genocide; the dehumanizing system of enslavement of Africans; indentureship; colonialism and servitude; the struggles of the first half of the 20th century for basic, fundamental rights and people's representation, punctuated by the historic People's Uprising of 1935; Universal Adult Suffrage; partial self-governance through Associated Statehood; until finally reclaiming our Independence on the 27th October 1979.

It's a long, historic trajectory that has forged in us an immense pride of being Vincentians, even while recognizing our "Caribbeanness" and being a part of the ethnic and cultural diversity which is the Caribbean. This recognition of our place within the Caribbean began to take shape in the earliest attempts at regional integration in the 1950s, when as a colony; we were led into the short-lived Federation of the West Indies. Though largely a construct of British colonialism and lacking the internal, homegrown dynamism and drive needed for success, the Federation was nevertheless a step in the right direction.

CARICOM and its predecessor CARIFTA, and the earlier sub-regional integration mechanisms such as the West Indies Associated States, which gave rise to its successor the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) in the post-independence period, were all noble integration initiatives of which St. Vincent and the Grenadines and its political leaders of the past era played a pivotal role. The strictures of colonialism as eurocentric as they were, never allowed for even a cursory glimpse into the possibilities which lay beyond the horizons of the English speaking Caribbean. The outlook was predominantly colonial, narrow and british-centred. After all, as a colony, our strategic direction could only be formulated in the hallowed halls of Westminster.

Even up to two decades after the reclamation of Independence, the initiatives associated with economic cooperation and integration remain largely within the narrow corridors of former colonial relationships, hardly venturing, if at all very timidly, outside the parametres of the English speaking Caribbean and the existing vertical relations with Britain and her close allies. The 40th Anniversary of the reclamation of Independence is therefore as good an occasion as any, to reflect from whence we came, while simultaneously casting our eyes far and wide, to see what opportunities lie beyond the horizon.

Reflections on St. Vincent and the Grenadines at 40

CONT'D

It's all the more reason that the often repeated formulation of Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, of *"building a post-colonial economy that is at once national, regional and international"* holds tremendous significance. It is a formulation pregnant with meaning and visionary in its scope. In my humble view, it transcends the mere implementation of a package of socio economic measures, by entering the realms of a contemporary philosophical thought. In essence, it not only signals a definitive break with the colonial mode of societal organization in all its dimensions but also importantly, it recognizes that we are not an "island unto ourselves", but an integral part of a multilateral framework from which we draw, in order to complement and strengthen our own internal resources for the betterment of our people.

The post-independence era has brought its own sets of challenges, but it has also opened up opportunities that were hitherto unforeseen. Indeed, the challenges have become more acute over the last two decades. The twin phenomena of liberalization and globalization that turn the wheels of the world economy, fueled by the revolution in Information and Communication Technology, global warming and the climate change agenda, international terrorism and transnational organized crime, all have established new frontiers and new hurdles from which we are not immune and with which Vincentian society has had to contend.

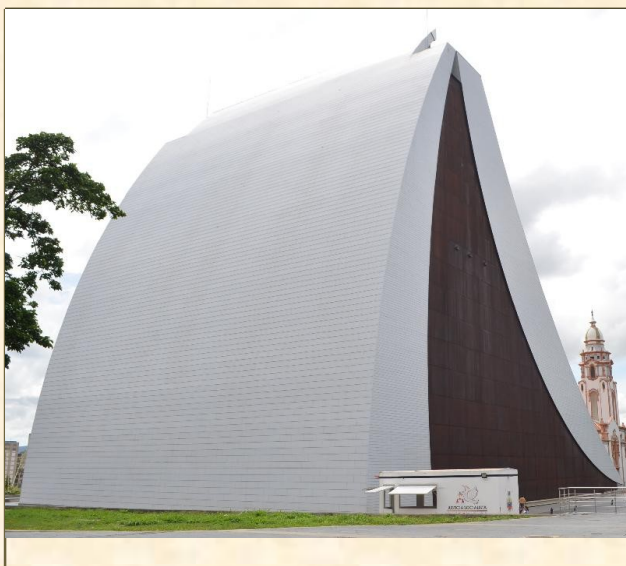
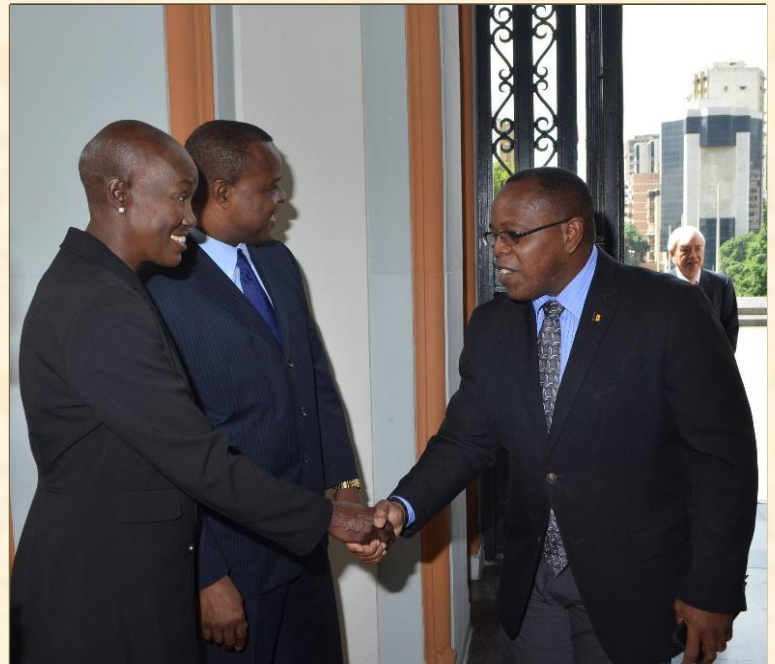
These new challenges have caused us to collectively draw on our inner resolve and be even more determined. Domestically, we have grown to repose more confidence in our own abilities and to rely more on the genius and creativity of our people, especially the young. The concerted and intense focus on the education of the nation's youth is an investment of gigantic proportions that has begun to pay dividends. The growing awareness of our history, heritage and culture and the legacy of our forebears, even amidst the barrage of external influences on the television screen and at our fingertips, are helping to mold and shape a society, whose strength also lies in its ethnic and cultural mix. We have journeyed far since October 1979 and have reaped successes yet, much more needs to be accomplished.

The challenges have also spurred the growth and development of new relationships through the implementation of an independent foreign policy, which is forward looking and progressive. Solidarity and fraternal relationships assume greater significance. The widening of the scope for convergence beyond the traditional concentric circles of integration, to include our Latin American neighbours has taken root and; a greater understanding and awareness of the climate change agenda all find resonance in a foreign policy which is both bold and creative.

Likewise, our strident advocacy in several international fora in which we participate, for democracy and the rule of law, multilateralism and defence of the interests of small, vulnerable island states, sets us apart as a small nation which has earned the respect of the international community. There is no better manifestation of this respect than St. Vincent and the Grenadines' accession to the United Nations Security Council for the two-year period January 2010 to December 2021, achieved with the votes and confidence of 96 percent of the world's nations.

As the smallest member state of the 74-year old United Nations to ever achieve that distinction, this historic milestone has to be classified among the highest of our achievements, the crowning glory of our nation state as a member of the international community of nations, in this the 40th year of the reclamation of our Independence. There is no better way for us to celebrate as a nation state. We all should be justly proud.

The SVG Embassy in Caracas, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela under the auspices of H.E. Mr. Andreas Wickham successfully held a solemn wreath laying ceremony in Caracas on the 25th October, 2019 to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of Independence.



H.E. Ambassador Andreas Wickham greeting delegates attending the function to mark the 40th Independence Anniversary celebration of SVG.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines Participation in Geneva Week



The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade & Commerce represented this country at the 39th Geneva Week General Council meeting which was held at the World Trade Organization from the 14th – 18th October 2019. During the week, a number of issues were discussed including Trade and Natural Disaster, Trade and Gender, Fisheries subsidies Negotiations, Agriculture, E-commerce and World Trade Organisation (WTO) Reform.

At the Trade Negotiation Committee, Permanent Secretary, Mrs. Sandy Peters-Phillips delivered a statement on behalf of the OECS and reiterated that for Small States the WTO is more than a collection of rules, more than a seat for the adjudication of disputes and more than a focal point for transparency - the WTO she reminded, serves as an insurance policy against the arbitrary use of economic force by the strong against the

weak. It provides a forum for the concerns of both the strong and the weak to be ventilated.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines joined with other countries including, Saint Lucia, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka and Vanuatu as co-sponsor of a proposal on Expanding the Scope and Mandate for the Geneva Week. This initiative will allow for representatives from Member States that do not have a permanent Mission in Geneva to spend a week at the WTO to receive an overview of the main developments taking place such as the WTO Reform, the Joint Statement Initiatives, Agriculture, Fisheries subsidies and Services Negotiations. The Geneva Week Programme offers non-resident officials a birds-eye view of the multilateral process in motion.

One of the key objectives of Geneva Week was to update capital-based officials on on-going key issues underpinning the work of the multilateral trading system, allowing them to have a broader and deeper understanding of the Geneva-process and the means and methods of work within the WTO.

The members of the General Council also granted approval for the renewal of the waiver to allow for the continuation of duty free access to the United States to eligible products from the Caribbean, under the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (CBERA). The waiver will last until 2025.

DID YOU KNOW...

ABOUT THE NEW CONSUMER PROTECTION BILL OF SVG?

The Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is conscious of the importance of consumer confidence towards socio-economic growth, and its obligations under Chapter eight (8) of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas establishing the Caribbean Community including the CARCIOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), has carried out a series of consultations throughout St. Vincent and the Grenadines; and has collaborated with regional bodies to make this Bill a reality. This Bill sets out a framework that consolidates, in one place, key consumer protection rights exercisable in relation to the supply of goods and services. Further, the Bill establishes administrative and legal frameworks for the identification of violations involving the supply of goods and services, the physical and financial security of consumers, unfair trade practices and transactions and unfair contract terms. Where violations have been identified, the Bill also makes provision for both consumers and suppliers to be heard, for consumer redress and for supplier defense, where appropriate.

The Bill consists of thirteen parts as follows:

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Preliminary; | 7. Unfair Trade Practices; |
| 2. Consumer Department; | 8. Unfair Terms; |
| 3. Complaints; | 9. Product Liability; |
| 4. Settlement of Complaints; | 10. Consumer Safety; |
| 5. Consumer Rights; | 11. Recall of Goods; |
| 6. Duties of Suppliers; | 12. Distance Selling; |
| | 13. General |

BACKGROUND

The parties to the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas establishing the Caribbean Community including the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (Revised Treaty) recognized the need for the development of a regulatory framework for the protection of the interests and welfare of consumers in the CARICOM Member States. The parties further recognized that, but for a few exceptions, consumer legislation in the Member States was limited, dispersed, outdated and, in some instances, non-existent.

Member States acknowledged that consumer policy, consumer representation and consumer advocacy differ across Member States. A few Member States have established well-staffed consumer protection agencies. However, in some Member States only one or a few individuals undertake consumer representation.

Further, market regionalization has impacted CARICOM Member States. The removal of trade restrictions between some countries in our geographical zone has created the means for greater and easier interaction between consumers and suppliers residing in different countries. Whereas there has been an expansion in the choice of goods and services available to consumers, consumers may experience difficulty in accessing relevant information regarding the products and services that are imported, language barriers, denomination problems or increased risk of misrepresentation. There is also a risk of dumping of unsafe or poorly manufactured products. In a region in which there is disparity in the regulatory frameworks pertaining to consumer protection, products, services, advertisements or marketing practices that are prohibited or restricted in one Member State will likely be exported to less regulated Member States with the region.

THE NEW CONSUMER PROTECTION BILL OF SVG?

CONT'D

The recognition of the foregoing culminated in Part Two of Chapter Eight “Competition Policy and Consumer Protection” of the Revised Treaty. In article 185 the Member States are mandated to enact harmonized legislation for the protection of consumer interests in the Community. Harmonized legislation is required, inter alia, to:-

- (a) Provide consumers in CARICOM Member States with a common level of protection;
- (b) Avoid disparate responses likely to create obstacles to free circulation of goods and services;
- (c) Provide for the resolution of disputes in matters involving cross-border issues such as marketing prices, sales methods, contracts concluded abroad and circulation of unsafe consumer products; and
- (d) Promote inter-State and regional co-operation, particularly in market surveillance activities.

The Consumer Protection Bill 2019 seeks to give effect to Part Two of Chapter Eight of the Revised Treaty and the CARICOM policy on consumer protection, as approved by the Counsel for Trade and Economic Development.

PARTS OF THE BILL SUMMARIZED

Part I – Preliminary: Sets out the short title of the Bill. It defines key terms used throughout the Bill and outlines the purposes and application of the Act. It also sets out the terms for consumer organizations.

Part II – Consumer Department: Establishes a Department of Government responsible for consumer affairs (by whatever name called). It sets out the responsibilities, functions and duties of the Department.

Part III – Complaints:

★ Sets out:

- ⇒ The grounds for complaint, who may lodge a complaint and procedures for lodging complaint.
- ⇒ Investigative power of the Division including power to enter premises, discontinuation of investigations.
- ⇒ Procedures for summoning and accompanying rights of persons summoned.

Procedures for laboratory testing and reporting.

Part IV – Settlement of Complaints:

- ⇒ It provides for any ambiguity that allows for more than one reasonable interpretation of a part to be interpreted in favor of the consumer.
- ⇒ Sets out provisions related to unsolicited goods or services.
- ⇒ Sets out the consumer’s right to select suppliers and products, right to authorize services, right to choose and examine goods and rights with respect to delivery of goods or supply of services. It also provides for consumer’s acceptance of goods or services, right to cancel reservation and right to rescind or cancel agreement.
- ⇒ Sets out the right to information in official language and in plain and user-friendly language.

THE NEW CONSUMER PROTECTION BILL OF SVG?

CONT'D

Part V – Consumer Rights:

This Part states that ambiguities are to benefit consumers

Sets out mainly:

- ⇒ Provisions that deal with unsolicited goods or services: relief from legal obligations.
- ⇒ Provisions giving the consumer the right to choose, authorize, cancel or rescind agreements, to be given adequate information.

Part VI - Duties of Suppliers.

It imposes certain obligations and prohibitions on suppliers in relation to the supply of goods and services and in relation to matters in connection with the supply of goods and services. This includes obligation to provide information to the consumer as well as obligations relating to the disclosure of price of goods and services.

This Part also deals with warranties and return of defective or incorrect goods.

PART VII - Unfair Trade Practices.

- ⇒ Provides for false, misleading or deceptive representations, prohibition on restrictive trade practices and unfair trade practices.
- ⇒ Imposes certain constraints and obligations on suppliers in relation to – unreasonable transactions; (b) unfair or unjust transactions; and unconscionable conduct.
- ⇒ It sets out the renegotiation of terms and the offences connected therewith.
- ⇒ Provides for bait advertising, to print in good faith, pyramid selling and rescission.
- ⇒ Sets out the defenses for contravention of this Part and that the Court may order payment of damages or costs.

PART VIII – Unfair Terms

- ⇒ Provides that consumer agreements that contain unfair terms are unenforceable against the consumer.
- ⇒ Provides a means for determining whether a consumer agreement contains unfair terms.
- ⇒ Seeks to prevent the exclusion, restriction or modification of any of the provisions in the proposed Act or the exercise of a right conferred by this part. the context of consumer use only, limits the extent to which liability for loss or damage may be excluded or restricted.
- ⇒ Seeks to prevent the exclusion or restriction of liability for breach of obligations arising from any enactment relating to an implied condition or warranty.

PART IX – Product Liability

This section sets out the interpretation of this Part. It provides also for defects inferred and liability of defects, damage giving rise to liability, prohibitions on exclusions from liability, defense in civil proceedings and application to Crown.

Part X – Consumer Safety

Sets out the interpretation of consumer safety requirements. It provides information on goods with inherent risks and the establishment of a regional alert system. It also sets out safety regulations and offences relating to the contravention of safety regulations. Voluntary recall of goods and suppliers to be given notice in certain cases and actions that would not affect insurance contracts.

THE NEW CONSUMER PROTECTION BILL OF SVG?

CONT'D

PART XI – Recall of Goods

Sets out provisions that deal with:

- ⇒ Compulsory recall of goods and compliance with goods recall notice.
- ⇒ Loss or damage caused by contravention of goods recall notice.
- ⇒ The procedure for conference to be held in certain cases.
- ⇒ It provides for that the Minister publish in the Official Gazette any goods that is of danger to the public.
- ⇒ Power to obtain information, documents and evidence.
- ⇒ Issue of warrants.

PART XII – Distance Selling

- ⇒ This section provides interpretation for this Part and what the application does not apply to.
- ⇒ It sets out prior information required by the consumers and the acceptance or decline of internet consumer agreement.
- ⇒ Payment by bankcards
- ⇒ It also provides for the performance of the contract and that the burden of proof is on the supplier.

PART XIII – General

Sets out provisions that deal with:

- ⇒ Provisions of consumer agreements.
- ⇒ Goods or services acquired by installment.
- ⇒ Apportionment of payments where service not received.
- ⇒ Supplier purporting to act on bill of sale.
- ⇒ Trade coupons and similar promotions and promotional competitions.
- ⇒ Over-selling and over-booking and layaways.
- ⇒ Protection of consumer rights and written agreements.
- ⇒ Rights reserved and no waiver of substantial and procedural rights.
- ⇒ Institution of proceedings under this Act.
- ⇒ General penalty provisions.
- ⇒ Establishing intention of a body corporate.
- ⇒ Regulations and Conflict of laws.

Amendments consequential to the Act.

Schedule 1: Template for summoning witnesses before the Department

Schedule 2: Deals with the appointment of members of the Consumer Protection Tribunal and connected activities.

Schedule 3: Template for summoning witnesses before the Tribunal

Schedule 4: Lays out the terms that are unfair of not individually negotiated

CONGRATULATIONS!!



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Commerce in collaboration with the Government of the Republic of Columbia held a graduation ceremony at the Ministry's Conference Room on December 11, 2019 to recognize the 34 public servants who participated in a training programme entitled "Dissemination of the Colombian culture through the teaching of Spanish as a foreign language" offered through the University of Pontificia Bolivariana, of the Republic of Columbia.

Remarks were delivered by Mr. Bernard John, Training Officer of the Service Commissions Department and Professor José Orlando Gomez Salazar. During his remarks, Hon. Sir Louis Straker, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Commerce thanked Professor Salazar, the Service Commissions Department and all those entities that played their role in making the initiative a success. Hon. Minister Straker expressed special thanks to the Government of Columbia for expanding the people-to-people exchanges in further strengthening the diplomatic ties between both countries. Sir Louis Straker also expressed the importance of connectivity and communication, which are two important elements in travelling and enhancing career opportunities. He therefore encouraged the students to know that being bilingual is an important tool that is marketable for today's working environment and thus, encouraged the students to continue in the next round in order to sharpen their Spanish speaking skills.

The 3-month training programme was held from September to December, 2019 and exposed the public servants to not only learning to write, read and speak Spanish but afforded them the opportunity to be exposed to the people and culture of the Republic of Columbia. Cohort 1 of the speaking Spanish programme was conducted by Professor Jose Orlando Gomez Salazar from the University of Pontificia Bolivariana. Cohort 2 is expected to continue in year 2020.

CONGRATULATIONS!!



Several diplomats assigned to the Permanent Mission of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations successfully completed a negotiations certificate training course for incoming members of the five (5) diplomats included: Mr. Gareth Bynoe, Ms. Janeel Drayton, Mr. Ellis Phillips, Ms. Jimesha Prince. And Ms. Hayley-Ann Mark.

The intensive three (3) day training course offered the young diplomats practical training provided the opportunity for the participants to spend most of the course time doing simulation negotiations exercises in mixed groups. Some of the courses that were covered included key concepts in negotiation (7 phases, PIN-model, the big canvas) such as Phases of negotiations (Preparation, Rules of Procedure, Exploration, Bargaining, Decision making and Constituency check); Distributive and integrative negotiations: simulation exercises in the context of the UN; Conflict handling modes: self-assessment and role plays in the context of the UN Security Council; Preparing for negotiations: analyzing the counterpart and using a strategic planning tool; Negotiations in the UN Security Council: lessons learned from UNSC membership and the role of diplomats; Multilateral negotiation simulation in groups- informal negotiations; Capital and Mission interaction: Capital decides what it wants to achieve and the Mission decides how to do so. Capital thinks of priorities and the Mission think of how to integrate them.

The training was facilitated by Clingendael Netherlands Institute of International Relations (Wilbur Perlot – Deputy Director Clingendael Academy and Christiaan Nelisse -Training & Research and was hosted by the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations. The duration of the course ran from October 30, 2019 to November 1, 2019.

The Ministry wishes the young diplomats continuous success as they continue their work at the Permanent Mission.



*From our hearts to yours.
May 2020 be filled with an abundance of joy, happiness
and much success.*

*From the
Minister and Staff
of the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Commerce*



***Best wishes from the
Permanent Secretary in the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Trade & Commerce,
Mrs. Sandy Peters-Phillips***

The year of 2019 was a successful year for the Ministry and we must pause to reflect on the achievements we have made over this past year. These include, but not limited to the finalization of the Consumer Protection Bill, coordination of the Chairmanship of CARIFORUM, OECS and

CARICOM initiatives and Trade Missions. Additionally two (2) of the major contributions made towards national development included the facilitation of technical and economic cooperation agreements with bilateral partners and the election of St. Vincent and the Grenadines non-permanent member on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the period 2020-2021. This is due to the commitment and dedication of members of staff both in capital and in our overseas missions. The team work demonstrated by all must be commended.

In 2020, the Ministry will continue to work towards developing and implementing strategies that will widen and deepen the SVG's diplomatic relations, and, reaffirm our nation's pledge and to be a responsible actor in the international community. Moreover we endeavour to attain a strong and external trade position. I anticipate an intense 2020 and trust that we will continue our post as nation builders.

To conclude, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of staff for their invaluable contributions to the work of the Ministry throughout the year. A special thanks also to our bilateral partners including our sister islands in the OECS and CARICOM for their continuous support and dedication provided in advancing St. Vincent and the Grenadines development. Special mentioned must also be made of the various international and regional institutions, public and private sector and the general public for their continued support and collaboration. We look forward to your continued partnership in the New Year as we advance the mandate of the Ministry.

A prosperous and productive 2020 to everyone.



THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TRADE & COMMERCE



ESSAY WRITING COMPETITION 2020

Group Prizes

Envoys Category – Trophy, Smart Phone & \$300

Ambassadors Category – Trophy, Smart Phone & \$500

**1ST
PLACE**

Envoys Category – Trophy, Smart Phone & \$200

Ambassadors Category – Trophy, Smart Phone & \$400

**2ND
PLACE**

Envoys Category – Trophy, Smart Phone & \$100

Ambassadors Category – Trophy, Smart Phone & \$300

**3RD
PLACE**

ESSAY QUESTIONS

ENVOYS CATEGORY: Age range - 9 to 13 years

1. 195 countries, hundreds of official languages and opportunities galore...every Vincentian should learn a foreign language. Discuss. **OR**
2. Travel is fun but visas are not. Why do countries impose visa requirements? **OR**
3. "My exporting journey" - Imagine that you can manufacture and export one product from St. Vincent and the Grenadines, what product would you export and why?

ESSAY QUESTIONS

AMBASSADORS CATEGORY: Age range - 14 to 18 years

1. St. Vincent and the Grenadines makes history - the smallest country to be elected to serve on the UN Security Council. What is the significance of our two year tenure? **OR**
2. Opportunities Abound! St. Vincent and the Grenadines opens new Mission in Taiwan. Discuss. **OR**
3. Consumers have no rights in this country! Explain why you agree or disagree with this statement.

ESSAYS MUST BE SUBMITTED – in font size 12, double spaced, Times New Roman – to email address svgforeign@gmail.com

Submission Deadline: 27th March 2020

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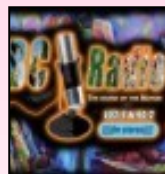
ESSAY WRITING COMPETITION 2020

All participants in the 2020 Essay Writing Competition should ensure that the following guidelines are followed:

1. The ESSAY COMPETITION is open only to nationals and residents of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.
2. EACH participant must select a category depending on their age by 1st April, 2020.
3. Participants in the Envoys category MUST be aged 9 to 13 years.
4. Participants in the Ambassadors category MUST be aged 14 to 18 years.
5. SUBMISSIONS must be written in Standard English.
6. SUBMISSIONS must have a cover page.
7. SUBMISSIONS must include the following details in the header of the document: Name of Participant, School of Participant, E-mail Address, Telephone Number and Word Count.
8. SUBMISSIONS must include page numbers at the bottom of each page.
9. PLAGIARISM is NOT ACCEPTED in the submission. All participants guilty of plagiarism will be disqualified. Research is expected but be sure to write the source of your information if necessary.

COMPETITION GUIDELINES

10. WORD COUNT- All participants are required to strictly adhere to the word count. In the Envoys category (300 – 600 words) and in the Ambassadors category (1,000 –1,500 words). Submissions must have a clear introduction, body and conclusion.
11. THE FINAL COPY submitted must be the participant's own work and should not be excessively corrected or improved by another person.
12. EACH participant, through entering the competition, agrees to the publishing of their name and essay on the website and social media pages of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade & Commerce.
13. SUBMISSIONS must be typed and in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx.), or in PDF Format (.pdf). Each submission must be typed in Times New Roman font size 12.
14. ALL SUBMISSIONS must be submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Commerce by 5:00 p.m. on 27th March, 2020.
15. ALL SUBMISSIONS must be made via e-mail to svgforeign@gmail.com.



TUNE INTO NBC RADIO on 107.5 and 90.7 EVERY THURSDAY AT 9:30 A.M. for the Ministry's weekly radio segment as we share the work and achievements of the various units and Departments.



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