



THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TRADE AND COMMERCE

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

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An anthology showcasing the perspectives of young Vincentians on topics related to trade, bilateral/regional/multilateral diplomacy and consular affairs.

195 countries, hundreds of official languages and opportunities galore... every Vincentian should learn a foreign language. Discuss.



Essay written by
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School



Buenos Dias! Hallo! Bonjour! As a thirteen-year old Vincentian, I can unequivocally state that there are many benefits to be derived from speaking a foreign language. Being bilingual or multilingual places one in a universally high level of human understanding, and affords one a plethora of opportunities regardless of age, gender or social status. Furthermore, with a total of 195 countries and roughly 6,500 languages spoken worldwide, there is a potential, inimical rift in communication among nations. As Vincentians, we can grow and reap multiple benefits as a nation and avail ourselves opportunities for development personally, professionally, and nationally from the mastering of a foreign language.

The ability to master a foreign language enhances a young individual's cognitive skills to become intrinsic learners and better problem solvers, while acquiring positive, lifelong and scholastic attitudes and skills. According to Dr. Gregory Poarch, Ph.D., language learning has positively impacted cognitive skills in areas such as problem solving, listening skills, social interaction with peers and an overall improved performance in the classroom. As a result, teachers and parents can recognize the notable difference in test scores whether in Mathematics, Vocabulary building and Reading Comprehension, in contrast to that of a monolingual student.

Being multilingual distinguishes one from a monolingual in the workplace, for the former is regarded as an important asset for businesses that intend to expand internationally. Such individuals possess a multiplicity of valuable skills ranging from translation of documents to the elimination of miscommunication. Employers tend to prioritize these individuals for their ability to communicate and interconnect exceedingly better than others. Such candidates help to bridge the gap between businesses and potential clientele. Companies need multilingual employees who can help them explore new business opportunities in foreign countries.

Our country has extraordinary potential with its people being its greatest resource. There are more opportunities for tertiary education in countries such as Cuba, Taiwan and Martinique, which implies that even though we are a relatively young nation, we are afforded opportunities to learn a foreign language and simultaneously develop a career. Our people should become aware of the need to learn languages in order to make an impact in this increasingly globalized world.

Additionally, having qualified representatives abroad affords us the platform for our voices and concerns to be heard and addressed at international forums such as the United Nations. It is, therefore, imperative that we take advantage of the many career opportunities available such as: tour guides, teachers of foreign languages, interpreter/translator, flight attendants, analyst or associate at ECCB, World Bank, IMF, Vincentian embassies and at United Nations, to name a few.

Consequently, there are more advantages for Vincentians, personally and professionally, as we change our views on language learning, hence, enhancing our intellect and marketability for the global workplace. This gives one an edge in life as it affords the opportunity to travel for work or pleasure. As a result, language competency

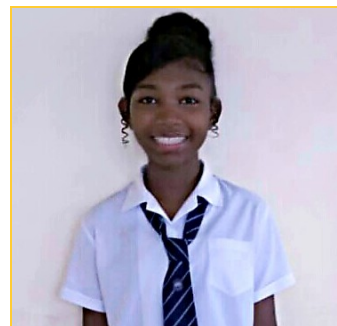
195 countries, hundreds of official languages and opportunities galore... every Vincentian should learn a foreign language. Discuss.

transcends spoken language as one gains cultural sensitivity, love and appreciation for another culture.

In conclusion, let me reiterate the significance of broadening one's intellectual scope by becoming bilingual. When Vincentians working in tourism, in areas of accommodation, recreation and entertainment, transportation, or food services can communicate effectively with tourists, this helps to strengthen that sector which, in effect, helps in accelerating the economic growth of our nation. Undoubtedly, accomplishing this task starts from the mindset of our world's people to realize the importance of acquiring proficiency and mastery in multiple languages. Adios, Auf Wiedersehen. Au revoir. "One language sets you in a corridor for life. Two languages open every door along the way." -Frank Smith.



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Travel is fun but visas are not - Why do countries impose visa requirements?



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I have always been intrigued about travelling to new destinations. Often, I imagine myself kayaking in the aqua lakes in Banff National Park in Canada, or zooming through Disney World in America, checking out the night markets, hitting the beaches or soaking in the hot springs in Taiwan or diving in Cozumel, museum hopping in Mexico City and visiting the pyramids of Teotihuacan in Mexico. For other reasons, I would enjoy visiting Africa, starting with Ghana. Alas, before I could do any of these things, like other nationals of my country, I would need to get a visa.

A visa is an official document that allows travelers to legally enter a foreign country for a specific period of time. Visas are usually stamped or glued into a traveler's passport to indicate the different rights which the traveler has in the host country. I can understand the need for visas when people want to study in a country, or when people want to migrate to, or work in a country but not when someone wants to enter a country for a short holiday.

Super powers like America, Taiwan and Canada impose visa requirements because they want to limit the number of persons entering their country and have knowledge beforehand of who their possible visitors are and have the records strictly kept. When the visa is granted, they also advise that there are possibilities of the visa being revoked without any reason being given. Visas always have an end date. As persons' circumstances change, they must apply for another visa. The host country would always be in control. Also, because they would have Consulates and Embassies all over the world, it is a means of providing employment for their nationals.

Another reason for imposing visa restrictions is so that countries can do their background checks on persons. They want to keep out terrorists by all means. This reason took on a whole new meaning after the events of 9-11. Persons applying for visas have to wait until the host country is satisfied that the application is genuine on all fronts.

The history of persons overstaying their time in host countries also plays its part in the stance taken for imposing visa restrictions. From time immemorial, persons go to countries for one reason and end up spending a lifetime there.

The reasons they give for imposing visa restrictions leave question marks in peoples' minds because visa restrictions are not imposed on persons from all countries. In those cases, they say that there is visa reciprocity - they have special arrangements with some countries. Unless there are special programmes, I think they want to keep out people from poor countries and small island developing states who they perceive will be taking away jobs from their nationals. Not only do they think that they would be taking away jobs from their nationals but will be satisfied with lower wages and therefore get jobs ahead of their nationals. Persons from small island developing states would also, they perceive be a burden on their social welfare system.

Travel is fun but visas are not - Why do countries impose visa requirements?

There is need for visa restrictions but for the simple holiday maker travelling for fun, the process is too complicated, too lengthy, too costly, too time consuming, too invasive, too taxing, I think. I would really like to travel to the countries named, and more but I would really start with countries that would welcome me with my passport as sufficient for the purpose. To me, the process of getting a visa is a deterrent to travel even though I can identify with the fact that travelling is FUN.



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“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?

“Oh, there’s a lovely island in the Caribbean Sea with cocoa, citrus, coconuts and fine banana trees...” The island of St. Vincent and the Grenadines has lots of natural resources. The tree that out numbers the rest is the coconut tree. Coconut trees can be found all across the islands. They can be seen on mountainsides, beaches and in backyards. Coconut trees have a variety of uses. The branches and shell can be used to make various crafts and the water bottled for drinking. However, in my opinion, coconut oil is the best use for exporting. Coconut oil has many uses, is in high demand and would provide jobs and benefit our economy.



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Coconut oil has many uses. In St. Vincent and the Grenadines, we traditionally use coconut oil for cooking, moisturising babies’ skin and home-made remedies for various illnesses, but what about the many other uses? A quick Google search would result in tons of articles discussing the many uses of coconut oil. Coconut oil can be used for hair health, to promote growth, keep the scalp healthy and reduce hair loss. In skincare, to treat acne, moisturise skin and help heal wounds. In internal health, coconut oil helps to promote heart health, boost brain function in people with Alzheimer's disease and burns body fat. These are only a few uses of coconut oil, but they are a few reasons why we should export coconut oil. Why keep it on the local market only? I would love to share this wonder working product with the world!

Coconut oil is in high demand. Due to the fact that persons are becoming aware of the many benefits, people want it. Coconut oil is needed in hair and skincare products, in supplements and for cooking on the global market. St. Vincent has many coconut trees. So much so that we should expand the use of them. We need to start producing coconut oil on a larger scale for export to infiltrate the global market.

Coconut oil production would provide new jobs. “The overall unemployment in St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) at the end of 2017 was 25 per cent, 3.5 percentage points higher than in 2012, and 4 percentage points higher than in 2001,” according to an IWN article, 18 January, 2018. Coconut oil production on a larger scale would mean a need for factories and construction workers, workers to work in the factories, farmers and other landowners to provide coconuts. If persons have a job, they have their own money to spend, no longer depending on the government or other illegal ways to gain funds, therefore a reduction in crime and increased spending on the local market. Coconut oil production would save lives.

The export of coconut oil would boost our country’s economy. “The global coconut oil market revenue amounted to \$5.9 billion in 2018,” according to Global Trade Magazine in their September 3rd, 2019 article. Can you imagine what a difference a percentage of that revenue would make in St. Vincent and the Grenadines? As a developing nation, the more money we make the better our lives would become. More funds to support education, improve the healthcare system, fix our national disaster shelters and bring us out of debt.

“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?

Coconut oil can do wonders! It is beneficial to the health of our bodies and the health of our nation. Coconut oil is a great export product because it is wanted across the globe, would provide jobs and boost our economy. Let's not leave our coconut trees to rot and become pathway blockages.



Essay written by
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“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?

At my school’s annual celebrations for Independence and National Heroes Day, the students at the Kingstown Preparatory School learn lots of folk songs and cultural items. One of my favourite songs is “Oh there’s a lovely island in the Caribbean Sea”. Some of the words are:



“Oh there is a lovely island in the Caribbean Sea,
With cocoa citrus, coconuts and fine banana trees,
There’s arrowroot and sugar cane, waving in the breeze,
St. Vincent is its name.”

My island homeland has a rich cultural history. It is blessed with verdant hills and valleys which produce root crops, herbs and vegetables that provide nourishment and sustenance to residents on a daily basis.

The Garifuna heritage of the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines has taught us how to use these food crops for healthy food choices and also in every aspect of our daily lives. One such crop is arrowroot.

Arrowroot is a root crop grown on the hillsides in the north of my country. Some of the communities include: Owia, Fancy and Sandy Bay. In these communities, the rich volcanic soil causes the plant to flourish.

At this time when a global pandemic has been declared due to the outbreak of the novel corona virus (COVID-19), the phrase ‘eat what you grow’ should have deep meaning for all of us. This is an ideal opportunity for me to share a taste of St. Vincent and the Grenadines with the world.

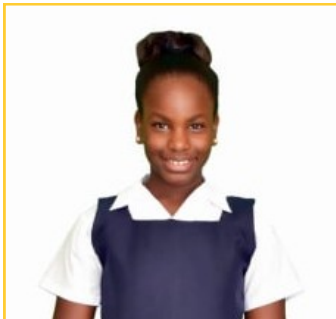
As a manufacturer, I will produce ready to fry madungo bakes. There are very few Vincentians who are able to acquire the skill of making madungo bakes. My great grandmother had to teach my grandmother who then taught my mother and her five siblings. Only my mother, gets it right.

I chose a ready to fry method because the food preparation is clearly intricate and may be a bit daunting for both Vincentians and non-Vincentians to prepare. With the knowledge of the preparation of the madungo that was passed down from my mother, I will produce madungo balls which will be refrigerated and given an expiry date. There will be no flour added to this blend but there will be a little grated coconut so that the user can not only fry when desired but may also use to make porridges for young children and older folk.

The madungo balls may also be dissolved and drunk to fight diarrhoea, as the starch helps to cure this ailment. With the absence of flour in this product, the madungo will be ideal for gluten free diets. More and more persons are having food allergies and reaction flour. My mummy also told me that persons with celiac disease will do well to increase the use of this product in their diets.

Essay written by

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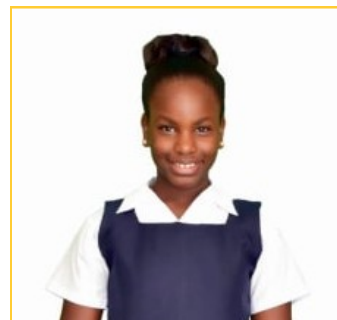
“My exporting journey” Imagine that you can manufacture and export one product from St.Vincent and the Grenadines, what product would you export and why?

The Prime Minister of Barbados – Honourable Mia Mottley was encouraging Barbadians to include arrowroot in their diet and indicated that trade with St. Vincent and the Grenadines is expected to help in this area. I think that my ready to fry madungo bakes would definitely add more export value than the raw arrowroot starch.

Fellow Vincentians, let us eat what we know and eat what we grow. The nutritional value of madungo bakes is great and we should not keep this secret to ourselves but share it with Barbados and the rest of the world. Let us sing “the arrowroot makes madungo bakes, moving around the world with ease, branded with the Vincy name”.



Essay written by
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Travel is fun but visas are not - Why do countries impose visa requirements?

Travel is fun but visas, oh no! I love to travel and most persons do too. People travel for different reasons which may include but are not limited to fun or vacation, education, health reasons and cultural exchanges. However it is not always easy and simple to travel to some countries because they impose visa requirements for non-nationals to enter their country. According to Wikipedia, a visa is a “conditional authorization granted by a territory to a foreigner, allowing them to enter, remain within, or to leave that territory”. Being granted a visa does not guarantee entry into that country which is done at the port of entry.

Countries impose visa requirements to enter their country for different reasons. One reason which is very important is for security purposes. Quite often a background check is carried out on the visa applicant before the actual interview is done. With the threat of terrorism and other criminal activities, countries aim to protect their borders via the visa application process by first screening the visa applicants. An applicant may be denied a visa if there are any suspicions that he might be a security risk to the country.

Another reason is to try to prevent persons from entering the country and becoming illegal immigrants in that country. The screening process during a visa application can help determine whether or not an individual is likely to stay on illegally in that country after entering it due to financial needs, health issues or even just to be close to other family members. When a person stays illegally in a country it is more difficult for that country to determine the composition of the general population which can affect how certain decisions are made regarding the population. It is considered that illegal immigrants generally cause an additional burden on some services in the host country like health care and educational services. However, because the screening process is not perfect some undesirable persons are still granted visas.

The visa requirement process which includes the application for the visa and the granting of or denial of the visa can be considered an economical benefit to the country imposing the visa requirements. According to an article in Stabroek News of July 11th, 2015 titled ‘US Makes Money from Visa Application’, it was concluded that the visa application process is a “lucrative business” for America.

Other countries who impose visa requirements also collect monies during these visa application processes. The monies collected are usually transferred to the state department of that country or any other related departments. Not all applicants are granted visas, however, the application fees must be paid and they are generally non-refundable.

Visa requirements can make it difficult for lots of persons to travel to those countries requiring a visa but it is an important process that needs to be carried out mainly to protect the wellbeing of the citizens of those countries.

It can also prove to be a hassle for the persons who wish to travel to those countries because several documents are needed to be presented and sometimes one must travel to another country for the visa interview. Although I understand why it is important for some countries to place visa requirements for some foreigners to enter their countries, I wish that one day some of the countries that require us as Vincentians to get a visa will no longer do so. Make travel easier and more fun!



Essay written by
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ENVOYS CATEGORY TOP FIVE AWARDS

1ST PLACE

MISS ANNA WARRICAN

2ND PLACE

MISS LAU BROWNE

3RD PLACE

MISS CHRISTI WILLIAMS

4TH PLACE

MISS TYLER MATTHIAS

5TH PLACE

MISS KUBA RANCIS

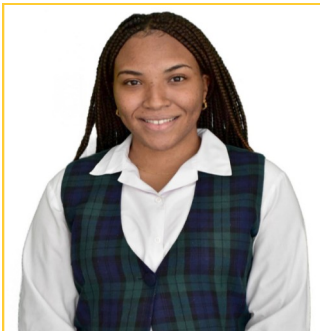
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St. Vincent and the Grenadines makes history- the smallest country to be elected to serve on the UN Security Council. What is the significance of our two-year tenure?



Essay written by
Mikayla Friday
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"The UN Security Council Flag Installation Ceremony took place today 2nd January 2020. H.E.I. Rhonda King planted the flag of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (S.V.G), the smallest country ever to sit on the Security Council." This was reported on the 2nd January 2020 by News784.com. According to CFR.org, "The Security Council, the United Nations' principal crisis-management body, is empowered to impose binding obligations on the 193 UN member states to maintain peace..." among its other objectives. The council consists of five permanent and ten elected members. The members meet regularly to assess threats to international security, addressing issues that include civil wars, natural disasters, arms control, and terrorism. This monumental achievement that St. Vincent and the Grenadines has earned, is indubitably auspicious to our nation and has caused the nation to experience changes in various areas, one of these is a proliferation in national pride, another is that the attainment of this opportunity would require an important level of responsibility, and this significant accomplishment impacts the next step for the nation.

The citizens of St. Vincent and the Grenadines both here and in the diaspora have just cause to brim with national pride with the election to serve on the UN Security Council, such an esteemed organization. As a background, the organization has four main goals which are stipulated in the UN Charter. These goals are, to maintain peace and security internationally, attain international co-operation in finding solutions to international problems, initiate amiable relations among nations and to be the main drive to harmonize the actions of the nations in the achievement of these goals.

UWI St. Augustine, in the Campus News, released statements in their news release entitled, 'Saint Vincent's Victory at UN Security Council,' by the Honourable Dr. Ralph E. Gonsalves. In this release it states that, "In his address, Prime Minister Gonsalves stated, "At the global level, our campaign carries the tagline: Friends of all striving for a better world and this fits with how we see foreign policy. In our representation on the UN Council we are advancing the interest of the Caribbean and Latin America and of course the world." He emphasized, "At the top of our agenda would be the security consequences of climate change...and second, which is in fact, fundamental to everything is to make sure that international law is upheld and preserved." He noted that "St Vincent and the Grenadines is small but will raise its voice against injustice from more powerful countries." In all of this our dear St. Vincent and the Grenadines has been given the chance to serve on the Security Council of this organization. As a nation, St. Vincent and the Grenadines should be filled with national pride to be the smallest country ever to sit on the United Nations Security Council.

The election to serve on the UN Security Council means that St. Vincent and the Grenadines now has an important level of responsibility. The UN Security Council is in charge of the 193 UN member states.

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?

The Charter stipulated six principal organs; the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice, and the Secretariat. There are also peacekeepers who, according to peacekeeping.un.org “protect civilians, actively prevent conflict, reduce violence, strengthen security and empower national authorities to assume these responsibilities.” The UN Security Council has primary responsibility for the upkeep of international peace and security, under the United Nations Charter.

The United Nations has undertaken countless humanitarian, peace-keeping and environmental projects. History.com outlines a number of these where it states, “Providing food to 90 million people in over 75 countries, assisting more than 34 million refugees, authorizing 71 international peacekeeping missions, working with 140 nations to minimize climate change...” The Searchlight newspaper held that, “ On January 9th, the Honourable Prime Minister Dr. Ralph E. Gonsalves, in an address to the Council on the topic of “Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Upholding the UN Charter”, highlighted that “one of the essential contributions to be made by small states like ours is the tireless advocacy for timeless principles enshrined in international law.”

St. Vincent and the Grenadines is now a part of this Council and has a voice on the world stage. The nation can now have a vote on all matters dealing with peace and security. This opportunity means that our voice as a nation can make a change. This can be beneficial, but it also means that this little island in the Caribbean Sea could be the one vote that results in significant global decisions being arrived at. Hence, St. Vincent and the Grenadines must be cognizant of this indicative level of responsibility.

Now that St. Vincent and the Grenadines has achieved such a goal, the nation should be curious of the next step to be taken. After such a momentous accomplishment of being elected to serve on the UN Security Council, St. Vincent and the Grenadines must, in the near future seek for higher opportunities and responsibilities. This nation has one of the smallest populations in the world and one of the lowest Gross Domestic Products (GDP). However, this election to the United Nations Security Council as a non-permanent member can mean a change in country profiling for St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Therefore, to continue this trend of profiling as a nation in the face of nations that possess a wealth of resources, both natural and otherwise, and also have larger GDPs, as a nation, St. Vincent and the Grenadines needs to aim for greater attainments moving forward.

There are only five permanent members on the United Nations Security Council, these are, China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States (superpowers). Can we afford to dream of obtaining a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council?



Essay written by
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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?

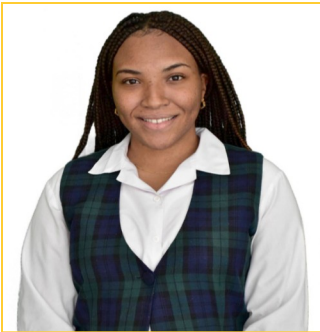
All in all, this profound achievement that St. Vincent and the Grenadines has attained, is most definitely propitious to our nation and has caused Vincentians to experience changes in various areas, one of these is a proliferation in national pride, another is that the attainment of this opportunity would require an important level of responsibility. This is definitely a remarkable accomplishment that impacts the next step for the nation.



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Consumers have no rights in this country! Explain why you agree or disagree with this statement

“Customers are the most important visitors on our premises, they are not dependent on us, we are dependent on them. They are not an interruption in our work. They are the purpose of it. They are part of it, we are not doing them a favour by serving them. They are doing us a favour by giving us an opportunity to do so.” Mahatma Gandhi.

Consumers have no rights in this country! I am in total disagreement with this statement. First let me define the terms consumer and consumer rights. According to the Draft Model Consumer Protection Bill 2015, a person is required to perform certain conditions to be regarded as a consumer. Therefore, it is stated that a consumer is “a person who buys any goods under an agreement or transaction and includes any other user of the goods, when such use is made with the consent of the person who buys the goods; or hires or avails him/herself of a service under an agreement or transaction and includes any other beneficiary of such service, when such service is availed of with the consent of the hirer.” In other words the buyer who is the final customer of goods and services is known as the consumer. An online dictionary defines consumer rights as “the legal and moral duties of protection owed to a purchaser of goods or services by the supplier.”

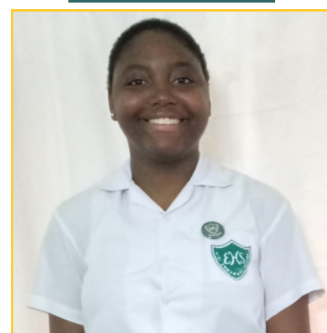
I am a member of a family who had a positive outcome, after certain rights were violated by a business person. Some years ago, my aunt visited a store that sells watches among other items. She was interested in buying a waterproof watch. After selecting a design that she liked, she paid one hundred and twenty dollars. Subsequently, the watch stopped working after one week of purchase. My aunt returned it to the store of purchase, where it was sent to a watch shop to be repaired. However, it was discovered that the watch was not to be placed in water. This means it was not waterproof. She requested a refund as the salesperson had misrepresented the information of the product to her. The store management rejected her request. She was very furious, bearing in mind she was not aware of her rights, but was willing to fight.

Upon gathering information on consumer rights, she was directed to the National Consumers Association, a non-governmental and non-profit voluntary organisation, which empowers consumers with the knowledge and skills for the effective protection of their rights and interest. With guidance she lodged her complaint to the Consumer Affairs Division in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Commerce. The matter was looked into and was highlighted that, it was an unfair practice to make misleading or false claims in relation to the consumer transaction. After some deliberation, the store management agreed to reimburse her in full.

It may be true that a number of consumers, like my aunt, are unaware of their rights, thus, they suffered unfair treatment. They do not know what they should do or where to go. They do not know the existence of rights because they lack basic education. They cannot avoid thinking of the economic condition which does not provide the atmosphere fit for consumers who are careful and demand quality.



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Consumers have no rights in this country! Explain why you agree or disagree with this statement



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Also, they compromise with the quality of goods bought because of limited finance. It is also true, according to Mr. Cuthbert Knights, former Director of Trade, that, where a comprehensive legislation is not present to impose such rights, it is a challenge for the pertinent authority of this country to successfully address the number of complaints that are received on a day to day basis.

However, the Ministry is working on a Consumer Protection Bill, while efforts continue to educate them about their rights and responsibilities. There are eight basic rights of a consumer. Firstly, they have the right to safety. This right protects them against hazardous goods and services to their health and life. Secondly, the right to a healthy environment. Consumers should live and work in an environment that is not threatening or dangerous. The Public Health Department in the Ministry of Health and the Environment is responsible for these two rights. They look at the expiry date of the products, etcetera. Then, there is the right to information. All consumers must be protected against misleading or dishonest advertising or labeling and the right to be given information that is factual to make an informed choice. Next, they have the right to choose. They can choose products at competitive prices with quality of satisfaction. Fifthly, the right to basic needs. This right guarantees survival, adequate food, clothing, shelter, healthcare, education and sanitation. The right to redress is a very important right. Consumers must be compensated for misrepresentation, inferior goods or unsatisfactory services. In other words unfair practices and exploitation. My aunt benefited from this consumer right.

Another right consumers have is the right to an education. They can acquire the knowledge and skills needed to be informed customers. The Consumer Division has been working tirelessly to increase its education and awareness programs. They are charged with the responsibility for consumer protection, education and advocacy. Panel discussions, exhibitions, monthly radio discussions were some of the programs they organised to help educate the consumers. Finally, they have the right to representation. This right will express the consumer's interest in making and executing government policies. This right can be executed using the Draft Model Consumer Protection Bill 2015, soon to be made law. The purpose of this bill will promote and advance the social and economic welfare of consumers. There is also a price control order, volume 5 CAP 161. The Bureau of Standards protects consumers from the greedy businessmen who abuse consumers by cheating in weighing and measuring, hoarding and artificial price hikes. The Consumer Affairs Division is in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Commerce, where you can lodge your complaint and they will look into the matter. The National Consumers Association is dedicated to the protection and promotion of consumer rights and interest in the country and the NTRC which is responsible for the telecommunication sector.

St.Vincent and the Grenadines joins the rest of the world annually on March 15th in celebrating World Consumer Day under different themes. This is to raise awareness about consumer's needs and rights and to ensure that they are not subjected to social injustice or market abuse that may threaten their rights.

Consumers have no rights in this country! Explain why you agree or disagree with this statement

This year's theme was Sustainable Consumer. It highlighted the need for sustainable consumption globally and the important role of consumer rights and protection.

In conclusion, Mr. John F. Kennedy in one of his speeches on World Consumer Day stated, "If a consumer is offered inferior products, if prices are exorbitant, if drugs are unsafe or worthless, if the consumer is unable to choose on an informed basis, then his dollar is wasted, health and safety may be threatened, and national interest suffers." Consumers are seen as our 'king' by the popular market economy. They drive the market, but too often, they are being treated and exploited by the use of various unfair practices by businesses. A number of provisions are being put in place to empower and educate consumers about their rights and responsibilities. Thus, making them more confident to protect, protest, and complain about wrong doing they face or see that goes against their rights. Clearly, we can see that consumers have ample of rights in this country.

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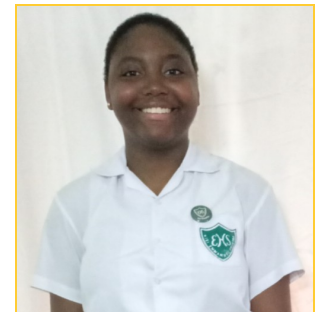
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St. Vincent and the Grenadines makes history- the smallest country to be elected to serve on the UN Security Council. What is the significance of our two year tenure?

"We are the audacious bunch, the tiniest country that ever dared to try to sit at the high table." This is a statement from Her Excellency Inga Rhonda King, this country's Ambassador to the United Nations, as she escorts St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations Security Council. The journey to gaining a seat on the Council began about ten years ago before Her Excellency was appointed.



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In an article written by Tricia Reddock, St. Vincent and the Grenadines' goal for its tenure was outlined, "The Security Council has an agenda of sixty eight items encompassing both country specific concerns in places including: The Democratic Republic of Congo, Libya, Iraq, and Sudan, and thematic, cross cutting security issues such as: terrorism, arms control, children and women in armed conflicts, subsidiary bodies which include sanctions regimes and other issues that threaten nations' security.

Within that framework, King sees a place for developing small island states like SVG to have a voice in solving the challenges confronting this body "Our purpose is to add value and to help solve these ongoing problems. Our interests are to promote international peace and security through collective cooperation, to underscore the link between climate change and security and address the consequences. We are also interested in looking at the root causes of conflict and explore more closely the peace/ security and development nexus."

In the event that a dispute leads to hostilities, the Security Council's primary concern is to bring them to an end as soon as possible. In that case, the Security Council may issue ceasefire directives that can help prevent an escalation of the conflict, dispatch military observers or a peacekeeping force to help reduce tensions, separate opposing forces and establish a calm in which peaceful settlements may be sought. If the situation requires further action, the Security Council may opt for enforcement measures, including economic sanctions, arms embargoes, financial penalties and restrictions, and travel bans, severance of diplomatic relations, blockade, or even collective military action.

The primary benefit of earning a seat on the United Nations Security Council is being in a member's-only club. Under Article 25 of the Charter, all UN members agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council. While other organs of the UN make recommendations to Member States, the Security Council alone has the power to take decisions which Member States are obligated to implement. Being a member of the United Nations Security Council is similar to being in a small, exclusive club for a small window of time (unless, you're one of the permanent members). The excitement of earning a seat stems from being in a prestige event and partially from the benefit of having a functional seat at the table.

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The secondary benefit that comes from the actual work being done is two-fold. First, a given country gets to have a direct line of input on how a particular resolution/response is formed. Now, a lot of the time that input is minimal; non-permanent members simply don't get as much of a say as the Permanent Members (United States, China, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and France).

This is explained in , Article 27 of the UN Charter,

- “ 1. Each member of the Security Council shall have one vote.
2. Decisions of the Security Council on procedural matters shall be made by an affirmative vote of nine members.
3. Decisions of the Security Council on all other matters shall be made by an affirmative vote of nine members including the concurring votes of the permanent members; provided that, in decisions under Chapter VI, and under paragraph 3 of Article 52, a party to a dispute shall abstain from voting.”

Upon creating the United Nations Security Council, the United Nations Charter appointed Permanent Member States of the Security Council, along with a special voting power known as the "right to veto". It was agreed by the drafters that if any one of the five permanent members cast a negative vote in the fifteen member Security Council, the resolution or decision would not be approved.

As discouraging as it seems the non permanent members do get to have a hand in crafting whatever it is that the council is doing. They also, when it comes to very contentious Security Council action, gain a little bit of leverage to extract outside concessions that they might not otherwise get. Having a vote, even a non-veto vote gives a country a bit of power.

In conclusion, the United Nations Security Council plays a valuable role in world peace. St. Vincent and the Grenadines gaining an input into these discussions and decisions is a monumental occasion that is worthy of celebration. Being a small overlooked country we have the ability to “shake things up” for the better. The team that sits on the Security Council along with the ambassador is filled with educated experts, majority of which are women, (which itself is a great feat), who will offer counsel and advice. The two year tenure granted to St. Vincent and the Grenadines will encourage great changes for many people in all corners of the world.

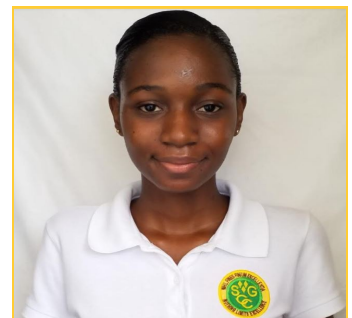
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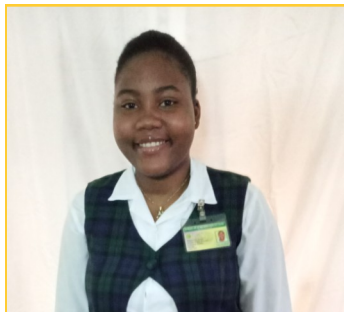
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"A small population, a small economic footprint, a small geographic area and a magnificent path of our legitimate and authentic Caribbean civilization. Our small island, mere irrelevant pebbles in the eyes of some of the large, the rich and the powerful, want to know better. Our small island must now form part of the new foundation of our international cooperation. Our challenges must be acknowledged and our voices long humoured, but unheard, must be listened to as the consistent advocate on behalf of people, progress, partnership and principle." These were the words echoed by our very own Prime Minister, Dr. The Hon. Ralph E. Gonsalves, as he addressed the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, as St. Vincent and the Grenadines achieved the singular honour of breaking the record as the smallest ever UN Security Council seat holder. We the people viewed this as a historical occasion. "It's sweet victory, sweet, sweet victory," the elated Prime Minister said.

The United Nations Security Council was founded in the aftermath of the second world war. According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, it's ultimate duty is to maintain international peace and security. In 1965, the UN Charter was amended, which expanded the membership of the council to fifteen. This includes five permanent members and ten non-permanent members. The non-permanent members are temporary members which hold their seats on a rotating basis by geographic regions, with five members coming from Africa or Asia, one from eastern Europe, two from Latin America and two from western Europe or other areas. Five of the ten non-permanent members are elected each year by the General Assembly for two-year terms, and five retire each year. Incorporating the most important issues during informal meetings, gives non-permanent members a chance to protect their interests and place issues that are important to them within the content of negotiated documents. The Security Council is the United Nations' most powerful body. St. Vincent and the Grenadines in our fortieth year of independence, would serve as a non-permanent member on this prestigious body for the period 2020-2021.

As a small island state, the significance of our tenure for the two years as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council is to have a voice and share our distinctive viewpoint in raising awareness and advocating for increased security. Thus, we promote matters that affect us directly such as the destructive effects of climate change. At a time when our ongoing climate crisis touches the lives of many people residing in low lying coastal regions and on islands scattered across the world, the Small Island Developing States perspective is pivotal for ensuring that the global community contemplates the consequences of their climate policies and our countries and peoples.

We will use the opportunity to demonstrate our longstanding belief in the principle of democracy, protection of human rights, collective security and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

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We seek to look at the root causes of conflict and explore more closely the peace and security and development nexus. As the threats to international peace and security have advanced in various ways, so too the needs for a diversity of viewpoints on the Security Council. Small island states having impressively resolved the challenges of peaceful harmonious societies. We have confronted these challenges with mutual respect, dialogue and an understanding that the distinctive circumstances required flexibility and innovation, with the issues at hand. It was this unique perspective, St.Vincent and the Grenadines was endorsed by the member states of the Caribbean Community and it is why for the next two years, we will continue to call for the reform of the membership of the Security Council to reflect modern realities and challenges.

This opportunity can open a gateway for Vincentians to move to various institutions globally. Our international profile will be raised and bring valuable experiences and opportunities to our country, as we work with our partners to uphold international law and the principles of sovereign equality. The delegation to represent St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the UN Security Council is diverse. Inga Rhonda King, Ambassador of St.Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations shares the view that, "Young people bring fresh perspectives to old problems."

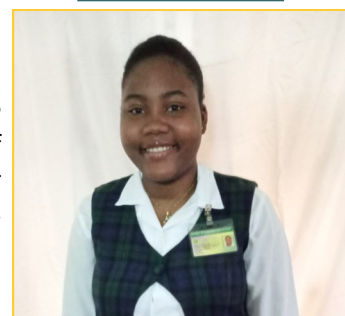
Jim McLay, New Zealand's former Permanent Representative to the United Nations, in an online article "Fair Observer," stressed that, "small states have a strategic interest to safeguard the United Nations system and defend principles of international law to ensure their participation as equal partners in global discussions. Also, by becoming defenders of international law principles and humanitarian standards, small states enhance their credibility as well as the legitimacy of the UN Security Council, which should always remember its obligations under international law."

Finally, we must maximize on its higher visibility to promote wherever possible our economic attentiveness such as the marketing of tourism and enhancing economic ties. According to Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, "A relationship with a continent, which is flooded with resources and 1.3 billion people and which has a large diaspora in Brazil, can be good for small countries such as St.Vincent and the Grenadines." We also seek to explore ways to build stronger connections and relationships between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council.

The eradication of poverty and deepening sustainable people centered development is our goal. Therefore, amidst the threat of climate change, the unpredictability of rapid increase trade walls and the daily uncertainties of inconsistent global policy shifts, St.Vincent and the Grenadines will seek increasingly creative pathways in pursuit of our people's right to development.



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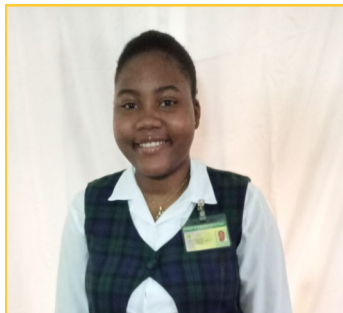
I conclude with the chorus of our national anthem, "What e'er the future brings, our faith will see us through, may peace reign from shore to shore and God bless and keep us true." We are now witness, as the Education Revolution comes to a distinct period, to how the boldness to hope has the nation composed to work with international partners at the highest level, on finding solutions and replacing world peace and security for all global natives.



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In June of 2019, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines managed to gain for itself a seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) with a tenure lasting January 1st, 2020, to December 31st, 2021. To begin, one must establish what the United Nations Security Council is. Founded on October 24th, 1945, the United Nations Security Council describes itself as an organ of the United Nations Charter responsible for “maintaining international peace and security” on the United Nations website. There are five permanent members China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States, and ten non-permanent members who are elected for a two-year period. Currently as the council stands the non-permanent members include Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, and Vietnam. Out of all these countries Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is the smallest in terms of population and territory and is actually the smallest to have ever been elected overall. This poses the questions, what significance does having its voice present on an international stage of this calibre hold for this country as a small island nation?

The major significance of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines’ tenure on the Security Council lies within the current climate crisis. As it stands the UNSC plays a major role in determining the efforts that the United Nations makes as a whole. The permanent members of the Council are the ones who dominate what the agenda of the Security Council will be for the most part. In addition to this, non-permanent members also bring forward their own ideas as to what the Council should be addressing which also gives them power regarding the agenda of the council and what it contains.

The issue of climate change is where a small island nation like Saint Vincent and the Grenadines comes into play in giving a voice to those who are already facing some of the harshest effects to date of what climate change has to offer. Small islands like Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, have already experienced the worst of climate change, with it not just being an impending disaster looming over their heads but a reality. From intensifying storms and the destruction of coastal areas, these countries have seen the worst of it. On the website of the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines’ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Commerce, in an article it states “Saint Vincent and the Grenadines will work tirelessly towards addressing the unique plight of SIDS, especially as it relates to the nuanced and unprecedented challenges posed by climate change.”, in regards to what the nation intends to do with its seat on the Council. By recognising the significance that the UNSC plays in addressing the United Nations overall reaction to climate change this country has brought itself to the front of international discussions to represent smaller, seemingly voiceless, nations who are facing the roughest of conditions climate change has to offer.

The overall effects of globalisation, not including climate change, on small countries like Saint Vincent and the Grenadines further makes it visible why this position on an international body like the UNSC is significant. Compared to other developing countries Small Island Developing States face greater issues with connectedness, a key feature of the globalising world.



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Due to their size it is extremely difficult for them to achieve what other nations have accomplished economically as they have neither the natural resources nor money to do so and are often exploited. A further consequence of their small size is that Small Island Developing States have fallen short of the benefits that globalization has offered to bigger players and rather have experienced its hardships and inequalities. No one small island can address these issues, so small islands must stand as a collective to represent themselves. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' position on the UNSC gives a voice to these small nations in an exclusive group that holds great influence and legitimacy like no other, on a world wide scale. In a statement, H.E. Mrs. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcéssaid "At the UN, SIDS make up 20 percent of the membership. In the General Assembly, they each have one seat, one microphone and one vote – and operate on an equal footing to larger states. I implore you, not to underestimate your collective voice." This highlights the importance of the voices of small islands realising their power as a united group and speaking on the behalf of each other to represent the collective and make themselves heard internationally.

In addition to this there is the added benefit of being on a deciding body of the United Nations. When there is crisis or conflict in the world the UNSC responds in determining how peace should be made. This is again exemplifying the significance of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines being a member of the Security Council. In making decisions about how to react to crisis around the world a voting system is used. Here non-permanent members are somewhat disadvantaged due to the permanent five holding veto power and being able to determine a resolution immediately, whereas non-permanent members must create a voting block to go against decisions of the permanent five in the council. Regardless of this, non-permanent members do indeed get to play a part in what the Council decides to do. Though there are limitations to how much say Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has, there is still importance of there being direct input on the behalf of such a small country into how a resolution or response is arrived at, at an international level.

When addressing the significance of this country's tenure there is no denying that prestige plays some role in the matter, though it is not the primary objective of its stay on the Council. By being on the Security Council, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is able to seek opportunities to push for its economic and political goals like other nations have before it. Compared to permanent members non-permanent members do not have as much power or prestige but there is still some gains to be had. For a small island like Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, there is privilege and great stature in saying that it is a member of one the United Nations major organs, and is actually the smallest one on the council to date, having accomplished something no other country of its size has.

To conclude, the Security council is an important organ within the United Nations. Saint Vincent acquired a position as a member on this exclusive council which is a milestone considering the size of the nation compared to previous and current members, with it being the smallest to date.

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The primary focus of the country's tenure is to address the effects of climate change on small islands on a more globally significant level where it has a greater chance of having its voice heard. In addition to climate change the country's membership also serves as a voice for Small Island Developing States as a whole. The position also allows for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to have a say in how the world responds to and resolves crisis and conflict. With all of this comes the added benefit of holding an exclusive and prestigious position when some perceive the country as being miniscule in the grand scheme of things.

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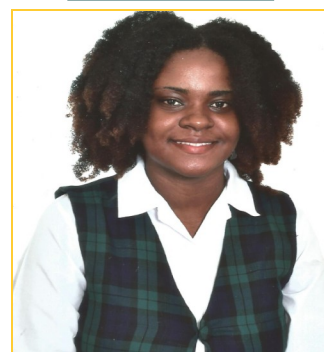
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