

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TRADE AND COMMERCE GOVERNMENT OF ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

DIPLOMATIC COURIER



In a few years, my eyes might be dim, my hearing might not be as good as it is now, and all my faculties might be deteriorating because of my age; but you have youth in your favour, you have a future in front of you. What are you going to do with your future and your youth? ??

> - Sir Louis Straker -Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Commerce

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ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES ESTABLISHES DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA



His Excellency Ellsworth John, Ambassador of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the Republic of Cuba and His Excellency Anthony Muchiri, Ambassador of the Republic of Kenya to the Republic of Cuba

On August 12 2020, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the Republic of Kenya signed a Joint Communiqué establishing formal diplomatic relations.

The signing ceremony took place in Havana, Cuba, where His Excellency Ellsworth John, Ambassador of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the Republic of Cuba signed on behalf of the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and His Excellency Muchiri, Ambassador Anthony of the Republic of Kenya to the Republic of Cuba signed on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Kenya.

Speaking on behalf of the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Ambassador John noted the following:

is yet another milestone in SVG's foreign policy and with African engagement countries.

Although 2. the ceremony marked the formalisation of diplomatic relations between the two countries, SVG's diplomatic relations with the Republic of Kenya and active engagement with countries on the continent of Africa is not new.

Collaboration between St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the Republic of Kenya has been long standing, as both countries customarily collaborate through membership and participation in the Commonwealth, Organisation of Africa, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) and the United Nations.



Signing of Communiqué establishing formal diplomatic ties between St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the Republic of Kenya

Furthermore, the formalization of diplomatic relations with countries on the African Continent coincides with the appeal by the United Nations General Assembly through Resolution 68/237, calling for the recognition of the period 2015-2024 to be declared as the International Decade for People of African Descent. The signing will 1. The formalisation of relations with Kenya boost St. Vincent and the Grenadines' thrust for deepened engagement with the African continent and augmentation of CARICOM-Kenya relations.

ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES ESTABLISHES DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA

Additionally, Ambassador John took the opportunity to express appreciation to the Republic of Kenya for its support during SVG's bid for a seat as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. Kenya will join St. Vincent and the Grenadines in January 2021 as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.

The momentous occasion was witnessed by His Excellency Valentino Longino Mlowola, Ambassador of the United Republic of Tanzania, Her Excellency Claris Charles, Ambassador of Grenada and Dean of the CARICOM Diplomatic Corps and His Excellency Dr. Lancelot Cowie, Ambassador of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines welcomes the establishment of diplomatic relations and anticipates greater bilateral engagement and cooperation with our Kenyan brothers and sisters.



L - R :

- Mrs. Charmane Tappin John, Minister Counsellor of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.
- Her Excellency Claris Charles, Ambassador of Grenada and Dean of the CARICOM Diplomatic Corp.
- His Excellency Ellsworth John, Ambassador of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.
- His Excellency Anthony Muchiri, Ambassador of the Republic of Kenya.
- His Excellency Valentino Longino Mlowola, Ambassador of the United Republic of Tanzania.
- His Excellency Lancelot Cowie, Ambassador of Trinidad and Tobago.
- Mr. Yahesh Monari, Minister Counsellor of the Republic of Kenya.

ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES ASSUMES CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)



Dr. Hon. Ralph E. Gonsalves Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves, Chair of CARICOM addresses the special meeting of CARICOM Heads of State and Government

St. Vincent and the Grenadines assumed Chairmanship of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) via a virtual hand over ceremony on July 3, 2020.

The ceremony which was previously planned to physically take place in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in July 2020 was facilitated online due to various travel restrictions amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Outgoing Chair, the Honourable Mia Mottley, Prime Minister of Barbados expressed appreciation to the CARICOM Secretary, the General Secretariat, and to the regional institutions for their support during Barbados' tenure as chair, especially during this year which has been "distinctive in the fullness of its challenges."

In his statement entitled "**Reshaping CARICOM to** meet the On-Rushing Challenges in Our Contemporary Global Political Economy", Dr. Honorable Ralph E. Gonsalves, stated that while "CARICOM has chalked up impressive achievements in its four pillars of integration ____ functional cooperation, coordination of foreign policy, collaboration. and security economic integration, including single market trading arrangements, the very make-up of the organisation calls attention to its limitations specific to cohesiveness."

The Chairman noted that issues on the agenda continue to be the challenges of COVID-19, the delivery of sufficient air transport, the strengthening of the region's vulnerabilities and the continued upliftment of the Caribbean civilisation.

encouraging his fellow Caribbean In leaders, Prime Minister Gonsalves said, "We cannot fight the future and its requisites; nor look forward to the past. So, we reaffirm that of all time, only the future is ours to desecrate. We must remain calm and patient, knowing always that sun brightens stone; we must not panic or be consumed by excessive fear or hysteria; we ought to stand askance from recriminations. We useless know ourselves as a people, and our immense possibilities, despite our limitations."

Caribbean leaders were further encouraged to continue to build upon the work that always exists within the Caribbean region. The incoming chair noted that "It is a great cause; and great causes have never been won by doubtful men and women."

Prime Minister Gonsalves accepted the Chairmanship and thanked the leaders for their continued support.

ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES HOISTS CARICOM FLAG IN HAVANA, CUBA



Hoisting of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) flag at the Embassy of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Havana Cuba

On Thursday June 2, 2020. His Excellency, Ambassador Ellsworth John participated in a symbolic ceremony to raise the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Flag in Havana, Cuba. The ceremony took place at the residence of the Ambassador of Barbados and was consequent upon a decision taken by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of CARICOM at a recently concluded meeting of the Council for Foreign and Community Relations (COFCOR).

Speaking at the ceremony, Ambassador of Barbados to the Republic of Cuba, Donna Forde, noted that the proposal was submitted to the meeting of COFCOR by the Barbados delegation and gained the full support of all the Member States. Ambassador of Grenada and Dean of the CARICOM Diplomatic Corps in Cuba expressed her delight at seeing the CARICOM Standard being hoisted in Havana and noted that there will always be strength in the unity of our Caribbean people.

The flag of the (CARICOM) features a blue background - the upper part being of a light blue representing the sky and the lower part of a dark blue representing the Caribbean Sea. The yellow circle in the center of the Flag represents the sun on which the CARICOM emblem is printed.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines assumed chairmanship of CARICOM from July 3, 2020 to December 2020.



His Excellency Ellsworth John, Ambassador of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the Republic of Cuba observing the hoisting of the Caribbean Community's (CARICOM) flag at the Embassy of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Havana Cuba

DIPLOMATIC COURIER

THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TRADE AND COMMERCE SUCCESSFULLY CONCLUDED ITS FOURTH ANNUAL ESSAY WRITING COMPETITION.



Back row: L-R: Sandy Peters-Phillips, Permanent Secretary; Honorable Sir Louis Straker, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Trade and Commerce; Mrs. Melecia Barnwell, Corporate Representative of Digicel SVG, and Dr. Doris Charles, Retired Diplomat. **Front row: L-R:** Mikayla Friday, Tiyana Roberts, Tiffany Pierre, Jeva Alfred, and Tianny Pierre.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Commerce successfully concluded its fourth Annual Essay Writing Competition with an Awards and Prize-Giving ceremony on Monday, June 29, 2020. In this year's competition, there were 33 participants from primary, secondary, and tertiary educational institutions across St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Students aged 9-13 years participated in the Envoys category while students aged 14-18 years participated in the Ambassadors category.

The topics in the Envoys category were as follows:

- 95 countries, hundreds of official languages and opportunities galore...every Vincentian should learn a foreign language. Discuss.
- Travel is fun but visas are not. Why do countries impose visa requirements?
- "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 topics in the Ambassadors category were:

 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?

- Opportunities Abound! St. Vincent and the Grenadines opens new Mission in Taiwan. Discuss.
- Consumers have no rights in this country! Explain why you agree or disagree with this statement.

Speaking at the Awards and Prize-Giving Ceremony, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Commerce, Mrs. Sandy Peters-Phillips, highlighted that the Essay Writina Competition provides a platform for students to learn and appreciate the functions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Commerce and allows for the expression of valuable viewpoints on related matters.



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Front row, L-R: Christi Williams, Tyler Matthias, Kuba Francis, Lau Browne, and Anna Warrican

" The Essay Writing Competition provides a platform for students to learn and appreciate the functions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Commerce and allows for the expression of valuable viewpoints on related matters."

> Mrs. Sandy Peters-Phillips Permanent Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Commerce

P.S. Peter-Phillips also noted that the 2020 Essay Writing Competition recorded an increase in the number of entries which included participation from a school in the Grenadines for the first time in the history of the competition.

Hon. Sir. Louis Straker, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Commerce in his address encouraged the participants to stay focused on their goals and allow success to be the reward in their chosen fields. Deputy Prime Minister Straker reiterated the commitment of the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the continued provision of opportunities for development of the nation's youth.

"In a few years, my eyes might be dim, my hearing might not be as good as it is now and all my faculties might be deteriorating because of my age; but you have youth in your favour, you have a future in front of you. What are you going to do with your future and your youth? These are some of the questions that Minister Straker posed to the students in attendance as he encouraged them to make use of the opportunities afforded to them through opportunities such as this competition.

Mrs. Melecia Barnwell, Regional Content Manager for Digicel St. Vincent Ltd. reiterated Digicel's support and commitment to developing the youth of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, having been the lone sponsor for the past four years.

Digicel provided the winners of the competition with Samsung smart phones, trophies, and cash prizes to the tune of EC \$2,500.

The competition provides a platform for youth to hone their research and writing abilities. It also allows participants to garner in-depth knowledge on local, regional, and international affairs and events via research and applicability to their lives, as well as to the Vincentian society.

ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES PASSES HISTORIC CONSUMER PROTECTION BILL



Hon. Sir. Louis Straker Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Commerce

Consumers have a right to access safe goods and quality services, to be treated fairly and offered effective solutions if things go wrong.

Through a collaboration with the CARICOM Secretariat, the OECS Commission, and the Jamaica Fair Trade Commission, the Consumer Affairs Department conducted several local consultations to guide the development of the Consumer Protection Act 2020.

This Act was passed in the House of Assembly on August 14, 2020. The Consumer Affairs Department is working towards implementing the necessary caveats of the Act, subsequent to its proclamation by the Governor General.

The purpose of the Act is as follows:

• Establishing a legal framework for the achievement and maintenance of a consumer market that is fair, accessible, efficient, sustainable and responsible for the benefit of consumers generally.

- Reducing and ameliorating any disadvantages experienced in accessing any supply of goods or services by consumers;
- Promoting fair and ethical business practices and social, economic, and environmental responsibility in consumer markets;
- Protecting consumers from all forms and means of unconscionable, unfair, unreasonable, unjust or otherwise improper trade practices including deceptive, misleading, unfair or fraudulent conduct;
- Improving consumer awareness and information;
- Encouraging responsible and informed consumer choice and behaviour;
- Promoting consumer confidence, empowerment and the development of a culture of consumer responsibility, through individual and group education, vigilance, advocacy and activism;
- Providing a consistent, accessible and efficient system of consensual resolution of disputes arising from consumer transactions; and
- Providing for an accessible, consistent, harmonized, effective and efficient system of redress for consumers.

The passing of this Act has put the Department a step closer to more effective consumer protection. We will continue to work assiduously with stakeholders to ensure consumer interests are constantly promoted and protected.

SVG UN SECURITY COUNCIL UPDATE



Her Excellency I. Rhonda King Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' Permanent Representative to the United Nations

July was a busy period in the United Nations Security Council with a packed agenda of activities conducted remotely in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. SVG's delegation continued to work closely in the "A3+1" configuration with African countries on the Council (Niger, South Africa and Tunisia) on many issues.

1. UN Peacebuilding Architecture: Resolutions of the General Assembly and Security Council called for a comprehensive review of the UN peacebuilding process to be conducted during the 74th session of the General Assembly.

Permanent Representative, H.E. I. Rhonda King has been appointed as one of the two co-facilitators who will lead the intergovernmental consultations during the formal phase of the review process, which will begin on September 2020. Ambassador King will be supported within the Mission by Special Advisers Mr. Ellis Phillips and Mr. Dominic Brisbane.

2. CARICOM IMPACS Virtual Security Conference (Securing Our Community Within the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond):

The first ever virtual security conference in the Caribbean Community was held from 27-31 July. CARICOM IMPACS brought together a network of practitioners, security experts, government officials, academics, private sector representatives and civil society officials to discuss the challenges, impact, and implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on the security of our region.

Ambassador King participated in session 1 under the theme: "*Peace, Security and Development - Roadmap for the Future*", where she emphasised the mutually reinforcing nature of peace, security, and development. She further noted that the current pandemic has exposed and exacerbated many of the vulnerabilities and inequalities both within and among countries and threatens to derail many of the gains made with the Sustainable Development Goals.

3. UN Office in West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS):

The A3+1 celebrated the numerous elections that have occurred despite the ongoing pandemic. Many of these elections saw an increase of the number of women in key political positions. In the Sahel region, COVID-19 has exacerbated challenges including climate change, armed conflict and fragile health systems. Food insecurity and displacement will be major issues in the region. The A3+1 believes that the best way to face these issues is with poverty alleviation and investment in human development.

Visit svg-un.org for the full text of all statements and other updates.

THE WAY FORWARD FOR MICRO SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE (MSMES)



Representatives of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College -Everything Vincy Expo 2019

The COVID-19 pandemic forced countries to both implement and adapt preventative and containment measures. These measures includes, but are not limited to, the restriction of movement, border closures, and strict sanitization protocols all of which affected demand and supply chains critical to the operation and survival of lives and livelihoods. Consequently, the additional pressures of the pandemic induced economic contraction in many countries.

The most vulnerable businesses Micro Small and Medium Enterprise are (MSMEs). This is as a result of having fewer resources to withstand the effects of the crisis. The WTO reported that MSMEs represent 95 percent of all companies worldwide. They account for 60 percent of employment and contribute to around 35 percent of GDP in developing economies and 50 percent in developed countries. Recognizing their contribution to economic stability. several international institutions conducted studies have to ascertain the impacts on these enterprises as well as to propose a way forward that promotes development growth and that conforms to and complements the new normal.

The parameters that determine MSMEs vary across countries and regions. The most widely referred parameter is the number of full-time employees. According to the OECD Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are non-subsidiary, independent firms that employ less than a given number of employees. It outlines that the most frequent upper limit designating an SME is 250 employees, as in the European Union, while the United States considers SMEs to include firms with fewer than 500 employees. Small firms are generally those with fewer than 50 employees, while micro-enterprises have at most 10, or in some cases 5, workers. Given this rubric, it is worth noting that the majority of businesses in St.Vincent and the Grenadines can be labeled or treated as MSMEs.

All MSMEs are not created equally; however they are susceptible to several common challenges. These challenges include lower cash reserves, smaller supply networks, challenges in adapting to fast-changing policies, and lack of information. In St. Vincent and the Grenadines, agencies such as the Centre for Enterprise Development, Invest SVG,

and Chamber of Industry and Commerce have been tasked with providing support to these enterprises. They commented that several enterprises are facing difficulties; however, it varies across sectors. Among the hardest hit is the service sector specifically travel, tourism, and the creative industry. The tourism sector makes significant contribution to the economy of St.Vincent and the Grenadines as such the disruptions lead to a number of businesses encountering difficulties to operate efficiently. The agro-processing industrv noted а decline in production, attributed to a decrease in access to critical supplies at the local and international level. Locally, agro-processing was negatively affected by a decline in crop production as a result of drought during the early periods of the year.

THE WAY FORWARD FOR MICRO SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE (MSMES)

The universal response to the economic consequences of the crisis has been the implementation of stimulus packages. The Government of St. Vincent the and Grenadines negotiated loan and utility bill moratorium, VAT and tax waivers, wage subsidies, the deferring of tax payments, and the provision of critical supplies to farmers. The total package of fiscal stimulus and tax relief will amount to more than EC \$70 million or over three percent (3%) of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The expansion of the Promotion of Youth Micro Enterprise (PRYME) program facilitated by the government is a noteworthy initiative as it assists in building the capacity of these enterprises and promotes innovation that can uncover new and existing opportunities created by the pandemic.

The International Trade Center highlighted some guiding principles for the way forward in its 2020 Small Business Competitiveness outlook entitled "COVID-19: The Great Lockdown and its Impact on Small Business". These principles are resilience, digitization, inclusivity, and sustainability

- Resilience- underscores the need to prepare and strengthen systems to withstand threats. Risk assessment and management will include taking into account sources of threats and areas of vulnerability, whether they be social. physical, technological or environmental.
- Digitization- the pandemic has highlighted the role of technologies more than ever before. Information and communication technologies (ICT) that are accessible, reliable and protected can help businesses to thrive.

- Inclusivityrecognizes the need for cooperative action to move towards recovery. All sectors of the national economy, supporting institutions and agencies should be involved in the recovery and capacity building processes.
- Sustainability- the new normal has to take into account the effects of development on the natural environment. St. Vincent and the Grenadines is susceptible to adverse environmental challenges such as hurricane and droughts. As such sustainable development is of critical importance to this nation.

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and MSMEs have cooperatively developed and implemented recovery measures specific to the needs of these enterprises and the development goals of the nation. These measures took into account the conditions of the new normal, that if insufficiently managed can place additional pressure on the limited capacity of these enterprises. The road ahead for MSMEs should be paved by resilience, digitization, inclusivity, innovation and sustainability.



Dr. Hon. Ralph E. Gonsalves and Vendor -Everything Vincey Expo 2019

ANNUAL CENIO LEWIS EDUCATION FUND AWARD CEREMONY



FRONT ROW, L-R:

R: Hon. Montgomery Daniel - Minister of Housing, Informal Human Settlements, Lands and Surveys and Physical Planning, Senator the Hon. Dr. Mineva Glasgow – Deputy Speaker of the House of Assembly, Hon. Sir Louis Straker - Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trade & Commerce, Hon. Frederick Stephenson - Minister of National Mobilization, Social Development, The Family, Persons with Disabilities and Youth and Dr. Orando Brewster

One hundred and forty-three (143) students throughout St. Vincent and the Grenadines were better financially prepared for the recent resumption of school following the Annual Cenio Lewis Education Fund Award Ceremony held at the Methodist Church Hall on Monday, 24 August, 2020.

The Fund which was established in 2005 is replenished yearly by generous donations from Vincentians in the diaspora, by organisations and Honorary Consuls wishing to contribute to the development of education in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Director of Foreign Policy and Research, Mr. Mozart Carr encouraged the students present to stay focused and to ensure that they do not give into the many distractions that would seek to rob them of the opportunity to become productive citizens.

The students and parents at the ceremony were also given the opportunity to hear about the Police Youth Clubs and the benefits to be derived from being a member of these groups during a special address delivered by Assistant Superintendent of Police, Junior Simmons. Some of the benefits as outlined by ASP Simmons include; musical training, summer programmes and educational scholarships.

Hon. Sir. Louis Straker, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Commerce during his feature address took the opportunity to reiterate the government's commitment to the continued facilitation of avenues to assist the youth of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to develop academically. During his speech, he conveyed heartfelt appreciation to His Excellency Cenio Lewis, High Commissioner to St. Vincent and the Grenadines, for his continued commitment toward the annual fund despite the current global financial strain as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The number of recipients benefiting from the Cenio Lewis Education Fund has grown exponentially throughout the years; 2020 recorded the highest number of recipients receiving financial bursaries.

THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TRADE AND COMMERCE CONDUCTS PROTOCOL TRAINING AND SENSITSATION DRIVE

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Commerce, through the Protocol and Consular Unit, conducted a Protocol Training and Sensitisation drive among line Ministries/Departments within the Public Service of St. Vincent and the Grenadines during the period of July 27 – August 31, 2020.

The training was geared towards equipping stakeholders with the necessary knowledge and competence to effectively communicate and interact with high level State and Government officials, as well as to improve citizens' skills set and knowledge.

A total of twenty (20) departments within the public service benefited from the Sensitisation drive which incorporated training specific to; The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations 1961, ushering, etiquette, national emblems and other related areas.



Session with members of the Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force

Session with some member of staff of the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning, Sustainable Development and Information Technology





Session with members of the Carnival Development Committee

VINCENTIAN YOUTH LEADER IS 2020 CHEVENING SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEE



2020 Chevening Scholar Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

One Vincentian is among the Chevening Scholarship recipients for the academic year 2020-2021.

The Vincentian awardee is Mr. Franz George, a Vincentian youth leader hailing from Diamond, St. Vincent.

Mr. George will be pursuing а Master's Degree in Industrial/Organisation and Business Psychology to help shift the culture surrounding the guality work and organizational performance in SVG helping organizations and bv businesses to become more innovative and work friendly, efficient and impactful.

Mr. George will complete studies at the University College London.

Across the OECS and Barbados, there are eight other awardees including:

- Loretta Benjamin Antigua and Barbuda
- Simon Dias Antigua and Barbuda
- Franz George Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- Olvine Holas Grenada
- Danielle Howell Barbados
- A'Shane O'Keiffe Antigua and Barbuda
- Naomi Matthew Dominica
- Keryn Nelson Saint Lucia
- Toni Thorne Barbados

The Chevening Scholarship scheme is the global scholarship programme of the British government. The scholarships are awarded to exceptional individuals with leadership potential, enabling recipients to study one-year masters courses in a range of subject areas at UK universities.

The scholarships are funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and aims to support UK foreign policy priorities by creating lasting positive relationships with future leaders, influencers and dream makers.

Applications for 2021/2022 Chevening Scholarships are open and will close on November 3, 2020. Interested persons should apply at www.chevening.org.



Tune into NBC Radio at 107.5 and 90.7 fm every Thursday at 9:30am for

Foreign Policy in Focus ප Focus on the Consumer



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