

Special
edition



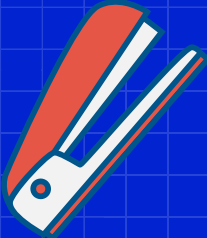
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS & FOREIGN TRADE

GOVERNMENT OF ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

DIPLOMATIC COURIER



*An anthology showcasing the perspectives of students
on the theme: "Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:
Youth and International Relations".*



MAY 2023

COMPETITION INFORMATION

ENVOYS

9-13 YEARS

1. How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected trade in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines?
2. If you were Foreign Minister for a day, which countries would you develop relations with and why?
3. National flags are significant. Why?
4. I am Vincy! I am CARICOM! Why do I love the Caribbean?

Word Range: 300-600 words

AMBASSADORS

14-18 YEARS

1. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) became the first CARICOM country to assume the presidency of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). Discuss the potential benefits for SVG.
2. What are the social, political and economic implications of the Russia/ Ukraine war on Small Island Developing States (SIDS)?
3. A tale of kings and queens - What are your thoughts on coronation and reparations in 2023?
4. In November 2022, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade launched the Import-Export guide. How does this help Vincentian entrepreneurs?
5. I am Vincy! I am CARICOM! Celebrating 50 years and identifying 50 things that make us uniquely CARICOM!

Word Range: 1000-1500 words

ENVOYS CATEGORY

AGE: 9 - 13 YEARS

I AM VINCY! I AM CARICOM! WHY DO I LOVE THE CARIBBEAN?



Written by
**Rylii Tyler L.V
Matthias**

--

St. Vincent Girls'
High School



The Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Constitution Order [1] states that one can obtain Vincentian nationality through birth, registration or naturalisation. My island does not have a programme for persons to acquire Vincentian nationality through investment. I am a proud Vincy, having been born in this blessed isle, my navel string is firmly planted here.

One's nationality establishes one's international identity as a member of a sovereign nation. As a sovereign nation, my island state has established and maintains close relations with countries internationally and is a member of the United Nations. Regionally, my island has forged strong bonds of political and economic cooperation and is a member of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). I am Vincy and I am CARICOM!

CARICOM was established by the Treaty of Chaguaramas, which was signed by Barbados, Jamaica, Guyana and Trinidad & Tobago and came into effect on August 1, 1973. It is a group of 20 developing countries in the Caribbean that have come together to form an economic and political community that works together to shape policies for the region and encourages economic growth and trade. [2] This treaty was revised in 2002 to allow for the eventual establishment of a single market and a single economy, known as the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME).[3]

As a Vincentian who is a part of CARICOM, there are so many reasons to love and appreciate the Caribbean region. The Caribbean is a special place and some key aspects making this region dear to me are:

1. Regional Unity and Cooperation: As a member of CARICOM, you are part of a regional organisation that promotes unity, cooperation, and integration among Caribbean nations. CARICOM fosters collaboration in areas such as trade, education, health, and

[1] Chapter 10 of the Revised Edition of the Laws of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

[2] Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) by Adam Hayes, September 28, 2022

[3] ibid

I AM VINCY! I AM CARICOM! WHY DO I LOVE THE CARIBBEAN?

disaster management, working towards the collective development and well-being of Member States.

2. **Historical Significance and Rich Cultural Diversity:** The Caribbean has a rich historical significance, having been influenced by indigenous peoples, colonialism, slavery, and the struggle for independence. It was a major hub of the transatlantic slave trade, and exploring the region's historical sites and museums can provide a deeper understanding of its past and its impact on the present. The Caribbean is renowned for its vibrant and diverse cultural heritage. It is a melting pot of various ethnicities, including African, Indian, European, and Indigenous peoples. This diversity is reflected in the region's music, dance, cuisine, festivals, and languages, creating a unique tapestry of traditions and experiences that are as varied as the patterns of the madras cloth yet our stories weave us together.

3. **Music and Dance:** The Caribbean is known for its captivating music genres, such as reggae, calypso, salsa, merengue, soca, and zouk, which create an atmosphere of celebration and joy.

4. **Exquisite Cuisine:** Caribbean cuisine is a delightful fusion of flavors, blending African, Indian, European, and Indigenous culinary influences. Each island also has its own specialties and local delicacies, contributing to a diverse and delicious food culture.

5. **World-Class Tourism and Breathtaking Natural Beauty:** The Caribbean is home to stunning landscapes, pristine beaches, turquoise waters, lush rainforests, and picturesque mountains. It is renowned for its tourism industry with the warm hospitality of the people further enhancing the visitor experience.

So, whether engaging in its rich history, cultural diversity or enjoying its natural beauty, to know the Caribbean is to love it and be a proud member of its citizenry.



Written by
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NATIONAL FLAGS ARE SIGNIFICANT. WHY?



Written by
Belle Adams

--

Sugar Mill
Academy



There are 193 national flags in the world (1). National flags hold great significance for countries. They are more than just pieces of cloth; they are emblems of a nation's identity, history, and values. These flags serve as a visual representation of a country and its people. National flags can evoke powerful emotions of pride, unity, and patriotism. Flags are also symbols of diplomacy and unity, and are used to show respect during meetings, visits by foreign delegations and support during tragedies.

National flags are often designed to reflect a country's unique history, geography, culture, and values (2). When a national flag is displayed, one should get a feeling of what, whom and where it represents. For example, the Vincentian flag, designed in 1979 by the late Mrs. Elaine Liverpool. Currently, the national flag comprises three colors: blue, gold and green with three green diamonds, forming a V shape in the middle gold portion. This flag is more than just bright colours and shapes. It gives a story of the country and people that it represents. These colors and shapes are not random either, but instead have been strategically placed to tell a story of our beautiful country and people.

The blue represents the sky and sea. Being a tropical island, the blue sky and turquoise waters of the Caribbean Sea are ever present. Gold is for warmth, the bright spirit of the people and the golden sands of the lovely Grenadine islands. The islands of the Grenadines are also proudly represented by the three diamonds forming the V. Green represents the lush vegetation and the enduring vitality of the Vincentian people (3). Therefore, when our national flag is flown, it represents a lovely set of islands in the Caribbean with warm and resilient people.

National flags also serve as symbols of unity and solidarity. In times of crisis or conflict, people often rally around their flag as a symbol of their shared identity and values. After the 9/11 attacks in the United States, American flags were displayed in homes, businesses, and public spaces across the country as a show of support and solidarity (4). Similarly, during the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine war, many people displayed the blue and yellow flag especially using social media to show solidarity for Ukraine (5).

NATIONAL FLAGS ARE SIGNIFICANT. WHY?

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries have flown their flags as a symbol of their determination to overcome the crisis together.

Flags also play an important role in international relations. They are often displayed at embassies, consulates, and international events to represent a country and its people. At the United Nations headquarters, each member country is represented by its flag, which serves as a reminder of the diversity and richness of the world's nations (6). Flags are also used in diplomacy to signal respect, friendship, or disagreement between countries. For example, a country may fly the flag of another nation as a sign of respect during a state visit. A country may lower its flag to half-mast to express condolences after a national tragedy and during periods of mourning.

National flags are also used widely in sports, where they serve as a symbol of national pride and unity. For example, during the Olympic Games, athletes carry their country's flag during the opening ceremony, and fans wave their country's flag in the stands to show their support (7).

National flags therefore hold a great importance for countries and their people. The significance of national flags lies in their ability to represent a country's unique identity and values, and in their power to bring people together showcasing a collective spirit of national pride, respect, and unity.



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I AM VINCY! I AM CARICOM! WHY DO I LOVE THE CARIBBEAN?

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6. loader (un.org).
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I AM VINCY! I AM CARICOM! WHY DO I LOVE THE CARIBBEAN?



Written by
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--

St. Vincent
Grammar School



I am Vincy! Although I was not born in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, my parents are Vincentians. Therefore, I am a Vincentian citizen by descent. In addition, I live and reside in St. Vincent and the Grenadines for most of my life enjoying the natural and historical features of my country, the cultural festivities, and our delicious cuisine of this blessed and beautiful isle.

As a true Vincy, I have embraced my country's past achievements and aspirations for the future. I am truly Vincy as depicted by my resilient nature. I have always defied the odds set against me, even in my mother's womb. I dispelled the doctor's odd against me and was given the name Adian which means "Mighty Warrior." That's a true Vincy.

Vincentians remain set on task and never give up until the goal is achieved. As such I have always remained steadfast academically and socially, focused on developing not only self but all those around me. I am dedicated, hardworking and determined, that's true Vincy.

The aforementioned qualities I have demonstrated by always giving my best in given tasks whether at home, school, or play. Vincentians have been described by many as being one of the most friendly and warm people in the world. Hence, I embraced this true Vincy identity by being kind to others irrespective of their gender, race, nationality, and ethnicity. Moreover, in my relentless pursuit in quest for self-development now and for the future, I demonstrate that I am truly Vincy.

Additionally, I am CARICOM because St. Vincent and the Grenadines is a longstanding member of this organisation and enjoys the many benefits offered by it. CARICOM, which stands for Caribbean Community was established by the Treaty of Chaguaramas and came in effect on the 1st of August 1973. St. Vincent and the Grenadines joined the community on May 1st, 1974.

As a member of CARICOM, some of the benefits accessible to Vincentians include, employment opportunities within the region

I AM VINCY! I AM CARICOM! WHY DO I LOVE THE CARIBBEAN?

and improved standard of living. Moreover, this allows for free movement of people, capital, and goods within the region. As a result, Vincentians can access employment and educational opportunities, expansion of trade within and outside the region and regional interdependence and cooperation with fellow CARICOM members.

It is evident that CARICOM provides individuals with opportunities to develop themselves within their country or region. Therefore, as a proponent of self and national development, I stand with CARICOM, and I am CARICOM.

Furthermore, my love for the Caribbean is inevitable. I live in the Caribbean and to many, it is paradise. In the Caribbean we enjoy a warm climate, an envy of many North Americans. I love the warm climate, as an American citizen, winter was my most hated season. Also, I do not miss the concrete jungle as I enjoy the natural features and scenery of my home and Caribbean neighbours.

I have travelled to other Caribbean countries and discovered that like my home country, they have an amazing culture, historical buildings, festivals, delicious meals, and friendly people. Also, when I look at CNN and see what is going on in my birth country, I cannot help but love the slow-paced lifestyle of the Caribbean. I have come to enjoy. That is why I would often say to my mother "Me nah go back to America".

In closing, as a Vincentian I stand with the ideals of CARICOM for the development of self, country, and region. Hence, I am Vincy! I am CARICOM and I most definitely love the Caribbean.



Written by
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St. Vincent
Grammar School



HOW HAS COVID-19 PANDEMIC AFFECTED TRADE IN ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES?



Written by
Lendre Pemberton
--
Biabou Methodist
School

Tanty Blackie was frustrated that she could not get her produce exported to Trinidad and Tobago. She became even more frustrated as revenue was lost because they were either spoiled or remained unsold. Tanty Irene had her share of worries when she could not receive her monthly supply of medication from abroad, and this was not the fault of Mary, her sister, who was not able to get the medication because of a lack of supply. Islands were closed, airports had no flights, hotels were closed, cruise ships were docked at ports, and economies were in trouble. Who would have thought that this would have occurred in the 21st century? All of these drastic measures were a result of lockdowns following the COVID-19 pandemic. In St. Vincent and the Grenadines, trade and tourism are significant sources of income and employment for citizens, so can you imagine the headache of a country of this nature throughout the pandemic? The action of purchasing, selling, or exchanging products and services between individuals, businesses, nations, and other entities is referred to as trade according to the World Trade Organisation. The COVID-19 outbreak significantly affected trade in St. Vincent and the Grenadines because of supply chain disruptions, trade restrictions, and digital transformation.

Many countries imposed lockdowns to contain the spread of the virus, and this resulted in a disruption of the global supply chain, affecting the delivery of goods and services. When the virus first emerged in China, many factories were forced to shut down or slow production. As the virus spread from country to country, the disruption was similar in other countries that manufactured goods. Consequently, this created a shortage of goods. Tanty Irene was one of the people who suffered as a result of this, as she had to find an alternative until supplies were made available. Additionally, with many countries on lockdown and travel restrictions in place, the transportation of goods became more difficult. This created a backlog of goods at ports and airports. Although St. Vincent and the Grenadines was not on lockdown, we were still affected as we engage in trade with many regional and international countries who had travel restrictions. Therefore, it was a challenge for Tanty Blackie to export her goods to regional counterparts.

HOW HAS COVID-19 PANDEMIC AFFECTED TRADE IN ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES?

Countries imposed restrictions on imports and exports to protect their markets, thus affecting trade in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. As COVID-19 spread near and far, import barriers for medical items and supplies, as well as agricultural and food products were reduced, while export limitations were placed. According to the World Trade Organisation in 2020, this was done to ensure that essential products were available on the local market of countries. Hence, St. Vincent and the Grenadines had to rely on friends and close allies to assist with equipment such as oxygen tanks, as not many were available for purchase.

The pandemic accelerated the shift towards digital trade in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. COVID-19 forced Uncle Glen to offer his products internationally. Prior to the pandemic, his products were limited to our country, but now, he is in the business of e-commerce and online delivery services. This shift has led to new opportunities for his business and many other businesses in the country. The OECD Secretary-General, Angel Gurrá, said "Transport and travel have collapsed, but digitally delivered trade and enabling services such as telecommunications have contributed to the resilience of our economies. This is indeed true.

Overall, supply chain disruptions, trade restrictions, and digital transformation affected trade in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, leading to significant challenges and opportunities for businesses and trade organisations in the country. Tanty Blackie, Tanty Irene, and Uncle Glen can all attest to this.



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HOW HAS COVID-19 PANDEMIC AFFECTED TRADE IN ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES?

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NATIONAL FLAGS ARE SIGNIFICANT. WHY?



Written by
Lynn Exume

--

Thomas Saunders
Secondary



It is 5:58 p.m. on Thursday October 27th 2022, in Maddison Square, New York. The event is the inauguration of the 43rd independence of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The highlights of the day were the flag-raising ceremony and the lighting of the Empire State Building with our national colors. Like, share, subscribe.

Let's raise a flag!

Countries are recognised on the global stage not only by outstanding individuals, but by a set of symbols; one such symbol is the national flag. Whether it's the World Cup Football, the King's coronation, the recent ALBA (1) games in Venezuela, waving high at the UN (2) and CELAC (3), independence celebrations, or important national and regional ceremonies, flags are on full display.

For the 234 countries worldwide, flags are significant for several reasons namely: identity, pride, community, independence, and patriotism. A flag is just a piece of cloth, but it has the power to tie people in ways unimaginable. It is a mixture of history, culture, symbolism, values and goals. It visually represents a nation's land, government and people. Flags consist of words, colors, symbols, and shapes. They vary in size and are made to allow them to sway in the wind.

Technology has certainly caught up with the famous flag emojis; nationals living abroad can identify and patronise with any countryman or woman, involved in online engagements that represent country and deserve an applause. This may happen in real time and can increase curiosity.

Here are five reasons why national flags are significant:

1. Identity - We are unique! Blue, gold and green are colours of other countries, but our Vincentian identity links with the three diamonds in the middle.

1 Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America

2 United Nations

3 Community of Latin American & Caribbean States

NATIONAL FLAGS ARE SIGNIFICANT. WHY?

2. Pride - A feeling of happiness to be associated with a particular country. Note the words of Consul General to the United States Mr. Rondy McIntosh, during the 2022 independence celebrations in New York: "I sought within myself something we can do to lift the spirits of Vincentians. To reinvigorate that sense of pride and belonging and to put us on the national stage, so that we are recognised as an independent nation and not a part of any other nation."

3. Community - We are a social group sharing common values, customs, and culture.

4. Independence - Many nations have fought hard to gain political and economic independence. It is certainly a reminder of the struggles of our national heroes like Joseph Chatoyer, and the resilience that has brought us thus far.

5. Patriotism - 'When one can say, 'no matter where I roam St. Vincent will always be my home', that is patriotism! and such individuals will proudly raise a flag. I can hear Becket singing 'St. Vincent, I love you' or the words 'I'm 100 % Vincy'. We have seen Usain Bolt and our own Kevin Lyttle on the world stage, representing with their flags. All will agree that this exposure will help especially small island developing states, with their tourism products.

People in every nation are connected by a common culture and history and are represented by a unique and significant national symbol, called a flag. National flags bring pride, independence, patriotism, and a sense of community and identity.

Fly your flags!



Written by
Lynn Exume

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Thomas Saunders
Secondary



ENVOYS CATEGORY TOP 5 AWARDS



1st Place

RYLII TYLER L.V MATTHIAS

2nd Place

BELLE ADAMS

3rd Place

ADIAN STRAKER

4th Place

LENDRE PEMBERTON

5th Place

LYNN EXUME



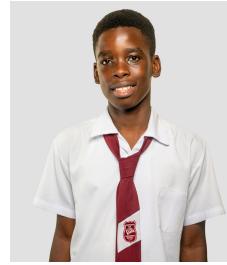
ENVOYS 2023



Belle Adams
Sugar Mill Academy



Lynn Exume
Thomas Saunders
Secondary



Tyrese Billingy
Thomas Saunders
Secondary



**Kathryn
Cumberbatch**
Thomas Saunders
Secondary



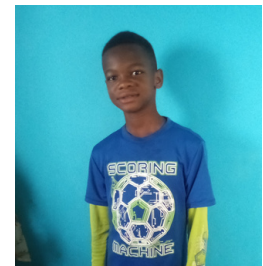
Cairos Ferdinand
Lodge Village
Government School



Rylil Tyler L. V Mattias
St. Vincent
Girls' High School



Lendre Pemberton
Biabou Methodist
School



Jamar Slater
Clare Valley
Government School



Cheryleah Cambridge
CW Prescod Primary
School



Matthew Williams
St. Vincent Grammar School



Adian Straker
St. Vincent Grammar School



Hyiesha Thomas

Seanakay Browne



Kiss Graham



Keyana Paudel

AMBASSADORS CATEGORY

AGE: 14-18 YEARS

WHAT ARE THE SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF THE RUSSIA/UKRAINE CONFLICT ON SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS)?



Written by
Leah Nanton

--

St. Vincent Girls'
High School



The legendary Robert Nesta Marley had great foresight as he penned the all too familiar song, "War". He had it all right until we achieve human equality among races, there would always be wars.

If I may quote Bob Marley, "And until the ignoble and unhappy regimes that hold our brothers in Ukraine in sub-human bondage have been toppled and utterly destroyed.

Everywhere is war, me say war".

According to the Collins Online Dictionary, "War is a period of fighting or conflict between countries or states." Today, amidst the global spotlight, some vulnerable small islands which comprise a diverse group of countries with limited resources are vastly impacted as the Russia/Ukraine war continues to unfold, its geographical ramifications reaching far beyond their borders. This essay examines the social, political, and economic implications of the Russia/Ukraine conflict on Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Due to the increased insecurity in the region brought on by the Russia/Ukraine war, SIDS faces a greater risk of experiencing relocation and humanitarian crises. This is caused when displaced people look for safety in nearby SIDS, placing additional strain on their already limited infrastructure and resources. Social services including housing, healthcare, and education may be overburdened as a result of this migration, which would increase demand on SIDS' populations. Additionally, these countries risk being left out of the humanitarian relief and disaster response as the world's focus is directed to the Russia/Ukraine war. SIDS face difficulties coping with the effects of climate change, natural disasters, and other socioeconomic problems because of their vulnerabilities, which are made worse by the intensity of the war and cast a negative light on tourism, and impede foreign investment in SIDS.

WHAT ARE THE SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF THE RUSSIA/UKRAINE CONFLICT ON SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS)?

Political implications of the Russia/Ukraine war on SIDS are complex and multifaceted. They relate to the influence of major powers. SIDS may be severely influenced by the participation of major international powers in the war between Russia and Ukraine. These countries might exert pressure on SIDS to support their geopolitical objectives. SIDS might become caught in the middle of conflicting interests, which could hinder their ability to pursue autonomous foreign policies and get aid from many sources. Moreover, SIDS may find it difficult to reach an agreement on the Russia/Ukraine issue if they already have relations with either of the two sides. The pressure to pick a side could jeopardise diplomatic ties with foreign nations, particularly those that support opposing forces. Therefore, maintaining an equal position may provide difficulties for SIDS, which could have an impact on their political standing in international fora.

The war between Russia/Ukraine has substantial and significant economic implications for SIDS. Many SIDS rely on foreign investment, tourism, and international trade. They depend highly on international trade because of their narrow resource base. The small physical size of most islands has made it virtually impossible for them to produce all of the goods that their citizens and organisations need on their own. Additionally, once international sanctions are imposed on Russia or Ukraine, SIDS may face challenges in exporting their goods and importing the necessary commodities. Such impact can lead to higher costs in products because of scarcity, reduced revenue, and financial instability in these small islands. For example, in the case of energy resources, our very own country, St. Vincent and the Grenadines depends heavily on imported energy resources to meet our domestic energy needs. However, we too were affected by the Russia/Ukraine war that disrupted our energy supplies and increased global energy prices, thus putting a burden on the nation. As a result of the rise in energy cost, this took away monies that would have been used for spending on vital areas like infrastructure construction, health care, and education.



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WHAT ARE THE SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF THE RUSSIA/UKRAINE CONFLICT ON SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS)?



Written by
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High School



The economic shockwaves of Russia's invasion of Ukraine have significantly impacted Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). The continuous war between Russia and Ukraine confronts significant economic difficulties as it engulfs global trade flows. Job loss, less tax revenue, and higher levels of debt can be brought about by diminishing commerce, foreign investment, and tourist arrivals. Inequalities already present in SIDS may get worse as a result of the economic pressure, which would also impede their progress in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals. The international community's commitment to assisting SIDS with their economic development may also weaken if attention and resources are diverted to the conflict, which would make it much more difficult for these countries to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth.

The Russia/Ukraine war carries significant social, political, and economic implications for Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The conflict's fallout, including relocation and humanitarian crises, diplomatic challenges, and trade interruptions can hinder the progress of and development of SIDS. It is therefore imperative that the international community recognises and addresses these repercussions and assures the sustained growth and resilience of these small island nations in order to prevent the exacerbation of vulnerabilities and the erosion of progress made from the war of Russia/Ukraine. Increased support is needed for SIDS's efforts in sustainable development, disaster response, and humanitarian help. By doing this, the international community can support the resilience and prosperity of SIDS and make sure that their voices are heard and that they are respected on the international stage rather than drowned out by the cry of war.

To borrow the words from the great Peter Tosh from the small island state of Jamaica, "We don't want no nuclear war. With nuclear war, we won't get far...It's just another holocaust. And we can't take no more."

WHAT ARE THE SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF THE RUSSIA/UKRAINE CONFLICT ON SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS)?

Nobody wins a war, for sadly in every war there are always casualties. In these wars, SIDS would suffer the greatest number of casualties. Casualties that we are quite unable to treat thus resulting in deaths. Death to the social, political, and economic sectors of our small island developing states (SIDS) where we become completely extinct.



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WHAT ARE THE SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF THE RUSSIA/UKRAINE CONFLICT ON SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS)?



Written by
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Social, Political and Economic impacts on small island developing states(SIDS)

The ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which began in 2014, has had far-reaching social, political, and economic implications not only for the two countries involved but also for the international community. One group of countries that has been particularly affected by the conflict is the Small Island Developing States (SIDS). These countries are a diverse group of nations located in different regions around the world, but they share common characteristics such as small size, limited resources, vulnerability to natural disasters, and a heavy reliance on trade and tourism. This essay will examine the social, political, and economic implications of the Russia/Ukraine war on SIDS.

Social Implications

The social implications of the Russia/Ukraine war on SIDS are significant. One of the most immediate effects is the impact on regional stability and security. The war has led to a deterioration of relations between Russia and the West, with both sides imposing economic sanctions and engaging in military posturing. This has created a climate of uncertainty and insecurity that has affected global trade and investment, and SIDS are not immune to these effects. SIDS are highly dependent on international trade, and any disruption to global trade flows can have severe consequences for their economies.

Furthermore, the conflict has also led to an increase in the flow of refugees and migrants to SIDS. The war has displaced millions of people from Ukraine and other neighboring countries, and many of them are seeking refuge in other countries, including SIDS. These countries are often ill-equipped to deal with large influxes of refugees and migrants, and the strain on their resources can exacerbate existing social and economic problems.

WHAT ARE THE SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF THE RUSSIA/UKRAINE CONFLICT ON SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS)?

Political Implications

The political implications of the Russia/Ukraine war on SIDS are also significant. The conflict has highlighted the importance of regional and global security arrangements and the need for SIDS to be included in these arrangements. SIDS are often marginalised in international politics and are frequently excluded from regional security arrangements. However, the conflict has shown that SIDS are not immune to the geopolitical tensions and security threats that affect the rest of the world.

Furthermore, the conflict has also highlighted the importance of multilateralism and diplomacy in resolving international conflicts. SIDS are strong supporters of multilateralism and have traditionally played an active role in promoting global cooperation and diplomacy. However, the conflict has shown that multilateralism is under threat and that the international system is becoming increasingly polarised. This has led to concerns among SIDS about the future of global governance and the ability of smaller countries to have a voice in international affairs.

Economic Implications

The economic implications of the Russia/Ukraine war on SIDS are perhaps the most significant. SIDS are highly dependent on international trade and investment, and any disruption to global trade flows can have severe consequences for their economies. The conflict has led to a deterioration of relations between Russia and the West, with both sides imposing economic sanctions and engaging in military posturing. This has created a climate of uncertainty and insecurity that has affected global trade and investment, and SIDS are not immune to these effects.



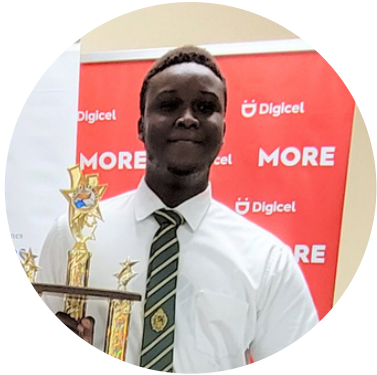
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Furthermore, the conflict has also led to an increase in the cost of energy and other commodities. Russia is a major exporter of oil and gas, and the conflict has led to disruptions in the global energy market. This has led to an increase in the cost of energy and other commodities, which has had a significant impact on SIDS. Many SIDS are heavily reliant on imported oil and gas, and any increase in the cost of these commodities can have a significant impact on their economies. In addition, the conflict has also affected global financial markets, leading to increased volatility and uncertainty. This has had a knock-on effect on SIDS, which are often small and vulnerable economies that are heavily dependent on external sources of finance.

The conflict has also had an impact on tourism, which is a major source of revenue for many SIDS. The conflict has led to a decrease in the number of tourists visiting the region, as well as a decrease in cruise ship traffic. This has had a significant impact on the tourism industry in SIDS, which is often a major source of employment and foreign exchange earnings.

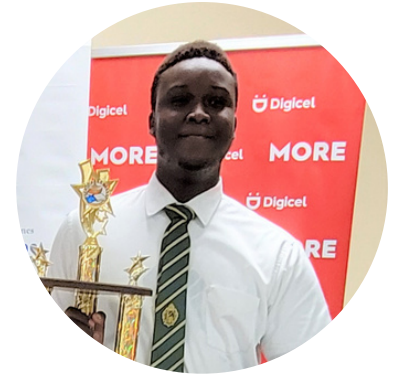
The economic implications of the conflict have also highlighted the need for SIDS to diversify their economies and reduce their reliance on a few key sectors. Many SIDS are heavily dependent on a small number of export commodities, such as tourism, agriculture, and mining. However, the conflict has shown that these sectors can be vulnerable to external shocks, such as changes in global trade flows or the outbreak of a conflict. As a result, SIDS need to focus on diversifying their economies and developing new sectors that can provide sustainable sources of growth and employment.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Russia/Ukraine war has had significant social, political, and economic implications for SIDS. The conflict has highlighted the importance of regional and global security arrangements and the need for SIDS to be included in these arrangements.

WHAT ARE THE SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF THE RUSSIA/UKRAINE CONFLICT ON SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS)?

It has also highlighted the importance of multilateralism and diplomacy in resolving international conflicts, as well as the need for SIDS to diversify their economies and reduce their reliance on a few key sectors. The conflict has had a significant impact on the tourism industry in SIDS, as well as on the cost of energy and other commodities. SIDS need to focus on developing new sectors that can provide sustainable sources of growth and employment, and work together to promote regional and global cooperation.



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WHAT ARE THE SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF THE RUSSIA/UKRAINE CONFLICT ON SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS)?



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Small Island Developing States (SIDS) is a grouping consisting of small countries such as Caribbean States. Although small developing islands vary in geographic features, and development progress, they share vulnerabilities as risks increase from global altercations. Fortunately, SIDS have the ability to resolve and reconcile from global financial crisis as seen in the novel COVID-19 pandemic. However, having survived that difficult battle, they are now encountering another hurdle of difficulties.

Despite the fact it has been over a year since Russia invaded Ukraine, with no signs of a resolution soon, this conflict has resulted in a number of widespread adversities, globally. Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are left to endure many consequences for example: disruption, and increased cost in the trade of agricultural commodities and food, drastic increase in oil and energy prices, jeopardisation of governments, and significant escalation in the cost of living.

In Small Island Developing States (SIDS), there have been several unprecedented disruptions, and an increase cost of the trade of agricultural commodities and food due to the recent conflict in Europe. Both Russia and Ukraine play a pivotal role in supplying crucial crops such as grain, corn, rice, and barley to the global market. Additionally, Russia is among the world's largest exporters of certain fertilizer, hence when combined, Russia and Ukraine, have the ability to put a strain on the global food market and food security. Due to their conflict, in which the war caused the food processing industry in these large states to become sluggish, many SIDS have witnessed an increase in the cost of food such as wheat and corn by roughly twenty-one percent (21%), and a food shortage. This has left about fifty percent (50%) of small nations dependent on international food exporters by now importing more than eighty percent (80%) of their food from other industrialised nations around the world. This is because Russia's ability to export to the global market are being blocked by global economic sanctions.

WHAT ARE THE SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF THE RUSSIA/UKRAINE CONFLICT ON SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS)?

The conflict in Ukraine has further affected the stability of the global market and food security especially for SIDS. This is because these countries generally have less resources available for them. In addition, they lack land, capital, and large-scale agricultural projects in comparison with large, developed nations. Therefore, their ability to quickly recover from the shortage of agricultural commodities and food will be hindered.

There has also been a drastic increase in oil and energy prices globally thus affecting the economy of small developing states. The spike in crude oil, natural gases and energy prices have had a negative impact on the commercial industry such as manufacturing, constructing, and food processing in Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Russia is among the world's largest exporters of crude oil and natural gases accounting for over twelve percent (12%) of the global crude oil production, however, their ability to export for the global market has been hindered by global economic sanctions due to their conflict with Ukraine. As a result, in the middle of 2022, the price per barrel of oil has seen about a forty five percent (45%) increase from January of the same year. This drastic increase in the price of oil has made freight and transportation costs more expensive.

Furthermore, this disturbance has negatively impacted the supply chain of goods for consumption in small nations and reduces the speed in the movement of goods, and even ceases the movement of goods to Small Island Developing States. Hence, SIDS are vulnerable and may lead to economic recession or no economic growth. This is because SIDS heavily depend on the importation of necessary commodities that are crucial for the nation's development and sustenance such as lumber, grains, raw materials, fertilizer, etcetera. This is because they have limited resources, thus their ability to quickly adapt, or recover to the decline of goods entering their ports will be a very serious challenge.



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The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has placed governments in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in jeopardy due to the consequences of the invasion. Not only have the governments of regions such as the Caribbean's foreign relations and trust between Russia, Ukraine and their citizens been weakened, but policy makers are forced to make new laws and regulations in order to soften the impact of the escalation in prices of agricultural commodities, food, oil, and energy, for instance, fuel subsidies have increased in meeting with rising global costs to minimise societal frustration. Also, many governments are considering reducing import taxes on agricultural commodities and food or even exempting imported items from Value Added Tax (VAT). Unfortunately, these measures to resolve inflation can put pressure on the standard and quality of living of the public and prolong the crisis.

Moreover, SIDS have observed a significant escalation in the cost of living, subsequently reducing the standard of living. Countries and their citizens, with a limited capacity to cope from the consequences of the invasion, have been facing a crisis in the cost of living. This crisis has constrained several household budgets and continues to by the rising food prices, rising oil, and energy prices, as well as governments failed efforts to handle the situation. This can restrain finances and increase social instability, hence reducing an individual's living standards as well as their opportunity for a better future, furthermore implicating long-term effects such as higher levels in poverty, rising inequality, and lower education.

In conclusion, the current crisis in Ukraine has undermined the activity of the global economy and the challenges that SIDS faced. Unfortunately, while large, developed countries have the ability to rapidly adapt by finding alternative energy sources, and agriculture production, Small Island Developing States lack that ability. Therefore, it is important that SIDS develop sustainable and long-term solutions that will be vital in reconciling to future challenging events. Therefore, to relieve food security and strengthen the social, political, and economic sectors of Small Island Development States (SIDS), large-scale investments from foreign donors are needed.

WHAT ARE THE SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF THE RUSSIA/UKRAINE CONFLICT ON SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS)?

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SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES (SVG) BECAME THE FIRST CARICOM COUNTRY TO ASSUME THE PRESIDENCY OF THE COMMUNITY OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN STATES (CELAC). DISCUSS THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS FOR SVG.



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On the 24th of January, 2023, at the Seventh Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), in Buenos Aires, Argentina, the thirty two Member States of CELAC, unanimously supported Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' bid to become the Pro-Tempore President for the year 2023. Undoubtedly, this signaled a great historical occasion for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, as the first Anglophone and CARICOM country to assume the responsibility for a combined population of over six hundred and fifty million people as the Pro-Tempore President of CELAC.

In the years before and after the fall of the Berlin wall, the Rio Group identified itself as a democratic voice for Latin America, but failed at uniting the region's voice. CELAC was birthed from a merger of the Rio Group and the Latin America and Caribbean Summit on Integration and Development (CALC); an idea of great thinkers such as His Excellency Hugo Chavez, late President of Venezuela, and His Excellency Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, President of Brazil. CELAC is a multilateral, intergovernmental mechanism, which was created in December 2011, to further the integration process. The potential benefits for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) as the Pro-Tempore President of CELAC includes the following:

1. Increased visibility and profile;
2. Prospectus for new bilateral partners which can potentially create new opportunities;
3. Positioning to influence and guide decision and policies of national interest through its work plan;
4. Training in the Spanish language; and
5. Positioning to receive and guide funding with respect to natural disasters.

While visibility is a transient term, the Webster's Dictionary defines visibility as the capability of being readily noticed.

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One of the most effective ways of lifting the profile of any country is by assuming the chairmanship or presidency of key organisations and institutions thus making that country more visible. This is comparable to “free advertisement” but within a diplomatic context which will naturally appeal to other countries to invest in learning more about this country. For instance, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines does not have diplomatic relations with China, but China is a non-regional partner of CELAC. As President of CELAC, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is mandated to work with China to continue the CELAC -China relations for the wider benefit of the CELAC membership. This can signal to China and other countries that do not have relations with SVG, that within the framework of the organisation, SVG can collaborate with and have respectful dialogue for the wider benefit of its members and continuity of the organisation.

Additionally, the way SVG conducts the Pro-Tempore Presidency, can change any negative perception that other countries might have which can potentially lead to the prospective for SVG forming wider relations with countries as well as institutions that can derive tangible benefits. For example, CELAC partners with several institutions with vast economic resources including but not limited to the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), The European Union (EU), the African Union (AU) and the Association of South Asian Nations (ASEAN), SVG as the Pro-Tempore President is responsible for coordinating with these institutions on behalf of the interest of all members and specific interest of SVG. Additionally, three of the Group of Twenty (G20) States are member States of CELAC. The G20 is composed of the worlds’ largest economies. They are Argentina, Brazil and Mexico. SVG already has bilateral relations with these States, however, as President of CELAC, SVG has the opportunity to deepen these relationships and explore prospects for trade opportunities especially for trade with these countries.



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According to an article entitled "Towards sustainable food and nutrition security in Latin America and the Caribbean in response to the global food crisis," 2023, COVID 19 and the war in Ukraine, significantly affected Latin America and the Caribbean's access to food. The Pro-Tempore President is responsible for creating a Work Plan at the beginning of the term. This strategically places Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to craft a work plan that supports the national interest and to include priority areas for SVG. Upon research, one such area that was included is in the 2023 workplan is Agriculture in the framework of food security, which plays a crucial role in the economies of many member states and is one of the main sources of revenue for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. This gives SVG the opportunity and advantage to lead the review of the current state of Agriculture in SVG and other CELAC Member States, including challenges and opportunities facing farmers and agribusinesses. Subsequently, SVG may work with organisations such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the Inter American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) to explore ways in which member states can cooperate to achieve greater food security, funding and sustainability and share experiences and best practices in agriculture across the region, in an effort to identify areas for further collaboration.

The official language of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is English. This usually presents a challenge in travelling and engaging properly with other countries and people from other countries, especially considering that SVG is neighbour to, and is often grouped with Latin America. It is advantageous that human resource in SVG is trained in at least the Spanish language. Annually, the PTP of CELAC partners with the Organisation of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI) to implement the programme "Spanish for English –speaking Caribbean authorities".

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While Saint Vincent is not a member state of the Ibero-American States, as Pro-Tempore President of CELAC, two advantages are clear; firstly, Saint Vincent is afforded the opportunity to widen or begin dialogue with the Organisation of Ibero-American States, and the opportunity to ensure that Vincentians have access to this training in Spanish language.

Climate change continues to threaten the very existence of the region. This issue is regarded as an urgent priority for CELAC to the extent that the Fund for Climate Adaptation and Comprehensive Response to Natural Disasters was created. The creation of this Fund establishes that the climate crisis is a global challenge that has severe impact on the countries within the region as it produces a high degree of vulnerability, especially in the Caribbean. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is tasked with Chairing this Fund which means that as a country that has experience with hazards related to climate change, SVG is positioned to guide how the funds can be best used or what projects can be created to mitigate against climate change.

It should be mentioned that while SVG was just a member of CELAC, it received humanitarian assistance from Mexico when the La Soufriere Volcano erupted, a past Pro Tempore President of CELAC in 2021, and also assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic. Should there be an event of this nature in any Member State of CELAC, SVG will be in a position of advantage to assist and coordinate assistance to affected Member States.

This 2023 period is indeed an exciting and historical time for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as one of the smallest Member States, the first CARICOM country to become The Pro-Tempore President of CELAC. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is now in a critical leadership position at the view of the world, however challenging this position is to define dialogue of thirty three member states, there are also potential advantages for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines that can continue after its tenure.



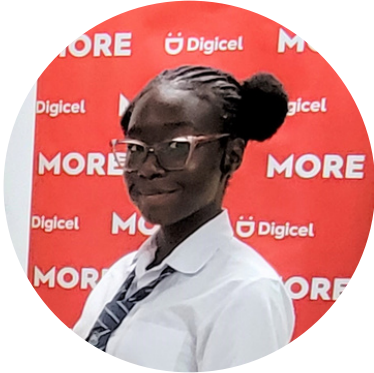
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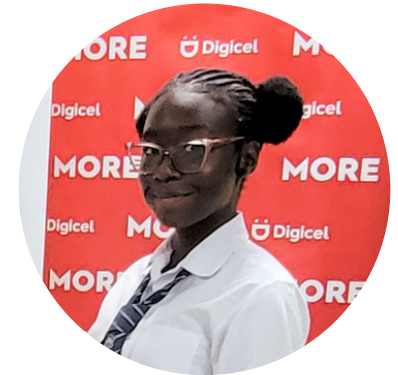
The recent news headline “St Vincent and the Grenadines becomes first CARICOM nation to lead CELAC” highlighted the historic achievement made by the small island nation, (Searchlight Newspaper, 2023). On Tuesday, 24th January 2023, during the seventh summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) was unanimously elected Pro-Tempore President by the 33-member community and made history by becoming the first CARICOM country to be elected to this position. This momentous accomplishment for the small island nation was not a mere transactional accomplishment that looks good on paper, but rather it is a new page in the book of Vincentian history; a great position that comes with great power and many potential benefits for SVG. CELAC was established in December 2011 as “an intergovernmental mechanism for dialogue and political agreement. It aspires to be a unique voice and structured decision-making policy in political and cooperation in support of regional integration programmes... carefully balancing the political, economic, social, and cultural diversity of Latin American and Caribbean,” (CELAC International, 2023). With their position in CELAC, SVG will potentially gain economic growth, political cooperation, access to resources, a strengthening of regional identity and cultural exchange.

The integration of markets among CELAC countries can lead to increased trade and investment, which can boost economic growth and job creation. In 2021, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) projected that there will be “a 25% increase in the value of regional goods exports,” and for 2022, it estimated that “the value of regional exports and imports of goods will grow by 10% and 9%, respectively, in a context of lower regional and global economic growth.” Notably, this projection was due to the increased prices for basic products and not an actual increase in trade within or from the region.

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES (SVG) BECAME THE FIRST CARICOM COUNTRY TO ASSUME THE PRESIDENCY OF THE COMMUNITY OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN STATES (CELAC). DISCUSS THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS FOR SVG.

Unfortunately, it has been noted that the Latin American countries are not the principal trading partners of CARICOM nations which is unfortunate because CARICOM's natural trading partners in this hemisphere are the Latin American countries. However, with St. Vincent and the Grenadines, being a CARICOM state and the president of CELAC, which is an organisation that helps to promote regional integration, there is the potential for SVG to encourage trade and investments in the region. Even more so, seek out opportunities of trade and investments beneficial to SVG.

CELAC provides a platform for countries to work together on issues of common interest, such as promoting democracy, human rights, and social justice, as well as addressing regional security challenges. The latter of which is one such challenge that SVG would benefit from addressing, due to the increase in gun violence on the island nation in recent years. Notably, CELAC addressed this issue of the importation of illegal firearms from the United States (US) at their January 2023 summit in Argentina. Prior to the 2023 summit, Mexico had circulated a draft resolution which firstly acknowledged that most of the homicides in the Caribbean and Latin America region were caused by firearms that have been manufactured or distributed in the United States and then trafficked in the region. Additionally, it urged the strengthening of national efforts to reinforce mechanisms to control the illegal trade and transfer of firearms, and the incorporation of technology in the gun industry to track illegal weapons, according to the Honourable Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister of SVG and current president of CELAC, (Clarke, 2023). The draft resolution was discussed at 2023 summit and upon its implementation, SVG would be direct beneficiary. This would mean a significant reduction in the importation of illegal guns and the gun violence they cause.



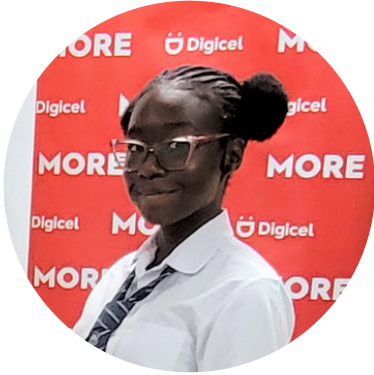
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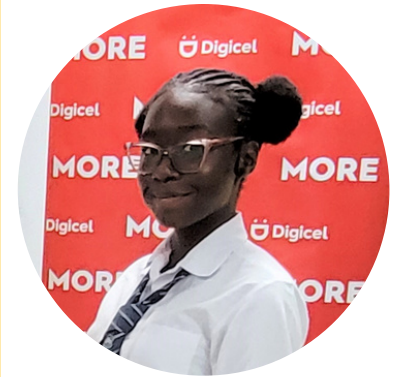
CELAC provides opportunities for cultural exchange and cooperation among member countries, which can help to enhance understanding and appreciation of each other's customs, traditions, and values. Two of the main hindrances of trade between CARICOM states and Latin America is the language and culture barriers. Therefore, cultural and language exchanges with CARICOM states and Latin American countries would remove these barriers and increase trade. Additionally, in SVG, there is a medical exchange between Cuba, so one would find a lot of Cuban doctors in the healthcare system. Being Cuban, Spanish is their first language and even when speaking English, they have a heavy Spanish accent, which can cause miscommunication between them and their patients. Therefore, Vincentians would certainly benefit from more opportunities to learn the language through free classes, which can be accommodated through a cultural exchange. And such exchanges, whether formal or informal, can be easily accommodated now that there are direct flights from Cuba and Venezuela to SVG. Moreover, at the CELAC ministerial briefing in SVG, Senator Peters spoke to the preservation of indigenous languages among areas of concern for CELAC member states, which should include the Garifuna, the language of the indigenous people of SVG. Today, Garifuna is an endangered language, but it is still being spoken in the Garifuna communities in Latin America. Therefore, SVG can benefit from similar cultural exchanges to keep the language and traditions of the Garifuna people alive for Garifuna wigia (we are Garifuna)!

CELAC aims to promote a sense of regional identity and solidarity among its member countries by providing member countries with access to resources and expertise from other countries in the region. In addition to holding the presidency of CELAC for the year 2023, "SVG is now also the chair of the CELAC Disaster Fund, which was set up to help member countries in times of disasters," (Searchlight Newspaper, 2023). With the Atlantic Hurricane season 2023 forecasted to have a range of 12 to 17 total named storms by

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the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), having access to such a fund would greatly benefit SVG. The CELAC disaster fund offers access to military helicopters, which is an asset in times of disaster. With its mountainous terrain, in times of natural disasters, villages in SVG can get cut off from the rest of the island for days depending on its severity, and with the roads being impassable, the only access would be by air. Notably, “CELAC is the only entity in Latin America and the Caribbean that has instituted such a fund,” (Ollivierre, 2023). In addition, to offering support to reduce the negative effects of natural disasters, the CELAC Disaster Fund supports “the implementation of projects to promote climate change mitigation and adaptation activities, including the Strategy for Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management,” (ECLAC, 2022).

“St. Vincent and the Grenadines elected to the presidency of CELAC,” a news headline declared and the Vincentians at home and abroad beamed with pride. From SVG becoming the smallest nation ever to secure a seat as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council in 2020 to now, in 2023, being the first CARICOM nation to assume the presidency of CELAC. For a small island nation, we are certainly leaving our mark in the world and Caribbean history. The Searchlight Newspaper (2023) in their news release entitled “Another milestone for SVG” quoted the Hon. Dr. Gonsalves, Prime Minister of SVG saying “SVG will benefit enormously from being President Pro-Tempore of CELAC!” A statement that is undoubtedly true. With such a position in CELAC, SVG will potentially gain economic growth, political cooperation, access to resources, a strengthening of regional identity and cultural exchange. And as for SVG’s prime minister, “he certainly deserves the accolades which are coming this way for his vision, ambition and tenacity, undoubtedly, he is now one of the principal leaders in the hemisphere,” (Rose, 2023).



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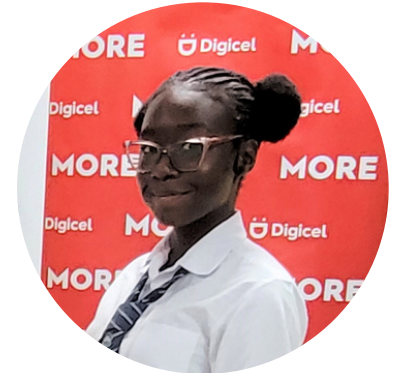
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AMBASSADORS CATEGORY TOP 5 AWARDS



1st Place

LEAH NANTON

2nd Place

KENDAL SAMPSON

3rd Place

BRADLEY ALEXANDER

4th Place

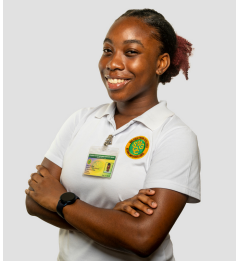
CHRISTEL SUTHERLAND

5th Place

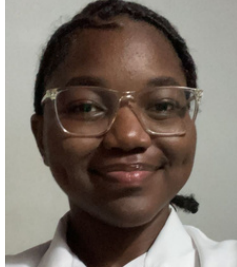
CHRISTI WILLIAMS



AMBASSADORS 2023



Karen Bellingy
St. Vincent and the
Grenadines
Community College



Kaige Cruickshank
St. Vincent Girls'
High School



Arianna Jardine
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Grenadines
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Ndeja Edwards
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Niaya Williams
St. Vincent Girls'
High School



Ciara Antoine
St. Vincent Girls'
High School



Raheim John
St. Vincent
Grammar School



Javea Cato
St. Vincent Girls'
High School



Zaronique Forbes
St. Vincent Girls'
High School



Christi Williams
St. Vincent Girls'
High School



Kendal Sampson
St. Vincent
Grammar School



Faith Sergeant



Aaron Charles

Anada-Le Henry



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