



The Diplomatic Courier

January, 2011

Volume 3, edition 1

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Foreign Trade and Consumer Affairs



Statement by Minister of Foreign Affairs - Hon. Dr. Douglas Slater



Dear Colleagues,

As we begin a new year, 2011, let me take this opportunity to firstly wish all members of the staff and members of the Diplomatic Corps a productive, healthy and a successful year.

As the New Year commences with new leadership and as the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Consumer Affairs, I am indeed humbled and honored to have been called to service in this capacity. It is with great pleasure I wish to take this opportunity to compliment the outstanding work that was done by my predecessor Hon. Sir Louis Straker. I acknowledge that he created a solid foundation from which my tenure is facilitated. I note the enthusiasm of the staff and I am

encouraged. As the new Minister it may be useful to give a brief background of myself. My professional career began as a Science teacher at the secondary level and I had a keen interest in the areas of environment, international affairs and politics. However, I decided on a career change to the field of medicine, in order to be able to directly "touch" the lives of our people. I functioned as a Specialist in health administration and was granted the opportunity in the political arena to serve as a Minister of Health and the Environment, for approximately ten (10) years. During my tenure as Minister of Health I gained significant experiences and interactions with representatives from International Organizations such as the United Nations (UN), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), CARICOM, Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) etc. In addition, I completed my academic studies in General Medicine in the Republic of Cuba, which endowed me with linguistic skills, which is very important in communicating with our allies in Latin America and other Spanish speaking countries. This is vital for the escalation of our Diplomatic relationships and strengthening of the Foreign Policy

thrust. St. Vincent and the Grenadines as a small Island developing state is faced with various challenges resulting from the global economic environment. Therefore, it is imperative that we fully utilize our resources, especially our human capital, to ensure that we meet our developmental goals which will ensure that our citizen's expectations and needs are met. As such, we must maximize our efforts to extract all the potential benefits that exist in our Foreign and Trade policies.

With respect to my responsibility as the Consumer Affairs Minister and in keeping with my healthcare background, I have a special interest in ensuring that the highest standards of consumer products are made available to our citizens at an affordable cost.

I therefore look forward with much excitement and optimism to a continuation of the successful development of our Foreign and Trade policies, with traditional and many more non-traditional partners. Best wishes to all and I anticipate your optimistic and enthusiastic cooperation!!

Statement by Permanent Secretary - Mr. Andreas Wickham



After a hiatus of about two (2) years, the Diplomatic Courier is once again in focus. In this issue, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Consumer Affairs seeks to share with all stakeholders in the public and private sectors home and abroad, information on its activities and operations, while at the same time highlighting the current challenges and opportunities which are present in these two dynamic sectors of

public policy, namely foreign affairs and trade.

Over the last few years, the Ministry has been undergoing a period of gradual transformation. In this respect, the long awaited Foreign Service Orders are in their final stages of approval. A draft of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Foreign Policy (a single cohesive document which outlines the philosophy, a strategic direction of this country's relations with the international community) will shortly be tabled for the approval of Cabinet. Additionally, St. Vincent and the Grenadines' Trade Policy and Consumer Protection Legislation are at an advanced stage and will be ready for implementation in 2011.

The work of the overseas Embassies and Consulates continues to be of critical importance, as St. Vincent and the Gren-

-adines seeks to carve out its space in the international community as a sovereign nation, with a well defined independent foreign policy, serving the national economic agenda.

While we continue to cement the longstanding relationships with our traditional allies, with most of which we have strong cultural and historic ties; we are acutely aware of the need to build new partnerships and alliances with countries which hitherto never featured in our foreign policy designs. This strategic direction has borne fruit and will be consolidated over the medium to long term.

This latest edition of the Diplomatic Courier is therefore designed to excite the expectation of readers and lay the basis for a greater awareness and appreciation of the work of the Ministry in the upcoming editions. We welcome your feedback!!

Foreign Policy Thrust



Mrs. Sandy Peters Philips Deputy Director of Foreign Policy and Research

The Foreign Policy thrust of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is dynamic in nature and is rooted in three fundamental pillars. They are (i) an independent pragmatic and progressive foreign policy, (ii) adherence to the principles of international law and (iii) solidarity and regionalism.

Implementing a country's foreign policy is a complex and challenging task. With the dynamic environment of world politics, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs needs to be constantly aware of changes occurring both regionally and internationally. This essentially allows us to respond effectively, ensure the adequate protection of the Nation's sovereignty and to ensure that its views and

positions are duly articulated. While the Ministry serves as an important bridge connecting St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the outside world, the responsibility for promoting relations with other countries is not one exclusively held by the Ministry, but the collective responsibility of a number of other Ministries and agencies. Recognizing the complexity of the environment in which foreign policy is executed, it is crucial that efforts in promoting the nation's interests are streamlined and carried out in close coordination with the other relevant Ministries.

Furthermore, as with all other small island developing states, the pursuance of our national interest is susceptible to various external factors. These changing dynamics of international relations include globalization, technological advancements, trade liberalization, financial crises, climate change and the effects of natural disasters. These challenges compel us to act strategically in an environment of constant change. In addition, the foreign policy is designed to ease the transition of the nation, from a post colonial era to a modern era. This means, the expansion of diplomatic relations beyond the pool of

traditional allies to include new prospects in the interest of our national development needs and priorities.

Presently, St. Vincent and the Grenadines has established diplomatic relations with one hundred and twenty-two countries around the world and will seek to further increase this number with friendly like minded states. To facilitate this process, the State is represented abroad by four embassies and two consulates. In addition, representation also exists in countries where there are no Embassies or Consulates, by way of Honorary Consuls. Currently, there are twenty-seven appointed honorary consuls in various countries around the world, charged with the responsibility of seeking out opportunities for the development of St. Vincent and the Grenadines in the various sectors.

Be sure to read our next issue to find out where we go next with our continuing efforts to expand our foreign policy!!

Resident Ambassadors

The establishment of diplomatic missions is critical for the strengthening of relations between countries. St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) as a small island developing state like other sovereign countries is engaged in such practise and in keeping with the Vienna Convention, has allowed other countries to establish diplomatic missions in this country.

Presently, there are four (4) resident Embassies located in St. Vincent and the Grenadines representing the countries of the Republic of China (Taiwan), the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Republic of Cuba and most recently the Federative Republic of Brazil. These Embassies are all instituted at the Ambassadorial level. It is important for SVG to encourage the establishment of resident embassies within the state as it ensures that our interest and development priorities are met and

maximises the prospects of the host government, actively engaging the sending state thereby complimenting the contributions to the Vincentian citizenry in areas of health, education and infrastructural developments among others.

The following are photos of all resident Ambassadors in SVG.



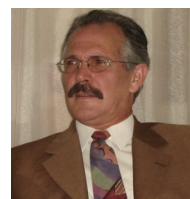
H.E Mr. Yoel del Valle Pérez Marcano
Venezuela
Dean of the Diplomatic Corps



H.E Ambassador
Mr. Renato Xavier -
Brazil



H.E. Ambassador
Mr. Weber Shih -
Taiwan



H.E Ambassador
Mr. Pablo Antonio
Rodriquez Vidal -
Cuba

Excerpts of an Interview with Former Minister of Foreign Affairs - Sir Louis Straker

Interviewer: Good morning Minister Straker, how are you today?

Sir Louis Straker: Good Morning Miss Adams, it's my last day on the job; a tinge of sadness but I'm doing fine, and I am glad to be here to say goodbye to the staff today.

Interviewer: Can you introduce and give a brief background of yourself before you started your political career?

Sir Louis Straker: I migrated to the United States when I was about 20 years of age, lived there for about 31 years and was a Banker for 25 years. I pursued my undergraduate work at Hunter College University of New York and my Masters at Long Island University. I have been very active in the church and founded two churches in Brooklyn with membership now of 750 and 500 respectively. I led an active and full life helping people.

Interviewer: What inspired you to enter the field of Politics and how long have served in this field?

Sir Louis Straker: Growing up as a child, I have seen and experienced extreme poverty. I had one pair of "washacon" or "softmash" which are now called sneakers that I'd put aside to wear to church on Saturdays. I always felt that the major factor in getting out of poverty was Education. There were so many bright students with me but because of poverty were unable to advance educationally. Thus, I vowed to do all in my power to help the poor, wherever I could even though I did not know exactly how I would do this.

However, after working at the Bank for (25) twenty-five years and attaining the position of Vice President and I thought it expedient to accept early retirement and return home in order to enter the field of politics. I must add also that Stalky John and Winfield Williams; political leader and General Secretary of the Old SVG Labour Party respectively, visited New York around that time and conveyed the wish of the constituents of Layou and Buccament, that I return and be their representative in the upcoming general elections in 1994. We agreed that I would return home at a later date and offer myself to the people of Central Leeward.

Interviewer: How long did you serve as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Consumer Affairs?

Sir Louis Straker: For ten years, since the time the Party won the general elections and formed Government in 2001. I was appointed as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Consumer Affairs, and these positions were renewed in 2005. But I must say prior to the 2005 general elections I was asked by the Prime Minister to serve briefly in the Ministry of Transport and Works.

Interviewer: How important is the crafting of a strategic foreign policy to St. Vincent and the Grenadines' development as a small island developing state?

Sir Louis Straker: Very important, without the crafting of such a strategic policy we would not be benefiting as we are in many areas such as Agriculture, Culture, Education and infrastructural development such as the International airport. Our economic wellbeing has been as a result of the crafting of our foreign policy which has been dynamic, proactive, and pragmatic. This is evident from the fact that we now have students all over the world, in Malaysia, Cuba, Mexico, Venezuela and Dominican Republic. Additionally, we have the YES programme (Youth Empowerment Service), and just recently we witnessed the opening of the new National Library, and all these are as a result of the strategic foreign policy we have been able to forge over the last nine years (9).

Interviewers comments: I am also a beneficiary of this dynamic foreign policy, as I pursued Undergraduate studies in International Business in Malaysia.

Interviewer: What are your recommendations on the way forward with regards to regional integration?

Sir Louis Straker: Well Regional Integration of two kinds, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and CARICOM. The OECS has a better chance of succeeding because it comprises of all the small islands and

certainly we know that in a globalised world, many of the developed countries do not want to be bothered with each little minuscule Island in relating to them, they would rather relate to us as a group. Beyond that we have to look forward to a political Union of these various countries.

With regards to the CARICOM, it is more problematic, some countries have never wanted to be part of any Union in which they would seed any sovereignty at all, but in order to have any cohesive union in the integration process, we have to seed some measure of sovereignty. Hence, until all countries within CARICOM can come around to the fact that we have to come together as a Region, there will be a lag in the integration process on the CARICOM level.

Interviewer: From your experience as Foreign Minister, in terms of the expansion of diplomatic relations, which geographic location (s) should be pursued in our quest for the fulfilment of our national objectives and why?

Sir Louis Straker: We should be pursuing relations with 1) Africa, for cultural and ethnic reasons. Africa is a continent of great potential and lots of minerals. I recently returned from the Democratic Republic of Congo and I know that country is rich in natural resources. When these countries are able to cease their conflicts either internal or cross border, concentrate on development, get rid of corruption, and build the right Government there would be meaningful developments which would be to the benefit of all Caribbean countries.

I think we are on the right part in forging links with countries in 2) Latin America, particularly Brazil, Argentina, Chile and countries of that kind. Brazil is an emerging economy, and it is to our benefit to have a strong relationship with Brazil and additionally it has the largest black population of any country in this hemisphere. Mention must also be made of those countries in the 3) Pacific Rim, such as Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia which are countries rich in technology, which can be harnessed to improve our ICT skills.

Interviewer: Minister what about Qatar, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, what of forging links within the Middle East?

Sir Louis Straker: These are countries we are moving towards now. We were one of the early countries to establish diplomatic relations with Libya. These countries are rich and have reaped the benefits of oil for a number of years, and I think we would do well forging links with these countries. We have, to some extent benefited from the Kuwaiti Fund, where assistance was received for the repairing and expansion of the E.T. Joshua Airport

Interviewer: We notice an increasing trend of women entering Politics in this Country and by extension regionally, what do you think of this move?

Sir Louis Straker: It's too slow, women are somewhat reluctant and hesitant to enter

politics, women feel it is too crude an experience for them to enter into. What should be done is to bring women in through the nomination process as Senators so that we can have a respectable presence in the House of Assembly of women, if they do not want to enter the rough and tumble of elective office, but I think it's a good trend. Additionally, women need to get beyond thinking that they have to vote for men, because a lot of women will tell you that they rather not vote for another woman.

Interviewer: Is there a project or anything special that you would have liked to complete before leaving office?

Sir Louis Straker: Certain pieces of legislation and reports we have been struggling with should have been implemented; the competition legislation, the consumer legislation and our export policy, unfortunately

are not complete. Additionally, we need more space here, it's important to have our physical space here reconfigured so that the staff can work comfortably.

Interviewer: Is there any possibility of you re-entering politics?

Sir Louis Straker: No, absolutely not, not at my age, *(laughs)* not elective politics as such. I do not know what I am going to do after I leave here, but in February I will be 69 years of age. Now that my party has retained Government, I will have several options in still being of service to my country. I do not know what those areas might be or what the Prime Minister will offer, but if nothing is offered its fine with me because I think at 69 years I have earned retirement. I can easily work in my community and be of service there.

Presentation of Credentials by Ambassadors

Country	Ambassador	Presentation Date
Republic of Korea	H. E. Mr. Yong Kyu Kwon	2010 – January 27
Israel	H. E. Mr. Amiram Magid	2010 – February 04
Republic of France	H.E. Mr. Michel Prom	2010 – February 11
Spain	H. E. Mr. Joaquín Maria de Aristegui	2010 – May 11

new resident Embassy of the Republic of Brazil in January, headed by Ambassador, His Excellency Renato Xavier.

In the latter half of last year, new resident Ambassadors of the Republic of China (Taiwan), His Excellency, Mr. Weber V.B. Shih, and the Republic of Cuba, His Excellency Mr. Pablo Antonio Rodriguez Vidal presented credentials to Governor General His Excellency, Sir Frederick Ballantyne in September and October, respectively.

Non-resident Ambassadors of the other countries with which St. Vincent and the Grenadines has close ties also presented their Letters of Credence to the Governor General.

Mrs. Florita E. Kentish, new Sub-Regional Coordinator of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO-UN) Office based in Barbados, also presented her credentials on 8th February to the Hon. Sir Louis Straker Former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Consumer Affairs. At right is a list of other countries that presented credentials in 2010.

One of the highlights of last year was the accreditation of eight foreign representatives to the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Our diplomatic calendar commenced with the opening of a

“To put the World in order, we must first put the Nation in order; to put the Nation in order, we must first put the Family in order; to put the family in order, we must first cultivate our personal life; we must first set our hearts right” .

By: Confucius

Coalition of Services Industries

By: Gibriel Bah

Trade Policy Analyst attached to the Trade Department

Background

The initiative to form National Coalition of Services Industries in each CARICOM Member State emanated from a decision of the CARICOM Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) in 2001. (Source: report prepared by the CARICOM Secretariat in 2005 (initial consultations conducted with stakeholders in St. Vincent and the Grenadines). The main underlying reasons for their creation stem from the dismantling of preferential access for African Caribbean Pacific (ACP) goods in the European market and in particular, the recognition that all CARICOM countries (with the exception of Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname and Guyana) have virtually become services based economies. Therefore, in keeping with the COTED mandate, the National Coalition of Services Industries of St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVGCSI) was launched in June 2008 through collaboration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Commerce and Trade and the Chamber of Industry and Commerce. As a registered non-profit private sector services organization, the SVGCSI is expected to strengthen the competitiveness of the services component of the private sector. The SVGCSI is also a party to the regional Working Group on Services and could play a pivotal role in services trade negotiations.

However, there are several compelling reasons why the role of SVGCSI is so critical to the socio-economic growth and development of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Firstly, St. Vincent and the Grenadines has diversified significantly its economic base from agriculture to predominantly services. For example, the contribution of bananas to GDP declined from 10.94 percent in 1990 to About 0.79 percent in 2008, whereas services has become a dominant economic

services has become a dominant economic sector accounting for 71% of GDP in 2000 up from 61.7% in 1990. However, tourism and travel related activity, construction and financial services contribute over 60% of all foreign exchange earnings. To reduce concentration and over dependence on a small number of sectors, the SVGCSI is expected to play a leading role to strengthen other services sectors like the cultural industries, business services such as management consulting, accounting and auditing, packaging, professional services like architectural services, engineering, medical and dental services including nursing, data processing, hotel development and services, maritime and sports services among many others.

Secondly, despite the significant contribution of the services sector to socio-economic growth and development, it is still relatively very small and unorganized. For instance, apart from the Legal



Association, Architects, Medical and Nurses associations there are virtually no vibrant service sector organizations in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Incidentally, most service sectors do not have the relevant standards and regulations to govern their activities. It follows therefore, that one of the most urgent tasks of the SVGCSI is to help service providers organize themselves into effective sector associations.

Thirdly, the Government, through its external trade policies facilitates the integration of St. Vincent and the Grenadines into

regional and global markets. For example the Government is a party to various bilateral, regional and multilaterals trade agreements that consequently create trading opportunities for services exports. However, due to lack of knowledge and understanding of the opportunities or conceivably the limited capacity of service providers, trading opportunities in these agreements have not been considerably exploited. In this regard, the SVGCSI has a mammoth task to sensitize service providers not only about trading opportunities but also how to actually conduct business in these markets.

Role and Functions

Among other things, the main goals of the SVGCSI include:

Strengthening the Domestic Regulatory Framework of Services to benefit Service Suppliers: by promoting the development of professional service standards, licenses and regulations, as well as lobbying government to ensure that appropriate incentives are extended to service suppliers;

Strengthening Local Service Export Capacity to exploit Market Openings: to increase service suppliers' knowledge and awareness of export opportunities in the CSME, the Economic Partnership Agreement with the European Community, and the CARICOM -Canada trade and development agreement being negotiated; and the facilitation of service suppliers to engage in trade fairs and missions through local, regional and international collaboration;

Promoting Strategic Policy Development: to ensure that incentives offered to Foreign Service suppliers are equally extended to domestic service suppliers and advise government on market conditions/trends with a view to implement/relax policies to protect local practitioners. The next issue will address Institutional framework and Membership.

**"The world is my country, all mankind are my brethren,
and to do good is my religion."**

By: Thomas Paine

Overseas Embassies and Consulates

In our Government's quest to foster global ties and expand the foreign policy thrust of St. Vincent and the Grenadines in the international and regional fora, the establishment of our Overseas Missions and Consulates are of utmost importance in this process.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines is represented abroad by four (4) embassies (missions) and two (2) consulates located in strategic cities which best serve our national interest. The Ambassadors appointed are extraordinary and plenipotentiary meaning they are bestowed full powers to act on behalf of the Government and People of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. These Ambassadors are charged with different areas of responsibility.

Appointed as Heads of Diplomatic Missions and Consulates are:

- ◆ H.E. Mr. Cenio LEWIS *High Commissioner* - High Commission of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Kingdom.
- ◆ H.E. Miss La Celia PRINCE *Ambassador/Permanent Representative* - Permanent Mission of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the Organization of American States and Embassy to the United States of America.
- ◆ H.E. Mr. Camillo GONSALVES *Ambassador/Permanent Representative* - Permanent Representative of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations.
- ◆ H. E. Mr. Dexter ROSE *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary* – Embassy of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to Cuba.
- ◆ Mr. Steve PHILIPS *Consul General* - Consulate General of St. Vincent and the Grenadines in Toronto Canada.
- ◆ Mr. Cyril THOMAS *Deputy Consul General* - Consulate General of St. Vincent and the Grenadines in New York, USA.



H.E. Mr. Cenio LEWIS



H.E. Miss La Celia PRINCE



H.E. Mr. Camillo GONSALVES



H. E. Mr. Dexter ROSE



Mr. Steve PHILIPS



Mr. Cyril THOMAS

Additionally, St. Vincent and the Grenadines is represented by two joint missions located in the cities of Brussels; Belgium and Ottawa; Canada. Appointed as Head of the Missions are:

- ◆ H.E Mr. Brendon BROWNE *High Commissioner* - High Commission for the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).
- ◆ H.E. Ms. Shirley SKERRIT – ANDREW *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary* – Embassies of the Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and to the European Union.

These missions and consulates assist in the overall developmental goals of the Nation, in matters relating to the Diaspora, consular services, investment; trade and economic matters. Their efforts significantly contribute to enriching the lives of each and every Vincentian. Some of the roles and functions they perform encompass:

- i. Existing as an established point of contact with the international community, in keeping with the norms and practices of international laws and norms. They therefore, constantly engage with representatives of foreign governments, regional and international institutions in the promotion and negotiation of the national interest of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.
- ii. Fostering relations with resident/non resident Embassies/ Consulates and international organizations to promote national development.
- iii. Providing direction for governmental policy on international trade and foreign policy interest.
- iv. Facilitating the process for establishing diplomatic relations with new countries.
- v. Monitoring the implementation of several technical bilateral

cooperation agreements within their purview.

- vi. Monitoring and providing input for, and actively participating in multilateral trade negotiations.
- vii. Constantly seeking to harness the resources of the Vincentian Diaspora for the benefit of national development.

Each Embassy is deliberately positioned to

interact with regional and international organisations on topical international issues and to promote and negotiate the national interest of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Further, the progress seen externally is a result of the excellent support staff in each of our Embassies. Each Mission is staffed with a cadre of professionals who together with the Ambassador efficaciously execute the mandate of the Government; promoting our nations' agenda. See contact information for our

Missions at the back of this newsletter!!

Staff at the Washington Embassy



New Consumer Legislation

The main aim of consumer protection legislation is to regulate the provision of goods and services in a way that is fair and beneficial to the consumer. Traders who provide goods and services must adhere to certain principles such as discouraging unfair trade practices and unfair contractual terms and encouraging beneficial standards.

As a signatory to the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas establishing the Caricom Single Market and Economy (CSME), St. Vincent and the Grenadines is expected to enact appropriate legislation to protect the interest of Consumers. This is even more urgent given the liberalization of goods and services across the region as advocated by the Treaty. Hence, St. Vincent and the Grenadines has to ensure that its Consumers are duly protected, in that, the quality of goods and services offered for sale are of an acceptable standard and that the rights of its consumers are protected. Presently, there is no comprehensive Consumer Protection Legislation in St. Vincent and the

Grenadines.

Principles which serve to enhance consumer welfare in St. Vincent and the Grenadines can be found in several existing laws which include the Pharmacy Act, the Standards Act, the Weight and Measures Act, the price and distribution of goods act and certain legal provisions that fall under the ambit of the National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (NTRC) and the Public Health Department. The Ministry with responsibility for trade, the government agency charged mainly with protecting the interest of consumers; administer the price and distribution of goods act. The Ministry's work in this regard as it relates to consumer protection is limited to price control. Consequently, the Ministry relies heavily on moral suasion to resolve several disputes between consumers and traders. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Consumer Affairs and the Office of the Attorney General have recently completed work on a Draft Consumer Protection Bill.

This Bill is modelled after the CARICOM Bill on Consumer Protection and is consistent with the standards established by the Revised Treaty for consumer protection throughout all CARICOM Member States. The Bill is revolutionary as it relates to Consumer Protection in St. Vincent as it covers areas that have remained unexplored in this jurisdiction. These areas include, inter alia, Dual Pricing; Price Disclosure; Unfair Practices; Unfair Contract Terms; Product Liability; Consumer Safety; Distance Selling; and Recall of Goods. The Draft has been circulated to various stakeholders and is available to the general public on the government website (www.gov.vc). The Ministry has invited all stakeholders to comment but to date the response has been less than expected. It is anticipated that the Bill will be enacted into law by the second quarter of 2011.

In the next issue of this newsletter, we will delve into some of the important provisions of the Bill.

Seminars and Workshops

The Ministry facilitated two successful one day protocol workshops in April and June of 2010. The main objectives of the workshop convened in April 2010, were to remind key officials from the various Departments of Customs and Excise, Immigration and Airport of the following: (i) who are diplomats, (ii) the rights and privileges afforded to diplomats by the Vienna Convention, and (iii) the importance of executing their duties in an efficient and professional manner.

The second workshop, which took place in June of 2010, focused on the continuance of the building of a cadre of trained protocol and liaison officers, from the various ministries throughout the Public Service. Both workshops were well attended and were facilitated by Mrs. Sandy Peters-Phillips Deputy Director of Foreign Policy and Research and Mr. Earl Paynter, Senior Foreign Service Officer (ag.).

Section of Participants at Workshop



Consumer Corner

Before You Buy

Product Returns

It is important for you to know that each store sets its own return policy. Before you purchase ask the following questions:

- ◆ Does the store accept returns?
- ◆ Do you have to have a receipt in order to return merchandise?
- ◆ What is the time period for returning merchandise?
- ◆ Do you receive an in-store credit or a cash refund for returned products?
- ◆ Will you be charged a restocking fee for merchandise returned?



Retail Purchases

- ◆ Don't be fooled by ads. If it seems too good to be true, it is.
- ◆ Read, ask questions.
- ◆ Compare the price and brand with other prices in other stores.
- ◆ Insist that all claims, promises and warranties be in writing.
- ◆ Never sign anything you have not read or do not understand. Because you do not have the right to change your mind after you make a major purchase, cool off for at least 24 hours before you purchase the product.
- ◆ Never give anyone one you do not know whether by telephone or in person, your credit card number, bank account number, date of birth or National Insurance Services (NIS) number.

Common Consumer Protection Myths

MYTH: A store has to give you a refund if you request one.

FACT: St. Vincent and the Grenadines does not have laws that specifically regulate refund or return policies. Provided the goods were not misrepresented, each business may set its own return policy.

Consumer Complaints



Do you have a problem with a product you bought and you were not satisfied with the way it was dealt with by the business you bought it from?

Pay us a visit on the Administrative Building and file a complaint. We are the Consumer Affairs Division in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Consumer Affairs.

Protocol: One should always rise if sitting or lift his/her hand if standing when being introduced or acknowledged in a meeting or a crowd.

Did You Know?

- When an Ambassador from a foreign country accredited to SVG comes to St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) on an official visit, the national flag of that country should be flown on the car pennant of the vehicle carrying the Ambassador!
- At national functions where the national flag of SVG is flown, no other flags should be placed at the right of the SVG flag!
- At official and other functions where the national flag is flown indoors, it must not be touching the floor!

Staff Highlights

Congratulations to:

- ◆ Mr. Mozart Carr on his Marriage.
- ◆ Mrs. Thalia Joyette on her Marriage.
- ◆ Mrs. Karlene Jackson on the birth of her baby boy.
- ◆ Miss Shameika Prince on the birth of her baby girl.
- ◆ Mr. Billy Jeffers for successful completion of Undergraduate studies in Meteorology and Mathematics at the University of the West Indies, Cave hill Campus.

Additions to Staff:

- ◆ Miss Jinelle Adams
- ◆ Mr. Gareth Bynoe
- ◆ Mr. Calvin Clarke
- ◆ Miss Soniet Gilbert
- ◆ Mrs. Janice King

Promotions:

- ◆ Mrs. Sandy Peters Philips from Foreign Service Officer to Deputy Director Foreign policy and Research.
- ◆ Mr. Mozart Carr from Administrative Cadet to Foreign Service Officer.
- ◆ Miss Kathy John from Administrative Cadet to Trade Facilitation Officer.

**OVERSEAS DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS AND CONSULATES
OF SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES**

SVG CONSULATE GENERAL CANADA
Consulate of St. Vincent and the Grenadines
333 Wilson Avenue
Suite 601, Toronto
Ontario M3H 1T2
CANADA
Tel : 01 416 398 4277
Fax: 01 647 438 5312
Email: consulategeneral@rogers.com

SVG HIGH COMMISSION LONDON
High Commission of St. Vincent and the Grenadines
to the United Kingdom
10 Kensington Court
London W8 5DL
ENGLAND
Tel: 0 44 207 565 2874/2884/2885
Fax: 0 44 207 937 6040
Email: svghighcom@clara.co.uk

SVG PERMANENT MISSION - NEW YORK/USA
Permanent Representative of St. Vincent and the
Grenadines
to the United Nations
800 Second Avenue, Suite 400 G
New York, N.Y. 10017
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Tel. 01 212 599 0950/0955
Fax. 01212 599 1020
Email: svgun@aol.com or cgonsalves@svg-un.org

SVG PERMANENT MISSION WASHINGTON/USA
Permanent Mission of St. Vincent and the Grenadines
to the Organization of American States
and Embassy to the United States of America
3216 New Mexico Avenue, N.W.
Washington DC 20016
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Tel. 01 202 364 6730
Fax. 01 202 364 6736
Email: mail@embsvg.com

SVG EMBASSY - CUBA
Embajada de San Vicente y las Granadinas
Centro de Negocios Miramar
Edificio Jerusaleñ, Oficina 403, 4to Piso
Ave. 3ra.y calle 80. Miramar, Playa,
Cuidad de la Habana,
CUBA
Tel: 0 537 206 9783
Fax: 0 537 206 9782
Email: embsvg@mtc.co.cu
consulembsvg@mtc.co.cu

SVG CONSULATE GENERAL
NEW YORK/USA
Consulate of St. Vincent and the Grenadines
801 Second Avenue, 21st Floor
New York, N.Y. 10017
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Tel. 01 212 687 4490/4491/4494
Fax. 01 212 949 5946
Email: svgconny@aol.com

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and
Consumer Affairs,
Administrative Center, 3rd Floor
Bay Street, Kingstown
Telephone: 1 (784) 456 2060
Fax: 1 (784) 456 2610
Email: office.foreignaffairs@mail.gov.vc
Office.trade@gov.vc

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