

## 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!!