

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

