



Post-Cabinet Press Briefing
March 19, 2007

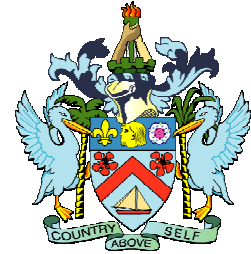
Last Monday, March 12, the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Information brought to you the first edition of the post-Cabinet press briefing. The Prime Minister informed you that the post-Cabinet briefing is intended to further the cause of increased transparency and the improvement of overall good governance and democracy, and he promised that these briefings would be a regular feature presented by himself or myself as Minister of State in the Ministry for Information. It is against this backdrop that I bring to you important matters discussed and decided upon at the meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers held today, Monday March 19, 2007.

Cabinet considered and approved a range of applications for duty concessions made by a number of small businesses. Concessions were granted in line with the government's policy to support further development of small businesses to support the Manufacturing and Tourism sectors, in particular. This policy has become even more important given the increased dependency of our economy on the Tourism industry and the need to increase the competitiveness of small businesses in the context of the emerging CSME.

Cabinet held extensive discussions on the programme of activities to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade. The programme is being led by the national commission for UNESCO in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture. A Church service, a lecture series, a freedom concert, panel discussions and inter-school debates are some of the activities that have been planned to mark the historic end to the British Slave Trade. Cabinet reflected on the recent closure of the sugar industry and viewed it as timely event as it marked the last chapter in the emancipation of Kittitian people of African descent. The private sector is being asked to collaborate with the Government in the hosting of these important and historic activities.

Cabinet approved for St. Kitts and Nevis, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to seek membership on the United Nations Economic and Social Council for the period 2009 to 2011. The Council's mandate is to promote higher standards of living, full employment and economic and social progress, cultural and educational cooperation, and universal respect for human rights. Membership for St. Kitts and Nevis on this council would give the country the opportunity to advance the agenda of Small Island Developing States on sustainable development particularly at this challenging time in our own development.

On its weekly update on CWC2007, Cabinet was delighted in the record set by Mr. Hershel Gibbs of South Africa for scoring six 6's in one over on the grounds here in St.



Kitts. It is hoped that the country would get the recognition it deserves as a first class venue for cricket. Today, Representatives from Johnny walker here were in St. Kitts to make a presentation to Mr. Hershel Gibbs for his achievement on our grounds at Warner Park. The donation of US\$1 million will be used to empower Caribbean homeowners in the provision of affordable homes. The Honourable Prime Minister is to undertake discussions with the Mr. Kenny Atai of Trinidad and Tobago, the regional representative for Habitat for Humanity on how St. Kitts and Nevis can benefit. In responding to the request from the Local Organizing Committee for Cricket World Cup, His Excellency the Governor General has approved for Thursday March 22nd to be declared a public half holiday in the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis in celebration of the achievement of Mr. Hershel GIBBS. The half-holiday also ensures that Kittitians and Nevisians are given ample opportunity to share in a once in a life time experience of participating in CWC2007 and to enjoy the facilities at Warner Park that have been built with the kind assistance of our Friends from the ROC on Taiwan and at great cost to the Government.

Finally, in its efforts to strengthen cruise tourism and related activities, Cabinet discussed and approved in principle a proposal from a private investor for the construction of a hotel on the remaining lands at Port Zante subject to the successful conclusion of the final phases of negotiation and the approval of the master plan for the project by the Physical Planning Department. This project will significantly impact the employment situation in the country at this time and will enhance the local tourism product as government continues to transform the economy into a services-oriented economy.

This brings to an end the post-Cabinet press briefing for Monday March 19, 2007.