

Post-Cabinet Press Briefing
April 11, 2007

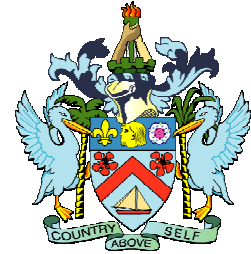
Good evening to all. This evening I bring you the Post Cabinet briefing for Cabinet meeting held today April 11th, 2007. As you are by now aware, the government has recently committed to bringing you important updates on discussions and decisions taken at the meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Federal Government of St. Kitts and Nevis. Cabinet meetings are held normally every Monday but occasionally on other days. This week, Cabinet meeting was held today Wednesday since Monday was a public holiday. This briefing is now the third such briefing.

Cabinet considered and approved a range of applications for duty concessions made by a number of small businesses. Of particular note, are concessions considered and approved in support of small, locally owned hotels. This decision is consistent with the government's policy to support the further development of the indigenous hotel sector as government recognizes the overall contribution of this sector to the development of Tourism, our lead economic sector. Concessions given will support hotel refurbishment and upgrading, thereby allowing these businesses to be more competitive and profitable by offering high quality services.

In the context of empowering citizens through its land distribution policy and the provision of opportunities to engage in the development and expansion of micro, small and medium size businesses, Cabinet discussed and approved plans for a new St. Peters Commercial and Institutional Development complex. This complex will offer 24 lots each measuring about a quarter acre for businesses and institutions. Space is also allocated for a Police Station, as this is part of the long-term plan to maintain security in that general part of the country that is expanding as a result of the rapid pace of development. Recall that the Government recently approved similar developments namely, a commercial and institutional development in Lime Kiln in Buckley's, an industrial development at Shadwell Estate, and a commercial development at Cabbage Tree in Cayon. Government has moved to foster commercial development at the community level so that opportunities could be better spread to citizens everywhere in the country. These developments will happen in a number of communities throughout the island.

Individuals interested in acquiring land for business development in these areas are asked to make the necessary application to the Ministry of Lands.

In reflecting upon the public discussions, which are now taking place in connection with the future of Fort Street, Cabinet discussed reports received from the Ministry of National Security and the Department of Physical Planning and Environment. Note was also made



of a petition with about 300 signatures asking for Fort Street to remain closed to vehicular traffic as well as the recommendation of numerous members of the public asking for Fort Street to be re-opened. The street was originally ‘pedestrian-ized’ as part of a strategy to improve the quality of the downtown Basseterre experience during CWC2007. Not only was that objective met but the positive feedback from both returning nationals and other visitors caused Cabinet to consider all options for the future of that street. Cabinet will finalize its deliberations on this matter in its meeting on Monday April 16. Further views from the public are welcome until such time.

Due to a number of individual requests being made by a number of civil servants for duty concessions on personal vehicles for which they do not ordinarily qualify, Cabinet has mandated a review of the policy for duty concessions on vehicles for civil servants. According to the current policy, Permanent Secretaries, Ambassadors, certain directors, certain Heads of Departments, and certain officers who by the nature of their responsibility use their personal vehicles for extensive traveling are entitled to duty free concessions on a personal vehicle every four years.

Finally, in line with its policy to increase transparency and information sharing with the common man, Government today decided that Ministers will hold monthly press conferences. These ministerial press conferences will complement the Prime Minister’s press conference, which is usually held the last Wednesday of every month. Ministers of Government will give members of the press and the general public an opportunity to be updated in a regular way on critical matters in their respective ministries.

This brings to an end the post-Cabinet press briefing for Wednesday April 11th, 2007.