

Post-Cabinet Press Briefing  
April 16, 2007

Good evening to all. This evening I bring you the post cabinet briefing for cabinet meeting held today April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2007. I trust that you have now come to expect and appreciate these briefings which have now become a permanent feature as the government attempts to improve its dialogue and information-sharing with the general public in its pursuit of the reinforcement of our democratic principles.

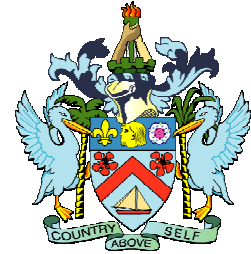
The Cotonou Agreement is the formal agreement, which defines the trade and development relationship between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (or ACP) countries. The original agreement was signed in the year 2000. Cabinet today discussed and approved the ratification of the revised Cotonou Agreement, which would ensure the continued development support from the European Union through the European Development Fund. The revisions to the Cotonou agreement specifically address matters of global security, money laundering and social responsibility, among other things.

In accordance with government's policy to spur growth in the manufacturing sector and to protect and create jobs in this sector having regard to current pressures of globalisation, Cabinet approved concessions for two small local manufacturing companies. These concessions fall under the Fiscal Incentive Act passed by Parliament several years ago.

Having regard to government's policy of privatization of some of its assets, Cabinet engaged in extensive discussions on the way forward. Cabinet was able to agree a number of decisions and in the near future, citizens will be updated on the privatization of certain government's assets.

Cabinet received a full update on Electoral reform matters. Cabinet noted that the reform is behind schedule by a few weeks but is confident that process will be completed in good time. Cabinet took the opportunity to constitute the Boundaries Technical Committee of the Boundaries Commission that will study the population and boundaries in the context of ongoing reforms, and make recommendations on whether new boundary demarcations would be necessary.

Cabinet received an update on the progress of the West Basseterre Bypass Road that is now under construction. In particular, a number of outstanding matters relating to property ownership along the route identified were settled. The project remains on schedule for completion in early 2009 but most of the works to be completed this year.



The government views the West Basseterre Bypass Road as being critical to the economic development of the country by expanding transportation routes.

The Cable TV programming was the subject of discussions held at the meeting of the Cabinet today. The kinds and quality of the programmes and the way the programmes offered at The Cable are packaged were scrutinized. Cabinet agreed to appoint a committee to study the programmes and make recommendations for improvement in this area. Members of the committee will be drawn from a number of disciplines including education, youth, media, entertainment, sports, and the church. The work of this committee should be completed in about one week.

Finally, having received input from a wide cross section of the community in relation to whether Fort Street should be permanently closed, Cabinet, after very extensive discussions, decided that Fort Street should be re-opened to vehicular traffic but that there should be no parking on that street. The relevant government departments will work to ensure that the street returns to normal operation by later this week. The government would like to thank all those who participated in the discussions and would like to thank the public for its understanding on this matter.

This brings to an end the post-Cabinet press briefing for Monday April 16th, 2007.