



Government of St. Kitts & Nevis
Cabinet Secretariat, Government Headquarters
Church Street, Basseterre
St. Kitts & Nevis

POST-CABINET STATEMENT SEPTEMBER 10, 2007

Citizens and residents of St. Kitts and Nevis, good evening. I bring to you the post-Cabinet briefing for Cabinet meeting held today Monday September 10, 2007.

CARDI

In the context of advancing the plan to further diversify and strengthen the non-sugar agricultural sector in the country, Cabinet discussed the role of the CARDI (Caribbean Agriculture Research and Development Institute) in assisting the success of our local agricultural programme. Cabinet was updated by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture on the need to support the restructuring of CARDI so that our goals could be more efficiently and more effectively achieved.

Cabinet was pleased with the progress made in the agricultural diversification programme and committed strong support for the Minister of Agriculture's request for land and other resources so that the sector may exceed its last year's performance when the output in the production of fruits and vegetables grew by 134%.

DEVELOPMENT BANK

A team consisting of the Financial Secretary - Mrs. Janet Harris, and the Chairman of the Development Bank – Mr. Elvis Newton and the Manager of the Development Bank – Mr. Len Harris, updated Cabinet on the student loans portfolio of the bank. The team indicated that the student loans portfolio has grown from \$15 million in 2000 to \$63 million in 2007, representing a 31% fraction of the entire bank portfolio. Cabinet was pleased to learn that the Development Bank is presently carrying 1,600 student loans. This is a reflection of Government's commitment to higher education and the ambition of our young people to advance themselves through education.

The Bank Manager indicated that there was need to work with the Government and other partners such as the Social Security scheme to improve the sustainability of the student



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loans scheme and guarantee the existence of a facility to support the tertiary level education of the young people of the Federation, which is in constantly increasing demand.

UNESCO INTERNATIONAL ANTI-DOPING CONVENTION

The UNESCO International Anti-doping Convention was ratified by the Cabinet after in-depth discussion on the importance of the convention in strengthening the international anti-doping framework that seeks to reduce doping in sport. The convention formalizes the global anti-doping policies and guidelines that help to provide a level playing field for athletes operating on the global scene.

Government's ratification of the convention exhibits tangible evidence of its support for and commitment to anti-doping. The support for the convention will help to ensure that our local athletes who may compete on the international stage will compete under equitable conditions.

Cabinet expressed strong support for the development of sport in the Federation and used the opportunity to get an update on the progress of the Bird Rock Athletic Stadium, which should be completed in time for the Carifta Games in 2008.

DUTY CONCESSIONS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In its continuing efforts to further stimulate economic growth and to empower local entrepreneurs, Cabinet approved the issuing of duty-free concessions to a variety of local small businesses. Businesses issued duty concessions are small manufacturing businesses, services oriented businesses, restaurants and retail businesses. Government views this kind of support as critically important to the development of the economy and the creation of wealth that can be used for further investment.

THE STATE SCHOLAR



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Government takes this opportunity to congratulate Ms Kyndra Liburd of the Sixth Form of the Charlestown Secondary School, and her parents on her winning the state scholarship for the 2007 academic year. Ms Liburd attained all grade one passes in the CXC CAPE examinations.

PASSING OF SIR JOHN COMPTON

Finally, Cabinet observed a minute's silence on the passing of Sir John Compton, Prime Minister of St. Lucia. Members reflected on the distinguished career of Sir John and the role he played as a leader not only in his country of St. Lucia but in the wider OECS and CARICOM region. Sir John was one of the founding Heads of Government of the OECS. He re-entered active politics in 2005 after many years in retirement. Sir John died on Friday September 7 in his home country St. Lucia.

END

This brings to an end the post-cabinet briefing for Monday September 10, 2007. I thank you.