



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

POST-CABINET STATEMENT SEPTEMBER 24, 2007

Citizens and residents of St. Kitts and Nevis, good evening. This is the post-Cabinet briefing for Cabinet meeting held Monday September 24, 2007.

Former Sugar Workers

Two years after the closure of the sugar industry, government conducted another assessment of the progress of the former sugar workers, particularly looking at the employment status of each worker and the economic activities in which they have become involved. A more detailed assessment has also been made of the housing needs of the ex-sugar workers as government immediately intends to assist in the provision of homes for those former sugar workers who are in need.

The recent assessment revealed that there are about 45 additional former sugar workers who are interested in obtaining more land for farming and Government is committed to providing suitable land for these workers in the shortest possible period of time. In the meantime, the Ministry of Agriculture is working with the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), International Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), CARDI (Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute), and the Taiwan agricultural support services to provide greater support to ex-sugar workers who have ventured into farming.

The study makes the second comprehensive assessment since the closure of the sugar industry, which has been conducted to assess the progress of the workers and to devise strategies for improving their social conditions.

The Price of Flour

Cabinet discussed the possible increase in the cost of flour imported into the Federation. Earlier this year, a marginal increase of 6% was experienced in the price of flour. Local flour suppliers have cited shrinking global supplies, poor harvest yields and increasing



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demand from China, Brazil and India as factors creating upward pressure of the world price of the commodity.

While a final position has not yet been taken, it is likely that the cost of flour will increase shortly. The Ministry of Consumer Affairs and the Ministry of Finance are engaged in further study, including discussions with local suppliers of the commodity, to arrive at the most favorable cost. It is likely that a decision will be reached in one week's time.

Fort Street

Six months after the institution of a no-parking policy on Fort Street, Government, as it had earlier promised, is reviewing this policy. This review is in response to numerous suggestions being made by the public. Cabinet has mandated that a survey be conducted to scientifically glean public opinion on the matter.

Cabinet is aware that the no-parking policy has created increased pressure for parking space at a time when the number of vehicles on the road is increasing due to economic progress. This review is consistent with government's practice to consult the citizens and residents in matters that directly affect members of the public. Citizens are encouraged to give their feedback on the no-parking policy that has been in existence for 6 months so that the best solution can be arrived at. You may email infocom@sisterisles.kn

Sale of Cable and Wireless' Shares

At today's meeting, Cabinet discussed the recent transaction involving the sale of government's shareholding in Cable and Wireless. Cabinet was pleased that the transaction had been successfully completed after two years of negotiations and after nearly three years of an articulation of government's policy of privatization of specific government's assets.

The increase of the shareholding by private citizens in C&W from 18% to 23% was viewed as a huge success of government despite C&W's right through the shareholders'



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agreement to purchase all the shares to be put on sale. Critically important as well, although government sold the shares to Cable and Wireless for \$6.41 each, the shares will become available to the public at a cost of just \$5.00 each.

The sale of the shares is in harmony with government's policy to ensure that more ordinary people can own equity in profitable private enterprises, and that they are able to do so at an affordable price.

The \$36 million generated by the sale will be used to address the fiscal position of the government, and to strengthen the government's social programmes.

END

This brings to an end the post-cabinet briefing for Monday September 24, 2007. I thank you.