



# **SPEECH FROM THE THRONE**

**“DEFINING HOPE AND DESTINY”**

Delivered by

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Governor General of Saint Lucia

On the Occasion of the

**Opening of the Fifth Session of the Tenth  
Parliament of Saint Lucia.**

Tuesday, 28 April, 2015

Old Government Building, Laborie Street, Castries.

Madam Deputy President and Members of the Senate, Mr Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, Chief Justice and Members of the Judiciary, His Grace, the Archbishop, Excellencies of the Diplomatic Corps, Ladies and Gentlemen, another year has come, by the Almighty's grace, as we look forward, onward, upward to what lies ahead for Saint Lucia.

No matter what our lot may have been, we give thanks to what has been given to us. And we set forth this day with strength and resolve to follow our paths as they intersect, mesh and weave for good, for glory and for greatness.

Our Saint Lucian family, from patient centenarian to precocious toddler, from fiery

teenager to frugal parent – the entire spectrum of our humanity, howsoever expressed – continues on its journey to define futures, to claim destinies, to embrace hope.

In 2014, we assembled, like we do today, in obedience to our constitutional ritual, to begin another session of this Parliament. I recall that it was a year of great unease, anxiety and consternation. This is understandable, because we are no longer far removed from the theatres of war, violence, terrorism, famine and disease. The world exists before us on our television screens in our living rooms, in the mobile phones we carry, and in our social media feeds wherever we go.

Suddenly, the entire world has become our neighbours. We see the pain, the humiliation, the anguish, the unexplained and naked brutality meted out to our fellow man, like we have never seen before.

## **FEARS OF EXTREMISM**

Disease and fears of extremism dominated our lives. We witnessed the rise of ISIS, the Islamic State, in Iraq and Syria, its brutality and inhumanity, the kidnappings of young girls by Boko Haram in Nigeria, civil war in Yemen, and terrorism attacks in Pakistan, Kenya and Somalia. Acts of terrorism in France and elsewhere in Europe sent shock waves throughout the world, testing our resolve and our collective humanity.

Many were left mourning after plane crashes in Taiwan, Europe and Mali, and some have sadly received little or no closure with the continued search for the wreckage of Flight MH370 in the vast, deep and forbidding oceans of Western Australia. We were all transfixed by these events.

Fears of Ebola gripped the world. Concerns of preparedness even meant that this Parliament was summoned and briefed on national and regional preparations. Chikungunya and dengue remained real in our islands, with many doubting that such great pain could be inflicted by creatures as small as mosquitoes.

## **OVERRIDING PURPOSE**

Today we begin the Fifth Session of the Tenth Parliament of Saint Lucia.

In the midst of Parliament's business, we are always called to remember the purpose of this institution, willed into existence by our forefathers. Honourable Members are charged with the responsibility to ensure that Parliament is grounded in the wants and wishes of the people to whom they are answerable.

Parliament cannot exist removed from the reality of the hotel worker in Gros Islet, the farmer in Micoud, the factory worker in Vieux Fort or the fisher in Canaries. It is true that Parliament must provide leadership, even take our people where they fear to tread, but in all of this, we must be convinced that it is acting in the best interest of

our people and of generations born and unborn, who are set to inherit what we have created.

Madam Deputy President, Mr Speaker, my Government believes that we can embrace 2015 with greater hope and optimism.

## **A SALUTE TO OUR SPORTSMEN AND SPORTSWOMEN**

The optimism that I share with you starts with the performance of our young athletes in the international and regional fora. They have done us proud. Therefore Madam Deputy President, Mr Speaker, I ask that we depart from the norm of focussing on matters of State for a moment and salute them.

Our Under-15 cricketers were once again triumphant and emerged champions of the Windward Islands Under 15 Cricket Tournament for a second year. I salute Captain Kimani Melius who, I understand, scored a century against Dominica in the recently concluded Windward Islands Competition. Prior to this competition, in 2014, he scored back to back centuries in the Schools Cricket Tournament. Then, this year, he made a record breaking score of 275 runs in the ongoing Ministry of Youth Development and Sports Massey United Insurance Under 19 Schools' Cricket Tournament. This is the highest score ever by any Saint Lucian batsman. Clearly, we may have a batting genius among us.



Laverne Spencer continues to soar to new heights. One of her most admirable achievements in the year gone by was her bronze medal in the Ladies High Jump at the Commonwealth Games in Scotland and a Gold Medal at the Caribbean and Central American (CAC) Championships in Vera Cruz, Mexico, last November.

Another young female High Jumper, Jeanelle Scheper, has been making her mark on the Collegiate Circuit in the United States. Only last month, she was ranked as high as number two on the International Association of Athletic Federations (IAAF) rankings. She was also the first Saint Lucian to qualify this year for the World Championships scheduled for Beijing.

There is a new era in Lawn Tennis. A number of our young players, Aiden and Adriel Bousquet, Megen William, Nathan Francis, Shamar Marcus, and Nicholas St John, have led us to success in regional tournaments. The Tennis Centre, financed by our friends from the Republic of China (Taiwan), has obviously transformed the landscape for tennis in Saint Lucia.

Then there are our swimmers. Young Jordan Augier is fast emerging as one of our leading swimmers on the circuit. Now on an Olympic Solidarity Scholarship, he continues to hold his own among the best swimmers in the United States.

Our CARIFTA Team returned from Barbados with one of the best medal hauls to date in that level of competition. We salute Katie Kyle, Terrel Monplaisir, Jayhan Odlum Smith, Jamar Archibald, and Ethan Dyke Elliot.

This year we shall see the commencement of the construction of the much-awaited Olympic size swimming pool in Beausejour, Gros Islet, to provide even greater impetus and opportunity to our young swimmers.

In sailing too, we are exploring our potential. Stephanie Devaux Lovell continues to blaze the trail for Saint Lucia and in the process become the first sailor to qualify for the Pan American games in Toronto, later this year.

In volleyball as well, we are holding our own. Our leading male beach volley-ballers, Julian Biscette and Joseph Clercin currently training in Greece have also qualified for the Pan American Games.

With such outstanding performances and commitment from our young people, my Government is even more committed to its thrust to develop, encourage and promote sport as a major avenue for development.

Madanm Vis-Pwézidan, Misyé Speaker, Médam, Mésyé. Nou asanblé isi-a, an Kay Konsit péyi-a, kon nou ni labitid fè toulézanné, pou wéfléchi ansanm asou diwèksyon-an Gouvèdman ka popozé pou péyi-a an lanné-a ki ka vini-an. Nou tout sav ki lonm pé popozé, me sé Dyé ki ka

dispozé. Sé li ki ka détèminé sa ki kay fèt. Mé sa pa dwètèt anpéché nou pwan démach pou endé kò-nou, épi pou mété bagay an plas pou avansé kondisyon-nou, swé o nivo pèsonnèl ou nasyonal. Sé Dyé ki mè, é sé lagwas-li ki ka mennen siksé.

Lanné 2014 pa té ézé. I pòté malè, twistès, lanmò, aksidan, kwioté, vyolans, maladi, lafen, tout sòt kwèk tjè, tout kalité soufwans, tout kalité déga, tout kalité dézas an pa lapòt-nou, osi byen tout oliwon latè-a. Gwas a télévizyon, radio épi téléfon pòtab-nou, nou wè, nou tann tout sé twakasman-sala an salon nou menm.

I pa ni bokou pami nou ki pa té tann palé di ISIS, Boko Haram, Vol MH370, mové tan pa isi é pa la, ében Ebola. Pa palé di Chikungunya-a!! - soufwans-lan ki fè anchay di nou pòté maygwen

gwan wèspé. Byen dé fwa, nou santi kò nou kon wavèt douvan poul an fas tout sé twakasman sala. Mé sé fo nou pa désèspéwé. Pa la gwas di Dyé, lavi ka kontiné, é sé fo nou konfwonté sé dimannli-an avèk fòs, kouway, lafwa èk lèspwa.

Jodia-a sé koumansman senkyenm sèsyon dizyenm Paleman péyi-a. Sa vlé di péyi-a ja kwiyé dis ilèksyon dépi lendépandans, épi sèsyon sala sé senkyenm fwa nou ka ouvè Paleman dépwidènyè ilèksyon 2011-lan. Wèsponsabilité Paleman – é la mwen ka palé di tout manm Senna èk tout manm Kay Konsit péyi-a – sé pou gidé péyi-a, défwa menm mennen pèp-la dé koté yo pè alé. Mé toujou sé pou Paleman agi an lentéwé tout pèp peyi-a - sa ki ja fèt osi byen sa ki pòkò fèt- paski sé yo ki kay éwityé sa nou ka kwéyé-a.

Madanm Vis-Pwézidan, Misyé Speaker, magwé tout twibilasyon lanné 2014-la, Gouvèdman ni lidé ki nou sa anbwasé 2015 épi pli lèspwa èk pli konfyans.

Nou ja koumansé wè konfyans sala an siksé sé jennès-la ki patisipé dènyèman an Chanpyonna spò o nivo wéjonal èk entènasyonal. Madanm Vis-Pwézidan, Misyé Speaker, annou pwan an ti moman pou aplodi èk salouvé yo pou go siksé-yo a an jwé krikèt, tennis, aflétism, volleyball, lanaj épi navigasyon. Kalité siksé sala méwité aplodisman épi sipò nou tout.

Madam Deputy President, Mr Speaker, I now turn to matters of State.

## **A SAFE AND SECURE FUTURE**

Madam Deputy President, Mr Speaker, my Government believes that the drought in our economic fortunes may well be receding, and so it continues on its path of fiscal consolidation, growth and reforms. Our economy is now poised to return to a cycle of growth, barring unforeseen circumstances. The sacrifices of the past have yielded results but I must caution that we are not yet “out of the woods”, so to speak, and further measures will be necessary to ensure that that we are safe and secure.

However, with our fiscal deficit nearing more reasonable and prudent limits, my Government is better positioned to invest in major infrastructure



to drive growth in our economy, attract new investment and reduce unemployment.

## **WORLD CLASS HEALTH**

Madam Deputy President, Mr Speaker, quality healthcare is a requirement for any developed society, and it is the wish of my Government that Saint Lucia secures for all of its people a system that promotes long, healthy and active lives from conception until the quieter contemplative years of later life.

It is our hope that by the next session of Parliament, Saint Lucia would have opened two high standard, world class health facilities, namely the Dr Owen King-EU Hospital at Millennium Heights and the new St Jude Hospital

at Cantonment, Vieux Fort. These hospitals combined represent an investment in the health sector in excess of two hundred and seventy million EC dollars.

The Dr. Owen King-EU Hospital was envisaged by my Government to replace the inadequate Victoria Hospital and it represents the largest single donation made by the European Union in the Eastern Caribbean. With their continued help, we are up-skilling and training staff while installing specialised equipment prior to commissioning. Earlier this year, Parliament enacted the Millennium Heights Medical Complex Act, which provides for the management of this facility, with a structure similar to what obtains for St Jude Hospital.

My Government is hopeful that St Jude Hospital will be ready for commissioning in early 2016. In this regard, we are grateful for the bilateral support provided by a number of countries, particularly the Republic of China (Taiwan), but also, most recently, the Government of Mexico.

## **ESTABLISHMENT OF QUALITY CARE COMMISSION**

Madam Deputy President, Mr Speaker, my Government is fully aware that from time to time, members of the public, whether individually or collectively, complain about the quality of health care at our medical institutions. Sometimes, the complaints are about the quality of treatment received by patients. On other occasions, the

complaints are about shortages of medical supplies. In some instances, patients have been required to purchase their own drugs from pharmacies. These complaints are loudest and most frequent in the case of Saint Jude Hospital.

In this era, the Government of Saint Lucia has opted to decentralise decision-making by entrusting the management of public hospitals to Boards. However, the Government cannot be expected to pour millions of dollars into these institutions without accountability of expenditure and governance, or assessment of the quality of care offered by these institutions.

My Government has therefore decided to establish an independent Quality Care Commission [QCC]

to regulate, inspect and rate the quality of service offered by all of our hospitals, both public and private.

This model is not new and has in fact been successfully tried in the United Kingdom. We hope to adapt that model to our circumstances. The Commission will undertake periodic reviews of our hospitals and health institutions and will assess the delivery of health care services by answering the following seven key questions, the first five of which are identical to that asked in the United Kingdom:

1. Are they safe?
2. Are they effective?
3. Are they caring?
4. Are they responsive to people's needs?

5. Are they well-led?
6. Are they making the best use of the subventions made available to them by the State?
7. Are they faithful to the Acts that authorised their existence?

The last two questions, will, of course, apply only to our public hospitals.

## **A PREFERRED LOCATION FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH**

Madam Deputy President, Mr Speaker, healthcare and medical treatment is expensive business, and for small countries there remains the challenge of providing high-quality healthcare. We must therefore see how we might

leverage such medical infrastructure to our advantage.

Accordingly, we have identified the opportunity to establish Saint Lucia as a preferred location for medical research and medical education.

In this regard, my Government is presently engaged with *Clifford Chance*, a world renowned legal firm, to study the legislative and regulatory framework needed to transform Saint Lucia into a world class medical research centre.

*Clifford Chance* has been commissioned to draft the needed legislation for consideration by this Parliament during the current Parliamentary

year. Government is excited by the possibilities this offers for the promotion of Saint Lucia, for investment, for high quality job creation and for uplifting the standard of our health care.

## **CRIME PREVENTION & SECURITY**

Madam Deputy President, Mr Speaker, crime is a scourge that affects our entire region. It is true that the Americas have the highest rate of murders in the world. Five countries in the Americas have murder rates higher than the death rates of Ebola in Guinea and Sierra Leone. You could easily conclude therefore that we do have a crime pandemic in our region.

However, Saint Lucia is thankful that we have seen a general trend of reduction in the level of crime, particularly homicides, since its peak in



2011. However, any successes should not be an excuse to be comforted, for even while statistics suggest a downward trend, our homicide rate is still too high. There is still too much senseless death in our midst. Our streets must not be places of “duck and cover” but thoroughfares of good and meaningful transactions. We must be indefatigable in our efforts for Saint Lucia to become a place of peace.

The challenge, of course, is a complex one. Just as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes the entire village to keep that child safe, and the village must secure itself as well. We require reforms to the justice system, reforms to the police force, and an environment in which law and order are respected. This environment must permeate

each institution, private and public, from the family home to the school to the community playing field.

In the Justice Sector, one challenge lies in the provision of evidence in the prosecution of cases. Therefore to assist persons and the courts in securing and protecting persons giving evidence, a Witness Protection Bill is being drafted and will be introduced in this Parliamentary Session.

My Government has introduced a second High Court judge responsible for criminal matters so as to improve the capacity of the Courts in handling cases. A new Master has also been introduced within the Criminal Division of the High Court. The Criminal Code is being reviewed to correct

anomalies brought to light by the commencement of sittings of this Master. It is expected that additional provisions will be necessary to complement and enhance the jurisdiction of the Master and to reduce the backlog of cases in the Criminal Courts. We have also increased the complement of staff at the Crown Prosecution Service, all in an effort to ensure greater speed and efficiency in dispensing justice.

## **FAMILY LIFE AND CHILDREN**

Madam Deputy President, Mr Speaker, what is certain is that we can produce greatness in this land. But this must be nurtured, and that nurturing begins at home, with the help and protection of family.

Family is the strength of all societies. Invariably, societies which possess strong social capital ensure that there is less of a social strain on the broader society. Former US President, Theodore Roosevelt, put it this way:

*“No man can be a good citizen who is not a good husband and a good father, who is not honest in his dealings with other men and women, faithful to his friends and fearless in the presence of his foes, who has not got a sound heart, a sound mind, and a sound body; exactly as no amount of attention to civil duties will save a nation if the domestic life is undermined...”*

All States must find balance in how involved they are with the elemental building blocks of society.

While the State can neither dictate individual faith nor family life, there is fundamentally an acceptance that if these elements are not in place and are not strong, then the State falters.

My Government holds fast to the philosophy that Saint Lucia needs strong, compassionate, caring and loving families. We must strive to remain a people of sound faith and belief. Only then can we successfully promote a strong and caring community ethos. Only then can we tackle the scourge of crime that seeks to rip us and our families apart.

The greatest role of the family is in nurturing and protection of children and we must do all we can collectively to nurture this. The Organisation of

Eastern Caribbean States, OECS, has recently developed model family legislation, as child care laws in most jurisdictions are viewed as archaic and inadequate. In this session, my Government contemplates that a suite of legislation aimed at greater protection for minors and other victims of domestic violence will be introduced; as well as legislation removing discrimination against children born out of wedlock and becoming compliant with the *International Convention on the Rights of a Child* and the *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women*. These Bills will include the Child Care and Adoption Bill, Juvenile Justice Bill, new Domestic Violence and Status of Children Bills.

## **ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE**

Madam Deputy President, Mr Speaker, in this Fifth Session of the Tenth Parliament, my Government will take the first tentative steps to establish a National Youth Service. Such a service has long been mooted but we have never been able to operationalise its existence. The reason, I suspect, has to do with the scarcity of resources.

In this Parliamentary Session, a National Youth Service Bill will be introduced for the consideration of Honourable members. Such a service could inculcate values and skills in our young people by instilling in them a tradition of industry, discipline and patriotic and loyal service

to Saint Lucia in any situation they may find themselves. It can develop in them the attitudes of mind, acquired through shared experiences and suitable training, which will make them more amenable to mobilisation in the national interest. It could enhance national awareness, environmental consciousness, civic pride, responsibility and participation. It could also encourage a culture of service and respect for others in the community. Crucially, such a service could provide our youth with opportunities for further studies and training so as to enhance their opportunities of employment. With the establishment of such a service, Government could then move to rationalise some of the interventions which currently support youth development.



My Government continues to see great possibilities for Youth and the Creative Industries. Work has commenced at Walcott Place at the corner of Grass Street and Chaussee Road, which should become a focal point for the arts. Furthermore, we will pursue more vigorously this year other opportunities for the creation of spaces for the performing arts.

Madanm Vis-Pwézidan, Misyé Speaker, i sanm akwèdi go nwèsè ékonomik péyi-a ka koumansé éklési. Mé menm si syèl-la ka anbéli timiyèt, i twò bonnè pou sélébwé botan. I ni anchay démach ki bizwen fèt avan nou pé pozé, ében pann chapo-nou.

Pa èkzanp, Gouvèdman vlé mété an plas an sistenm santé ki kay bénéfisyé tout moun péyi-a – tibébé kon gwan moun. Nou ni lèspwa ki sé dé lopital nèf-la – lopital Dr. Owen King-la épi lopital St. Jude – kay ouvè avan finisman sèsyon Paleman-sala. Nou ka wimèsyé sé péyi Européyen-an, péyi Taiwan èk pli dènyèman péyi Mèksik pou gwan lasistans-lan yo ja ban nou-an jiskisi-a.

Nou ka pwopozé plisyè go chanjman an mannyè nou kay mennajé sé dé lopital-la, pou fè asiwé ki nou tout wisivyè valè pou lajan-an nou ka dépansé-a asou sé dé établisman sala, ében asou sèvis-la yo kay ofè-a. Nou ni lantansyon mété an plas an lotowité endépandan pou wéglé, èkzaminé épi évalouwé kalité sèvis-la tout sé lopital nou-an

ka ofè, ni sa ki piblik, ni sa ki pwivé. E osi Gouvèdman ka avoudwé wè Sent Lisi établi kon an Plas ki kay spésyalizé an wichach épi étid médikal. Démach asou pwojé-sala ja koumansé.

Nivo kwim an péyi-a ka twakasé tout moun. Twòp moun ka jwenn lanmò-yo initilman. Lawi péyi-a sipozé sé koté lézabitan sa maché fè zafè yo libman, san kwentif, san pèwèz; pa an savann batay koté nenpòt lè, a lavidèy tout moun, an gwan jou, bal ka pété pa isi pa la; koutla èk tout sòt fèman ka palé; koté moun ni pou pwan kouwi pou sovè lavi-yo. Sé pou nou fè tout sa ki posib pou witounen lapé, pa lapè an lawi péyi-a.

Tout moun dakò ki yonn sé pli go pilotwi an sosyété sé lavi lafanmi. Si lavi lafanmi-nou fèb,

anyen di fèt. Nou pé fé sa nou vlé, sé lavé lanmen, swiyé atè. Sé pou nou touvé mannyè pou wanfosé sé pilotwi sosyété-a pou genyen about sitwasyon kwim èk vyolans sala ki ka wann lavi nou minab sé jou sala.

Yonn adan sé démach-la Gouvèdman ka popozé, sé létablisman an Sèvis Nasyonal pou Jennès. La nou kay sa ankouwajé sé jenn moun péyi-a pou dévlopé mannyè èk atitid positiv: kon bon kondwit, wèspé pou yonnalòt, lanmou pou péyi-a, wèsponsabilité pou kò-yo épi pou lèzòt, wèspé pou lanviwonman-an, fidélité, bon natiwèl èk bon santiman anvè péyi-a épi konpatwiòt-yo. La osi, yo kay sa jwi bennéfis étid épi antwennman ki kay ouvè dèt opotinité, dèt lokasyon pou avansé kò-yo di plis. Lidé sala sé pa an lidé nèf, mé jiskisi nou

pò kò janmen kapab mété'y an plas. Kou sala, sé fo nou éwisi. Nou pa nos tadé, paski, pli ta kay pli twis.

## **ENERGY LIBERALISATION**

Madam Deputy President, Mr Speaker, nearly a decade and a half ago, my Government pioneered the liberalisation of the Telecommunications Sector through new legislation and the creation of institutions like the Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority (ECTEL). This year, Government aims to liberalise the energy sector so as to promote renewable energy. At Independence, the thought that we might somehow power our country through renewable energy was perhaps mere fantasy. Today, this dream is more real as we actively pursue

investments in solar, wind, geothermal and waste-to-energy alternatives.

My Government will introduce, in this session, a new Electricity Supply Services Bill and accompanying Regulations which will allow for the generation of electricity from renewable sources by independent power producers, whether they are utility -scale producers or micro-generators.

In tandem, legislation for the establishment of an independent regulatory commission for the water and electricity sectors will also be introduced. This will allow for liberalized and non-discriminatory entry into the utility supply services sector and

enable a robust competitive environment in which there is fairness, transparency and accountability.

This process is well under way and will be introduced as the National Utilities Regulatory Commission Bill. The Water and Sewerage Authority Act, Cap. 8.04 will also be amended to allow the new Regulatory Commission to replace the Water and Sewerage Commission as the regulator for the water sector.

## **FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Madam Deputy President, Mr Speaker, in this session of Parliament, my Government plans to enact legislation to govern the fiscal management of our country.

The Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Bill, which was previously announced, will shortly be introduced to Parliament for consideration and approval. This Bill seeks to enact uniform and internationally accepted methods of procurement of public assets and build upon the Procurement Regulations set out in the Finance Administration Act.

My Government will introduce for enactment a Fiscal Responsibility Bill similar to one which has already been introduced in Grenada and Jamaica.

This Bill will create a fiscal responsibility framework, establish principles of responsible fiscal management, introduce rules to govern expenditure, set prudent and sustainable debt targets, and establish a fiscal responsibility



oversight committee that is answerable to Parliament.

## **REFORMS OF CUSTOMS MANAGEMENT ACT**

Madam Deputy President, Mr Speaker, it is true to say that one of the departments of the Government of Saint Lucia that attracts the greatest scrutiny is the Customs and Excise Department. Complaints are loud and frequent. In recent times, the Department has made a determined effort to reform the way it interacts with the public, particularly with the Private Sector. They deserve commendation for their efforts.

However, the Department has no choice but to apply and implement the laws that are currently

in force. The principal laws are contained in the Customs (Control and Management) Act, Cap 15.05. This Act which was enacted in 1990 came into force on April 03, 1993. Since then, times have changed, procedures have changed, new technology exists and new tax regimes have been introduced. We too must change.

My Government has therefore decided to enact a new Customs (Control and Management) Act to reflect the times, the imperatives of our Independence Constitution, and indeed, the new technology that is available to us all. For that purpose, a new Draft Bill will be made available “on line” and the public will be invited by the Customs Department to comment on the provisions of this Draft Bill.

## **SUPPORTING INVESTMENT**

At the last opening of Parliament, I announced that my Government would look into the issue of citizenship by investment. Since then a Committee headed by former Prime Minister, Professor Emeritus Honourable Dr Vaughan Lewis, has researched the matter and has had consultations with various stakeholders and interest groups and has reported to Cabinet.

The overwhelming view seems to be that we ought to proceed with this new avenue of investment, provided that the process is open and transparent and that adequate safeguards are in place to protect the integrity of our country. To achieve this, it would be essential to work very closely

with our partners, particularly the Governments of the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom.

It is my Government's intention to immediately create a legislative framework to allow for such investments.

## **PRIVATE/PUBLIC PARTNERSHIP**

Madam Deputy President, Mr Speaker, my Government has indicated its tempered and cautious approach to the redevelopment of the Hewanorra International Airport through a public-private partnership, or PPP as such arrangements are described, all in an effort to ensure that we re-develop the airport without

creating an unmanageable debt burden on the State.

My Government is being assisted by the International Finance Corporation, an entity owned by the World Bank, in developing this framework. A Bill will be laid in Parliament this session to allow the Hewanorra International Airport to be managed and run by an independent entity selected on the basis of competitive bidding. This approach will relieve SLASPA of some of their responsibilities while allowing the new entity to utilise SLASPA's employees to manage and redevelop the airport without being a strain on the public purse. This will offer a greater level of service to the travelling public, and provide an

international gateway that all Saint Lucians may be proud of.

## **SECURITY OF BORDERS**

Madam Deputy President, Mr Speaker, the security of our borders should not be compromised. We must ensure that we protect our country from those who seek to enter with criminal intent, bent on causing pain and injury to our citizens.

In this regard, my Government will introduce an Advance Passenger Information Bill currently being developed by the OECS. This is in anticipation of the environment which has been created with the free movement of people throughout our sub-region. It is also an effort to

remain vigilant in the protection of all people throughout the region and to facilitate the provision of advance information relating to passengers and crew members of an incoming aircraft or ship or other vessel. It will also allow for the sharing of information with other States with a view to identifying persons who may pose risks to our security.

This Bill is to be introduced by all OECS Member States to allow for benefits to be achieved through reciprocity of application.

Madanm Vis-Pwézidan, Misyé Speaker. An chak sèsyon Paleman, Gouvedman ka pwoposé lwa nèf i vlé entodwi ében chanjman an sé sa ki méwité chanjé. Kou sala la kay ni chanjman an lwa-a ki

ka wéglé produksyon couwan ilektrik pou fasilite biznis eben lòt moun apa di LUCELEC ki entèwesé podwi sa nou ka kwiyé lénèji winouvab. An lòt lwa kay établi an lotowité endependan ki kay wéglé zafé LUCELEC osi byen sa WASCO. La kay ni chanjman an lwa ki ka gouvèné ladwenn, epi lopéwasyon lèwopò Hewanorra-a. Pami sé lwa nèf-la, la kay ni sa ki kay òfè **manmay** pli potèksyon douvan la lwa, pou fè-y pli ézé pou adòpté manmay, epi pou fè povisyon bay viktim vyolans domestik. La kay ni lwa ki kay fè'y obligatwa pou nou wisivyè enfòmasyon asou tout pasajé ki ka antwé péyi-a swé pa avyon ében pa bato menm avan yo débatjé; lwa ki kay òfè sitwayennté a jan biznis letwanjé ki entéwésé fè an kontwibusyon konsidéwab an dévlòpman ékonomik péyi-a. La nou kay twavay épi gouvèdman dòt péyi, sitou péyi Laméwik,



Kannada épi Langlitè pou fè asiwé pwès malfètè ében pyés kotjen pa pwan lavantaj asou nou.

## **A NEW ERA IN EXTERNAL RELATIONS**

Madam Deputy President, Mr. Speaker, before I close, I wish to turn to the sphere of international relations, and our country's foreign policy in relation to global trends. I cannot help but make the observation that we face a world of increasing complexity, as what we once clearly recognized as the ideologically competitive Cold War relations between the dominant countries of our globe, transform themselves, and the Great Powers seek new ways of relating to each other.

From our position in this Hemisphere, we have seen a decisive recognition of these

transformations in the historic reconciliation, for which we in Caricom have long pleaded, between the United States and Cuba. This reconciliation visibly took place at the Summit of the Americas in Panama, a few days ago. As my Government stated at the summit, “The Presidents of the United States and of Cuba must be applauded for refusing to be chained by the history which they have inherited.”

Madam Deputy President, Mr. Speaker, what my Government believes that this implies is an opening of opportunities for the pursuit of relations not only within the Hemisphere as a whole, but more particularly, within our Caribbean. Our Caribbean Community, if it acts wisely and decisively, now has an opportunity to pursue meaningful regional cooperation, and indeed, regional integration on a wider scale.

We can be sure that within the wider Hemisphere and beyond, we will be watched, from far and near, as we proceed to consolidate economic and political cooperation within the wider Caribbean area, and in the new Hemispheric geopolitical environment which has emerged. And we will be watched as we seek to consolidate Caribbean-wide strategies in our international trade and aid relations.

It is from this perspective, Madam Deputy President, Mr. Speaker, that my Government feels constrained to express its concern that functional cooperation between Caricom States in external matters is not proceeding with the decisiveness

that we believe to be vitally necessary in this new diplomatic configuration.

My Government is particularly concerned by the image that we have portrayed during the process of selection of a new Secretary General of the Commonwealth. Three candidates have been offered from our region for that post. We have, by our actions, said to the world that we have extreme difficulty in co-operating with each other in the representation of our collective interests.

Inevitably, the international community will ask itself if our Caricom arena has the maturity and the strategic decisiveness to pursue the consolidation of our diplomatic interests in the new global environment.

Government believes that the time has come for our regional community to overhaul its diplomatic postures, define its strategic interests, and establish procedures to determine co-operation in the selection of individuals to represent the regional community in international fora. The collectivity we share is a vital diplomatic resource.

And it is therefore, in this connection, Madam Deputy President, Mr. Speaker, that my Government, despite recent disappointments, will continue to work assiduously with our Caricom colleagues to ensure that the diplomatic and operational prerequisites for fashioning effective regional and international strategies necessary for our economic development in particular, are

agreed, and pursued with consistency among ourselves. For the portrayal of a consistent cohesion is critical to our country's, and our region's survival, in today's non-ideological and pragmatic world.

Madanm Vis-Pwézidan, Misyé Speaker, sé dwa tout moun lib pou désidé sa yo vlé fè avèk lavi yo, pou dékouvè dèstin yo. Mè lè yo vini ansanm kon yon nasyon nou ni dwa konté asou yo pou anbwasé an wésponsabilité kòlèktiv pou twavay an lentéwé péyi-a. Nou pa oblijè dakò épi yonnalòt asou tout bagay tout lè, ni nou ni an obligasyon pou vini ansanm asou bagay ki enpòtan pou dévlòpman péyi-a. Sa péyi-a bizwen sé moun ki ni an atitid positif, pa sé sa ki toujou pawé pou détwi tout sa lézòt popozé. Nou bizwen

noun ki pawé pou twavay; pa sa ki vlé dépann sèlman asou lézòt. Nou bizwen moun ki kay pousé yonnalòt douvan; pa sa ki vlé hédi'w dèyè pou anpéché'w avansé. Nou bizwen moun ki ka aksepté ki si an bagay bon pou Matiwen, i bon osi pou Matiwin; pa sé sa ki kwè ki i ni yon lwa pou yo épi anlòt pou lézòt. Jodi-a nou ka mandé tout Sent Lisyen pou wèspèkté yonnalòt, pou pèmèt chakan di nou wéalizé potansyèl-nou, èspwa-nou, wèv-nou, dèsten-nou.

## **NATIONAL DESTINY**

Madam Deputy President, Mr Speaker, in closing, I remind all herein that it is the right of all women and men, who enjoy free thought, to define their hopes and discover their destinies. Yet, when these women and men form a State, there is

also a national hope and destiny which requires collective responsibility driven by a common purpose. The state of mind, the state of being of our people must find commonality in the midst of diversity, must find grand alliance in the midst of minor disagreement. We must be a nation of consequence, a nation of strength, a nation of purpose, a nation anxious to live by good deeds, a nation of great men and women.

Such a state of being is not where the pessimist finds comfort. It requires positive thought, positive vibes and positive vision.

Such a state is far removed from helplessness, doubt or dependency. It requires wisdom, will, and action.



Such a state is defined by women and men of courage, character, and will. They understand of their own free will, that they must imbue care and kindness towards each other.

It is a state summoned by Providence, sanctioned by purpose, and not sullied by prejudice and untamed desires of power.

It is a state of being that we can all secure and achieve, never mind our station in life, never mind profession, never mind material wealth.

It is a state of doing for oneself; not a state buoyed by dependency or people who are left destitute and weak for want of will and valour.

Madam Deputy President, Mr Speaker, Members of the Senate and the House of Assembly, our free choice as a nation to determine our destiny is a powerful ability, but it is not naïve to the realities of the ever globalising, ever more connected and harsh forces of the world, be they of nature, or of man.

Today, we ask our people to clothe themselves with robes of reason and respect for others, that they might assume regal postures and a regal presence in this world, and not with rags of rage or rancour. Let us secure hope and define our destinies for self and country.

Madam Deputy President, Mr. Speaker, Members of Parliament, Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank

you. And now it is my pleasure to formally declare open this Fifth Session of the Tenth Parliament of Saint Lucia.