



GOVERNMENT
OF
SAINT LUCIA
DIASPORA POLICY

TOUT SENT LISYEN SE YONN - Written by: Ronald "Boo" Hinkson

*No matter where your navel string bury
North south east or west in this country
Means you born in Saint Lucia
Your input we calling for
Cause de progress of this nation
Depend on every Saint Lucian
And if you living abroad
You have to come on board*

Chorus

*When we start to speak Creole
We going to we own world
Tout Sent Lisyen sé yonn
We share de same culture
Cause we all from Saint Lucia
Tout Sent Lisyen sé yonn
We want you to
Bring your money
Bring your skill
Your knowledge we need home still
With your money
Buy your country
Give a hand
To your home land
This is a call to action
Come and build your own nation
Tout Sent Lisyen sé yonn*

2

*We have to start working together
So we have a stake in Saint Lucia
Those in the Diaspora and
Who living in Saint Lucia
Invest in the economy
A better future we will see
Be the success story
You want for your country*

(chorus)

*Wave your Lucian flag high
Wave your Lucian flag high
Wave your Lucian flag high
High high high high
Wave your Lucian flag high
Wave your Lucian flag high
Wave your Lucian flag high
High high high high*

3

*Taking charge is priority
Don't forget this is our country
Talk about remittances
Of Saint Lucians overseas
Don't think we haven't noted
Yes you are appreciated
For twenty ten reunion
Come home all Saint Lucians*

Chorus

*Wave your Lucian flag left
Wave your Lucian flag right
Tout sent lysine sé yonn
Wave your Lucian flag left
Wave your Lucian flag right
Tout sent Lisyen sé yonn*

CONTENTS

SECTION 1.0: INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Definitions
- 1.2 Diaspora/Home Country Relationships
- 1.3 Capturing the contributions of the Diaspora
- 1.4 Role of Embassies and Consulates
- 1.5 Role of Diaspora
- 1.7 Role of Associations and Organisations
- 1.6 Role of Regional Integration & Diaspora Unit

SECTION 2.0: POLICY OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 Applicability and scope

SECTION 3.0: POLICY STATEMENTS

- 3.1 Citizenship, Rights and Obligations
- 3.2 Financial and Economic Incentives & Regulations
- 3.3 Investment Opportunities
- 3.4 Development Finance
- 3.5 Skills Retention and Skills Transfer – The Brain Gain
- 3.6 Information exchange between Saint Lucia and Saint Lucians in the Diaspora
- 3.7 Aging
- 3.8 Immigration
- 3.9 Recognition for Outstanding Service
- 3.10 Political Policy
- 3.11 A biennial Diaspora Conference

SECTION 4.0: DEVELOPMENT POLICY AREAS

- 4.1 Social Development
- 4.2 Cultural Arts/ Cultural Exchanges/Export of Cultural Products
- 4.3 Sports
- 4.4 Youth and Children
- 4.5 Agriculture Promotion
- 4.6 Tourism Promotion
- 4.7 Trade Promotion
- 4.8 Health
- 4.9 Community Development
- 4.10 Human Resources/Capacity Building
- 4.11 Information Communication technology

SECTION 5: 0: IMPLEMENTATION & EVALUATION. CONCLUSION

SECTION 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Since the independence of Saint Lucia in 1979, there has been a concerted attempt to engage with nationals who live overseas. Although the relationship has not always been clearly defined, the intention to ensure that nationals who leave home remain connected to their homeland has always been addressed by policy makers and by Saint Lucians living overseas.

The Government of Saint Lucia continues to engage in a wide range of activities to ensure improved diaspora participation, as well as to reassure them of benefits that are available as Saint Lucian nationals.

Over the years the Government of Saint Lucia has dialogued with its nationals mainly through its consular offices and missions. Most of the conversations have been centered on the need to address some critical issues that affect nationals as migrants overseas.

Since 1996 the dialogue has also attempted to focus on policy issues and much discussion has focused on the entitlement of returning nationals. The result is the **Returning Nationals Information Booklet** which in some ways assists in the definition of Diaspora. At this stage in our development the focus is on encouraging skilled Saint Lucians to contribute to nation building.

As such, it has become imperious to prepare a Diaspora Policy that can effectively and efficiently respond to the need to ensure active and voluntary Diaspora participation in political, economic and social activities of the country so that it benefits from its engagement and contributes to the economic development of Saint Lucia.

This policy document is divided into five sections. Part one focuses on the definition, vision and relevance of the policy whilst section two covers the objectives and major goals of the policy. Section three deals with policy statements whereas section four provides in-depth

information about the development policy areas. Lastly, section five presents the strategies, implementation and evaluation bodies of the policy.

1.1 Definitions

The Saint Lucian Diaspora

Saint Lucians and foreign nationals of Saint Lucian origins, residing outside Saint Lucia.

A nation's Diaspora is that part of its population that has emigrated overseas and is permanently resident in foreign countries. The Saint Lucian Diaspora consists of non-resident nationals and persons of Saint Lucian origin residing overseas. This includes the children of our nationals. Our Saint Lucian Diaspora resides in many countries throughout the world including the Caribbean.

Saint Lucian Diaspora Policy

A document containing objectives, strategies and other activities aimed at ensuring the participation of the Saint Lucian Diaspora in the development of the country no matter where they reside in the world.

Returning Nationals

A Returning national is:

- a. A citizen of Saint Lucia by birth, of eighteen years and above, returning to Saint Lucia to settle after a minimum of ten years residence abroad;
- b. A citizen of Saint Lucia by descent who is eighteen years and above who is coming to Saint Lucia to settle, after a minimum of ten years residence abroad; or

- c. An alien spouse of a citizen of Saint Lucia by birth or descent, coming to Saint Lucia to settle, after a minimum of ten years residence abroad;

1.2 Diaspora/Home Country Relations

Saint Lucians like all Caribbean people have always migrated in order to take advantage of the economic opportunities afforded by other countries. The United Nations (2003) report shows that Saint Lucia has one of the highest net migration rates. The fundamental question however is whether these persons are lost to the country or can they make a viable contribution from outside the country.

After more than thirty years of independence this pursuit for the deepening and strengthening of relations with the Diaspora is coupled with nation building and the reevaluation of primary identities.

Whatever arguments are posited for or against the nature of the relationship with the Diaspora, the fact remains that it is a relationship that can bring benefits to the country and decisions must be made about the nature of the relationship that should be pursued at this juncture. There is no doubt that like all developing countries remittances have reduced the impact of external shocks, high unemployment and poverty rates, and have served to increase human and capital. There must be strategies that will not just focus on remittances to households but also investment for the country. It is also important that these benefits as well as the relationship not only be properly documented but also communicated.

1.3 Capturing the Contributions of the Diaspora

The contribution of the Diaspora to the home country is as old as migration of nationals. However, the measurement of remittances is extremely imprecise and the value of the flows of non-monetary goods has to be

estimated in most cases. Since many Caribbean migrants do not have bank accounts, a significant amount of these flows moves unrecorded through informal channels. To a large extent this contribution has remained at the level of the family and would extend to the national sphere in time of crisis or when charitable donations are made.

Many argue that the contributions go directly to families, who in many cases do not pay taxes on these remittances. Saint Lucia and its nationals must establish policies and structures that ensure these contributions are not left to chance. These policies can include special areas such as:

- a. Capacity building.
- b. Directed investment
- c. Named causes and institutions
- d. Proper tracking of remittances

Undoubtedly, engagement with the Diaspora must be one that must be constantly reevaluated so that the type of engagement policy can shift as the country evolves. **The first step must therefore be improvement of the investment climate for entrepreneurs in the Diaspora.** This must be accompanied by structures at the Ministry of External Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, the Office of the Prime Minister, Financial institutions and the Statistics Department to facilitate the collection of the data on the contributions of the Diaspora.

1.4 The Role of Embassies and Consulates

Saint Lucia maintains embassies and consulates in many countries where our Diaspora reside.

- a. Government commits to expanding the role of its Embassies and Consulates beyond that of the provision of consular services to include appropriate aspects related to the implementation of the Diaspora Policy

- b. Consulates and Missions should be forthcoming in the dissemination of information about issues affecting Saint Lucians living abroad.
- c. **Consulates and Overseas Missions should collaborate with Diaspora Associations in the development and maintenance of a Diaspora Database/Skills Bank.**
- d. Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Consuls' General should be very active in assisting Saint Lucians in the Diaspora to prepare for participation in public policy discussions in their host country as they relate to policies affecting Saint Lucians in the Diaspora and the developmental needs of Saint Lucia.
- e. Missions should work with Diaspora Groups and organizations and local stake holders should be encouraged to enhance investment in various sectors of national interest.
- f. Full and uniform protection should be ensured to all Saint Lucian citizens throughout the Diaspora. While it may not be feasible to have national or regional embassies and consulates throughout the world, mechanisms to ensure such protection should be addressed.

1.5 The Role of the Diaspora

Saint Lucians living overseas have also attempted to organise themselves as a strategic response to their circumstances. They have organised themselves into Associations that represent communities from which they came or which represent the entire country. They should focus on:

- a. Encouraging Nationals living overseas as well as returning nationals to invest in the various sectors of the economy.
- b. Establishing institutional mechanisms leveraging the Diaspora's political potential on policy development and decision-making in host countries;
- c. Assisting Saint Lucia in developing policy

- options for dealing with issues of mutual interest with the host country;
- d. Accessing resources within the Diaspora for Saint Lucia's development, including alternative options for remittance flows;
 - e. Assisting with the building a Saint Lucia Diaspora data base of expertise and means to utilize such expertise in its development;
 - f. Assisting in the transferring of scientific and technological resources to Saint Lucia;
 - g. Coordinating the Diaspora's response to natural disasters and other emergency situations.

1.6 The Role of the Regional Integration and Diaspora Unit

In April 2008 the Government of Saint Lucia decided beyond the issue of Returning Nationals that special attention had to be given to the concerns of Saint Lucians resident in other countries. In this regard, Diaspora Affairs was added to the Office of the Prime Minister and was located within the Regional Integration and Diaspora Unit (RIDU), headed by an Ambassador. Essentially, this action identified the Prime Minister as the Minister responsible for Diaspora Affairs.consistent with the Constitution of Saint Lucia, the location of the Unit will be determined by the Prime Minister. It also signaled to the Diaspora the importance attached to the relationship. One of the missions of this Unit is to facilitate the deepening and strengthening of connections between our nationals overseas and their homeland.

Other objectives include:

- a. To build partnerships between Saint Lucians living overseas and Saint Lucians at home.
- b. To encourage Saint Lucians living overseas to invest in their country.
- c. To encourage young Saint Lucians living overseas to maintain contact with their country.

- d. To establish structures to facilitate Saint Lucians overseas in their efforts to reintegrate into the Saint Lucian community.

1.7 The Role of Associations

While the vast number of Saint Lucians belong to Associations some chose not to be part of a grouping. There are currently Associations in most countries but not **all** are affiliated to the USLOA. The following Associations have been formed and recognised by the USLOA:

- a. Unity of UK Saint Lucian Associations
- b. Saint. Lucia Calgary Cultural Association
- c. Saint Lucia Toronto Association.
- d. The Saint Lucia Community of Barbados
- e. Saint Lucia Association of St. Croix
- f. Saint Lucia Assn. of Central Florida
- g. Saint Lucian United Association
- h. Saint Lucian Association of London (1963)
- i. Saint Lucia/Ottawa Association
- j. Saint Lucia International Association.
- k. Saint Lucia Association of Georgia
- l. Saint Lucia Association of Metro Washington DC
- m. Saint Lucia Cultural Association of Montreal
- n. Le Vwa St. Lisi of St. Croix

There are also other Associations that are not currently part of the USLOA. These include the Associations in Cayenne, Martinique, Guadeloupe and Panama. The goal is to invite them into the umbrella Association and to also broaden the membership.

The Union of Saint Lucian Overseas Associations (USLOA) is the umbrella body for most of the existing Saint Lucian Associations. Since 1984 it has been meeting on a biennial basis. The USLOA in pursuance of the purpose for which it was formed encourages programmes that:

- a. Provide mutual and voluntary assistance, enjoyment, and entertainment for the social, physical, moral and educational improvement of members.
- b. Promote and maintain fellowship, sociability and culture among its members
- c. Promote friendship among its members and inculcate in them a high sense of loyalty to each other and their island home. Also to reach out to our youth and nurture in them a sense of belonging as sons and daughters of Saint Lucia
- d. Hold meetings and social gatherings for the better realization of the above purposes
- e. Participate voluntarily whether financially or otherwise in any assistance program for the less privileged of Saint Lucia, and,
- f. Do any or all things, exercise any and all rights and privileges that may be required, and incidental to the above mentioned purposes, subject always to the laws of the country of member associations.

The primary mission of the USLOA is to unite Saint Lucians within the Diaspora. Above all, the goal of the USLOA is to do all in its power for the betterment of Saint Lucians worldwide.

SECTION 2.0: POLICY OBJECTIVES

From the onset it must be clear that Diaspora initiatives fermented by this Government belong to all of our Diaspora with the full participation of all Saint Lucians at home and overseas. This policy objective has been articulated by all Governments and is reemphasized by this policy.

Given the stage of our development and our constraints, this policy is focused on economic growth, poverty reduction, good governance, capacity building, and policy development that will redound to the benefit of

all. It is about all Saint Lucians working together for the good of the country.

The Saint Lucia Diaspora Policy is intended as a transparent and unambiguous statement of Government's Policy with regard to non-resident Saint Lucians and will indicate the areas in which the latter can be incorporated more meaningfully into the development and social agenda. The Policy also seeks to define the rights, privileges and obligations of Saint Lucian citizens in the Diaspora.

It also addresses Saint Lucians who have returned to live and retire in Saint Lucia and the policy of the Government upon their return. The policy on Returning Nationals has been documented and every effort will be made by the Government of Saint Lucia to ensure a seamless homecoming.

2.1 Applicability and scope

This policy shall apply to all aspects of the relations between Saint Lucia and its citizens in the Diaspora. It is addressed to those citizens resident or naturalized in countries abroad and to persons of Saint Lucian origin. It addresses all persons defined as citizens under the Saint Lucian Constitution.

SECTION 3.0: POLICY STATEMENTS

3.1 Citizenship, Rights and Obligations

The Saint Lucia Constitution Order 1978 confers the right of citizenship on persons of Saint Lucian decent as follows:

- a. Persons who were born in Saint Lucia and whose parents were Saint Lucian citizens at the time of birth.
- b. The children of Saint Lucian citizens shall be considered as persons of Saint Lucian origin.

3.1.1 Fundamental rights and freedoms

The Saint Lucia Constitution Order 1978 confers fundamental rights and freedoms on its citizens as follows

Every person in Saint Lucia is entitled to the fundamental rights and freedoms, that is to say, the right, whatever his race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex, but subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest, to each and all of the following, namely

- a. Life, liberty, security of the person, equality before the law and the protection of the law;
- b. Freedoms of conscience, of expression and of assembly and association; and
- c. Protection for his family life, his personal privacy, the privacy of his home and other property and from deprivation of property without compensation,

There are however some restrictions relevant to non-resident citizens as follows:

- a. Citizenship does not confer the right to vote on non-residents
- b. The right to vote is contingent on the citizen being registered to vote
- c. Eligibility to register is contingent on the citizen having resided in a polling district for three (3) continuous months prior to registration and the elector being at least eighteen years old at the date of registration
- d. Entitlement to vote is preserved, even if the registered voter is not resident in the polling district on polling day
- e. The elector's name can be deleted from the register in the case of an absence from the country for a period exceeding five years

3.1.2 Multiple nationalities

All Saint Lucian citizens should be given the right to possess and to gain or regain multiple nationalities to which they may have a claim, given the fundamental nature of nationality to the citizen and his or her means of livelihood.

3.1.3 Education

- a. All children of returning nationals should be granted the same free education up to secondary level as obtains for Saint Lucians who have always resided in the country. This would also hold for scholarship programmes.
- b. There should be ongoing efforts towards ensuring that an accreditation body is established to ensure verification of diplomas and other certificates and qualifications.

3.2 Financial and Economic Incentives & Regulations

The Government of Saint Lucia is committed to a policy of non-discrimination between domestic, foreign and Diaspora investors. Provisions and application procedures are contained in the Returning Residents Information Manual. Current Incentives for Returning Nationals are as follows;

Such persons may be afforded the following incentives:

- a. Importation free of customs duty, household and personal effects, whether new or used, adequate to furnish his or her family residence.
- b. Importation of one motor vehicle whether new or used with a CIF value of not more than US\$30,000.00 or EC\$81,507.00 free of customs duty provided the returning national arrives accompanied by the motor vehicle or the vehicle arrives within three months before or after the arrival of the returning national or is purchased in St Lucia by the returning national within three months of his or her return to St Lucia.

- c. If the CIF value of a motor vehicle imported under this concession exceeds US\$30,000.00 or EC\$81,507.00, the full customs duties will be payable on the excess amount.
- d. Importation free of customs duty, tools of trade, instruments and pieces of equipment normally used in the pursuit of the declared profession or trade of the returning national. Tools of trade do not include plant, machinery and heavy duty vehicles.
- e. In addition, returning nationals are also allowed to import the following items (whether new or used) to adequately furnish his or her family residence: Living Room items such as Couch, Television sets etc., Dining room Furniture which includes Dining room set (Table and Chairs) End Tables etc., Kitchen Appliances such as Microwave, Dishwasher etc., Bedroom Furniture which includes beds/mattresses, Dressers etc., Other furniture such as wall clocks, Ironing board etc., and other reasonable equipment that the individual wishes to import such as exercise equipment for home use, Garden tools etc. (see appendix 5.1)
- f. Moreover, there is another act that grants incentives to both nationals and non nationals. This act is called the Fiscal Incentives Act. Under the Fiscal Incentives Act No 15 of 1974, Fiscal Incentives are granted to Enterprise to facilitate local and foreign investment in the productive sectors of the economy.

3.2.1 Criteria for Fiscal Incentives Qualification

Generally the criteria that are used for determining Fiscal Incentives for investors are as follows:

- a. The enterprise must be incorporated and registered in Saint Lucia
- b. The enterprise must contribute to the economic development of Saint Lucia

- c. The country's human and natural resources must be utilized
- d. The enterprise must train local personnel and upgrade its plant through technological transfer
- e. The enterprise must form linkages with other economic sectors
- f. The enterprise must contribute to earnings in foreign exchange

Government offers a range of tax and non-tax incentives to the manufacturing sector under the Fiscal Incentives Act. Approval of an enterprise for these incentives is granted by Cabinet upon application, using the prescribed form.

The extent of the incentives varies with:

- a. The amount of an entity's export business outside the CARICOM region
- b. The local value added content
- c. The level of capital outlay of the investment

3.2.2 Fiscal Incentives Offered To All Investors

- a. Tax Holiday up to a maximum of fifteen (15) years
- b. Waiver of Import Duty on imported plant, machinery and equipment
- c. Waiver of Import Duty on imported raw and packaging materials
- d. Export Allowance - Tax relief on export earnings
- e. Carry forward of losses
- f. Unrestricted repatriation of all Profits and Capital

Other incentives are also available to manufacturers who may not be eligible for benefits under the Fiscal Incentives Act. Duty free concessions on machinery, raw materials and packaging may be granted to enterprises, which do not qualify for the full range of fiscal incentives. These include waivers of import duty and

consumption tax on imported plant, machinery and equipment and imported raw and packaging materials.

The extent of benefits to be enjoyed by an enterprise is related to the contribution, which the enterprise, in producing the approved product (s), makes to the regional (CARICOM) economy. The contribution of the enterprise is measured in terms of the 'local value added'. The 'local value added' can be defined as the amount St Lucia receives in payment from a manufacturer for local raw materials, labour, capital, services etc. This identifies the value of all regional (CARICOM) inputs into production (I.e. does not include imports from non - CARICOM States).

3.2.3 Areas of Investment Activity Reserved for Nationals of Saint Lucia

The following are areas of investment activity which Cabinet has decided to ...of particular interest of nationals of Saint. Lucia. The Government of Saint Lucia welcomes nationals of Saint Lucia to invest in the following areas:

- a. Distribution - both retail and except where conducted ex - factory, wholesale.
- b. Import for the purpose of trading
- c. The operation of agencies and distributorships
- d. Operation of restaurants with the exception of top class specialty type
- e. Rental agencies for homes villas and apartments
- f. Real estate
- g. Construction (excluding and ad hoc contracts) repair and maintenance of buildings and other facilities.
- h. Landscaping
- i. Services which nationals have the capability to provide including secretarial, clerical, hairdressing services, laundry, internal hire, transportation, vehicle and other repairs
- j. Advertising except where local technology is not sufficiently advanced

- k. Entertainment on a protracted basis
- l. Operation of guest houses of less than 10 rooms or with an investment of less than EC \$600,000.00
- m. Operation of a manufacturing or processing plant in an area in which there is already adequate local productive capacity and in which the investment in the plant is below EC \$250,000.00 and employment is offered to less than 10 nationals.
- n. Printing where local technology is not sufficiently advanced
- o. Production of the following exclusively for the domestic market
- p. Agricultural:
 - Horticulture
 - Animal Husbandry
- q. Handicraft
- r. Furniture
- s. Soft drinks carbonated and non carbonated bread and pasta
- t. Quarrying
- u. Games of chance and lotteries
- v. Warehousing where capital investment is below \$500,000.00
- w. Heavy equipment, hire and leasing
- x. Tire rethreading and repair
- y. Road maintenance and repair

Cabinet further agreed that despite the reservation on the above areas of business for nationals, a trade license could nevertheless be granted to non national companies or persons in cases where local investment has not been sufficiently forthcoming or where the appropriate technology is not available locally.

3.3 Investment Opportunities

Policies which either attract or encourage Nationals living overseas, as well as returning nationals to invest in the various sectors of the economy are being reviewed and implemented. In a country like Saint Lucia,

returning nationals investing in the various sectors of the economy would have tremendous benefit for Saint Lucia's development. Policies will be focused on the creation of investment opportunities and the transfer of technology and knowledge that would help promote employment and improve standard of living, and also make the environment conducive to retaining nationals wanting to invest in Saint Lucia's economy. **The government is committed to improvement of the investment climate for entrepreneurs in the Diaspora.**

The Special Development Areas Act is aimed at promoting balanced spatial and economic development of the island. The legislation provides incentives to investors/developers for the establishment of certain types of businesses specially designated areas that are endowed with the necessary infrastructure and amenities for business development. The special areas are Vieux- Fort, Anse la Raye, Soufriere, Canaries and Dennery.

Individuals and/or Companies can obtain the following concessions:

- a. Import duty, stamp duty on inputs for the construction of new buildings and the renovation of refurbishment of existing buildings.
- b. Land and house tax.
- c. Stamp duty payable by vendors and purchasers on the initial purchase of property.
- d. Lower corporate taxes
- e. Higher tax allowances/accelerated depreciation

The following are the types of businesses, which qualify for concessions:

- a. Conference Centers
- b. Residential Complexes
- c. Commercial or Industrial Buildings, including Office Complexes

- d. Other facilities directed towards the improvement or expansion of services to the tourism sector
- e. Water based activities
- f. Tourism projects highlighting the heritage and natural environment of St Lucia
- g. Arts and cultural investments
- h. Agricultural-based activities
- i. Fisheries-based activities

Any manufacturer located in St Lucia may qualify for these incentives if the enterprise manufacturers an approved product (i.e. a product declared by Order of the Cabinet for manufacture by an approved enterprise). Given Government's policy to increase foreign exchange and the potential impact on the economy, special consideration is given to export oriented manufacturing enterprise.

Saint Lucia will continue to endeavour to regain the spot for the number one place in the Caribbean and Latin America for doing business and there are special areas that are reserved for Saint Lucian investors. The Government will actively pursue the signing of double taxation treaties in order to increase its competitiveness. In addition, the government has established Invest Saint Lucia, which in effect acts as a "one-stop-shop" for investors.

3.4 Development Finance

Government will work with Saint Lucians in the Diaspora to develop financial instruments through which Saint Lucians overseas might contribute to funding projects at national and community levels

Saint Lucia recognises the impact of remittances sent back by individuals to their families but will encourage the pooling of resources so that the new focus will be on investment and development of new human capital.

3.5 Skills Retention and Skills Transfer - The Brain Gain

Saint Lucia will focus more attention on the impact of the loss of skilled labour on the country. The statistics for Saint Lucians migrating to the United States between 1965 and 2000 show that more than 70% of this population has had at least a secondary education and that more than 50% has been trained at the tertiary level. There is also the added loss of taxes which are one of the main sources of government revenue. There is also the social impact with the loss of the middle class, the loss of community leaders, the loss of the population during its most productive years, the loss of parents and the compounding issue by the need for new infrastructure to facilitate returning retirees and aging populations.

In 2000 Saint Lucia ranked 10th in the top twenty countries sending skilled migrants to developed countries. Analysis shows that the loss of such highly trained migrants far out weighs the gains from remittances. This therefore justifies the need to have a more structured approach to engagement with the Saint Lucian Diaspora in order to ensure that the focus is not just on remittances but also on skills transfer. In this regard, the Government of Saint Lucia will:

- a. Work with Diaspora organizations to establish databases of skilled and qualified non-resident Saint Lucians. Each mission and consular office will also maintain databases of skilled and professional non-resident nationals in their host countries
- b. Encourage skills utilization on temporary and volunteer bases, e.g. short term visits/attachments by qualified members of the Diaspora.
- c. **Establish a Diaspora Volunteer Programme that provides an avenue through which they donate their time and expertise towards worthy causes on the island.**

- d. Promote initiatives to facilitate visiting medical teams to supplement the provision of health services
- e. Advertise vacancies in its Missions and consular Offices
- f. Work with Missions, Consular offices and Diaspora organizations to recruit persons who might perform representational and lobby functions in host countries
- g. Institute the registration of individuals and companies that may be eligible to provide consultancy services that may be required from time to time.
- h. Ensure that Diaspora individuals and companies will be given due consideration consistent with regional and international obligations
- i. Facilitate the establishment of structured technical networks to facilitate ongoing technical consultations between Diaspora and resident technicians in fields such as education, health, tourism, agriculture, trade, science and technology.
- j. Facilitate the participation of skilled and professional non-resident nationals in capacity building programmes at the national level
- k. Work with regional bodies, OECS and CARICOM to establish databases with the assistance of key international agencies for the recruitment of qualified members of the Caribbean Diaspora.

While our resources do not permit us to provide for the absorption of all the skills of our nationals, or pay the wages that such skills may attract, the country must find ways to ensure that such skills are not lost when nationals migrate temporarily or permanently when opportunities are afforded elsewhere.

3.6 Information exchange between Saint Lucia and Saint Lucians in the Diaspora

The deepening and strengthening of the relationship between Saint Lucia and its Diaspora will be fostered and enhanced through information exchange. Apart from the databases which will be established, the Government of Saint Lucia will:

- a. Ensure that all information pertinent to investment, procedures for relocation of returning residents, employment vacancies, consultancy announcements are communicated to all Missions and posted on web sites for easy access by members of the Diaspora.
- b. Encourage information flows, from the Diaspora to Government that may be useful in guiding policies and strategies. Such information should be channeled through the Executives of the Diaspora Associations and other representatives of non-resident groupings to the Missions and consular offices or to the Ministry of with responsibility for Diaspora Affairs.
- c. Invite discussion of all major policy initiatives and programmes related to overseas nationals before signing off on them.
- d. Encourage the participation of overseas nationals in discussions in which developmental matters are being deliberated

3.7 Aging

The Government of Saint Lucia recognises the right of all Saint Lucians to receive Social Security and pensions from the countries where they made their contributions provided that such countries allow payments to be made overseas. The Government will utilize its best endeavors through its Consulates to ensure that its nationals resident overseas receive such entitlements without discrimination.

3.7.1 Social Security

- a. The right of patients to treatment in the country of their choice within the OECS Economic Union, regardless of the country/ies) in which they have paid their state and/or private health insurance contributions. Social Security should be portable within CARICOM

3.7.2 Pensions

- a. The acquisition of state and supplementary pensions should be ensured in practice, and their payment ensured from the age of retirement, to all Saint Lucian citizens who qualify, wherever they reside in the world. Pensions should be portable within CARICOM.

The Government will also work with Diaspora Organisations to ensure that:

- a. Pensions of returning nationals should be subject to any increases that would have been granted to them if they were resident in the countries that pay their pensions.
- b. Community-based organisations that serve seniors toward improving their quality of life by providing resources which promote wellness and healthy aging.

3.8 Immigration

The Saint Lucian Missions and Consular Offices will be responsible for addressing immigration matters overseas. They should have regular fora in the Diaspora to address issues relating to immigration matters.

- a. The Consulates should take responsibility in developing programmes to obtain information and inform Saint Lucians in the Diaspora on immigration and relevant trends and policies of their host countries;
- b. Form alliances with other Caribbean groups to address immigration issues.

In addition, Saint Lucian nationals visiting or returning to Saint Lucia will be subject to all the courtesies given to residents. Any immigration matters should be addressed to the Ministry responsible for Diaspora Affairs.

3.9 Recognition for Outstanding Service

Government will continue to recognise members of the Diaspora for outstanding contributions to the social and economic well-being of Saint Lucia. This will be done at the annual Investiture Ceremony for Independence and Special Awards Ceremonies recognising the outstanding contributions of Saint Lucians at home or in the Diaspora.

3.10 Political Policy

The engagement with Saint Lucians living overseas has inevitably led to discussions on the political involvement of persons in the Diaspora in the process of local political decision making. This is a critical issue that needs to be debated locally and in the Diaspora. The Government is committed to encouraging discussion on this matter (looking at changing the voting laws in St. Lucia/proxy voting policy).

3.11 A biennial Diaspora Conference

There is need for the conversation on the Diaspora, its contributions and its role in Saint Lucia's development to be explored more fully. This will ensure that the intellectual stimulation that it will provide will serve to

reduce the tensions that exist between nationals living at home and nationals' resident overseas.

- a. This conference will occur in the year following each biennial convention and will be organised by the Ministry responsible for the Diaspora.
- b. A document of the Conference will be produced for distribution at home and in the Diaspora.

SECTION 4.0: DEVELOPMENT POLICY AREAS

There are specific areas in which the Diaspora can make a major contribution to Saint Lucia. As stakeholders in their country, the Saint Lucian Diaspora needs to play a pro-active role in supporting and engaging in developmental initiatives.

4.1 Social Development

Social development must be the focus of any country seeking to advance its development. A 2004 study indicated that Saint Lucia has made tremendous progress towards achieving fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS). There are however vulnerabilities that can hinder progress in the areas of education, environment, youth development and health. The matter of social protection is still one of the major vulnerabilities for the country. The Diaspora will be encouraged to assist Saint Lucia in overcoming these vulnerabilities which can exacerbate poverty in the country.

4.2 Cultural Arts/Cultural Exchanges/Export of Cultural Products

The Government of Saint Lucia has undertaken the development, management and promotion of the cultural industries as part of its goal to create a sustainable environment for the emergence of the creative industries in the country. In the Diaspora cultural communities thrive on the principle of a common identity and the traditions that reinforce that

collective consciousness. It is therefore imperative that Saint Lucians living overseas with the support of the Government of Saint Lucia undertake to:

- a. Promote in the Diaspora, the cultural works of Saint Lucians
- b. Support sound initiatives undertaken by members of the Diaspora to promote Saint Lucia's musicians, dancers and other performing artistes, artists, writers as well as its festivals in host countries.
- c. Encourage Saint Lucians resident abroad to take appropriate action to retain and promote aspects of our traditional heritage in their host countries.
- d. Encourage more cultural exchanges between schools and cultural groups in Saint Lucia and the Diaspora.
- e. Encourage the creation of businesses and organisations in the Diaspora to promote local cultural arts productions.
- f. Encourage the twining schools and cultural organisations in the Diaspora and Saint Lucia.
- g. Encourage the establishment of scholarship programmes in conjunction with the Diaspora aimed at assisting the creative industries.

4.3 Sports Development

Saint Lucia has produced many outstanding sports personalities and most of them live in the Diaspora. The Government of Saint Lucia will create and encourage dialogue between the relevant sporting authorities; Saint Lucian sports enthusiasts in the Diaspora and the Ministry of Youth Development and Sports with the aim to develop sports activities which will be beneficial to Saint Lucians at home and abroad. There a variety of programmes that can be considered:

- a. The creation of opportunities to be harnessed in sports tourism through joint co-operation between the Diaspora and Saint Lucians at home

- b. Development of a sports exchange programme for Saint Lucians at home and abroad.
- c. Sports mentorship programmes.
- d. The development and support for clubs and organisations.
- e. Investment in sporting facilities

4.4 Youth and Children

There is a need to ensure that structures to maintain contact are put in place even before nationals, especially the youth leave the country. Once they are in the Diaspora, Saint Lucian groups can assist in various ways. It is therefore recommended that:

- a. A database where students can register to show their area of study, location and level of study be designed, managed and updated, in order to maintain contact and to give strategic support. This information could be shared with the Saint Lucian business sector and with mentorship groups, which can offer guidance and internships that will assist international students in identifying career paths and job options.
- b. Saint Lucian organisation overseas can encourage Saint Lucian youth to joint associations through the establishment of youth arms and by planning special youth activities.
- c. A 2007 study shows that Saint Lucia needs to enhance and development of resources that will promote child development and risk reduction for the children of Saint Lucia. The Diaspora can engage in discussion with the Government on how this can be achieved and work toward acquisition of these resources.

4.5 Agriculture Promotion

Agriculture is very important to the food safety of Saint Lucia. The Government of Saint Lucia will therefore promote the importance of Agriculture both at home and in the Diaspora. Initiatives will include:

- a. Provision of incentives for export crops.
- b. Encouraging Nationals living overseas as well as returning nationals to invest in the various sectors of the economy.
- c. Encouraging nationals living overseas to buy foods produced in Saint Lucia.
- d. Promotion of agricultural shows in the Diaspora by enlisting the services of members of the Diaspora in identifying niche markets in capitals with high concentration of Saint Lucians

4.6 Tourism Promotion

Tourism is the largest revenue earner for Saint Lucia. At the same time, emphasis has been placed on

- a. Government will institute initiatives that promote off-season visits by overseas Saint Lucians.
- b. Government will enlist the services of members of the Diaspora in identifying niche markets in capitals with high concentration of Saint Lucians
- c. Government will encourage the Private Sector to offer packages to promote off-season visits by Saint Lucians in the Diaspora

4.7 Trade Promotion

Saint Lucia's trade policy is clearly not developed in isolation, but rather within a regional and global trade context. There are however many limitations including size and capacity to the trading regime. This means that Saint Lucia has not been able to take full advantage of the various regional and international trade agreements to which it is a signatory. It is for this reason that the government of Saint Lucia would like to work with the Diaspora in trade promotion.

- a. Government will work with Diaspora organizations to institutionalize a system of trade promotion that incorporates the skills and knowledge of members of the Diaspora.

- b. Trade shows will be conducted in the Diaspora once or twice per year to promote its activities and services.
- c. Government will enlist the services of members of the Diaspora in identifying niche markets in capitals with high concentration of Saint Lucians.
- d. Government will encourage potential investors/Diaspora firms planning to establish enterprises in Saint Lucia to incorporate the marketing aspect as a critical component of proposed ventures.
- e. Such investors should avail themselves of opportunities under the various trade agreements, such as CARICOM, CARIFORUM, CARIBCAN and the EPA.
- f. Government will encourage Diaspora established companies to establish joint venture projects with the local private sector that will allow the local companies to gain access to expertise, networks, trade practices and financial resources overseas that would not otherwise be available to them.

4.8 Health

Saint Lucians resident overseas have always contributed to the maintenance of the health sector through financial and other donations. They are therefore encouraged to:

- a. Develop a network amongst Saint Lucian organisations in the Diaspora to help promote activities towards a healthy lifestyle.
- b. To create partnerships with local hospitals, clinics, and wellness associations spec, and provide more contributions to the health sector in Saint Lucia.
- c. To dialogue with the Government with a view to developing the service capacity of the health sector in Saint Lucia.
- d. To organise attachments for Saint Lucian Health professionals in the Diaspora to give of their

service to Saint Lucian Health institutions.

- e. To organise seminars for Saint Lucian health professions to be conducted by Saint Lucian Health professionals living overseas.

4.9 Community Development

Saint Lucians living overseas have also formed associations that address the needs of specific communities in Saint Lucia. Local knowledge, network and community identity are important elements for continued development in the communities. This can be used to ascertain modalities, and forge new and stronger links with their Diaspora. More groups are encouraged to undertake this task through the twinning with communities.

- a. Identify local community projects that could be undertaken jointly by locals and input from members of the Diaspora.
- b. Continue to enhance and form linkages between the Diaspora and grassroots community organisations.
- c. Assist communities in capacity building

4.10 Human Resources/Capacity Building

Human resources and capacity building are fundamental to the brain gain that is at the heart of the Diaspora Policy. It will commence with the establishment and maintenance of a directory or database of Saint Lucian professionals, businesses and organisations in the Diaspora. It must continue with:

- a. Promotion of training programmes geared towards enhancing partnerships in business and investment.
- b. Programmes for permanent connection with the Diaspora of professionals and Scientists, in such a way that those highly skilled migrants may engage in scientific and technological development projects in Saint Lucia.

- c. Development of more entrepreneurial ventures with the Diaspora in which they can share entrepreneurial experiences and skills.
- d. Establishing partnership between locals and Diaspora Nationals to facilitate the development of small business enterprises.

4.11 Information Communication Technology

The acquisition of technology and the transfer of technology are very expensive for Saint Lucia. It is also difficult to get qualified persons to give of their time to the teaching of subject areas that will assist the country in its technological advancement. The Diaspora should work with the Government to:

- a. Make better use of Information and Communication Technology (ICTs) to enhance business relations between Saint Lucia and its Diaspora. ICT must be a central feature in any business development strategy toward the Diaspora.
- b. Facilitate education in ICT.
- c. Mobilise trained ICT professionals to train and mentor Saint Lucian youth (bridge with CARICOM/SLU/ICT4D).
- d. Invest in ICT.

SECTION 5: 0: IMPLEMENTATION & EVALUATION.

All stakeholders i.e. the Government of Saint Lucia, the Ministry responsible for Diaspora Affairs, the Consulates and Missions, the USLOA, and other Diaspora Organisations are responsible for ensuring the successful implementation of the Saint Lucia Diaspora Policy. Therefore, all partners must at all times display the highest level of commitment, cooperation, respect and diligence for this process to enhance relations between Saint Lucia and the Diaspora.

The Government will ensure that the Ministry responsible for Diaspora Affairs will work diligently to

implement the of the Policy and will ensure that it works with the Associations to set target dates for establishing the infrastructure for the making and monitoring of relevant policies.

CONCLUSION

This Diaspora Policy is an attempt to ensure that all Saint Lucians are mobilised to assume full participation in national development. The Government is clear that there are ways in which it must engage with the Diaspora in order to ensure that they reverse the negative impacts of the brain drain.

The Government recognises the potential of the Diaspora in the building of networks for social development, culture, investment promotion and trade, as well as key international development issues that affect the country. We envisage great benefits from this partnership. **(The policy will be revised from time to time in conjunction with the Government of Saint Lucia, Diaspora Affairs Unit, The Diaspora Resource Team and the Union of Saint Lucia Overseas Associations (USLOA)).**

Effective date

This Diaspora Policy was signed by Honorable Kenny D. Anthony, Prime Minister of Saint Lucia on 12th August 2015.

The effective date for the implementation of the Diaspora Policy is 15.10. 2018.

