



**PRESS STATEMENT BY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION, POLITICAL LEADER OF THE
SAINT LUCIA LABOUR PARTY & PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATIVE FOR
CASTIES EAST, HON PHILIP J PIERRE
AT THE SAINT LUCIA LABOUR PARTY'S PRESS CONFERENCE, MARCH 2ND 2017**

DESERT STAR HOLDING PROJECT (DSH)

Over the last few weeks, we have witnessed a sustained campaign from civil society for the UWP Government to be more accountable by providing more detailed information on the proposed DSH project. The Labour Party has been very clear in its pronouncements that there should be no DSH Project unless the Agreements are renegotiated.

The UWP Government has indicated that it is attempting to renegotiate parts of the Agreement. We have heard certain Government Ministers agree that there are clauses which are unacceptable. The Government has indicated that it has finalised the Agreement for Phase One which is the race track. However, there has been no information on whether the concerns expressed by the Labour Party and civil society were addressed.

We have been informed that there will be a formal signing ceremony on March 8th and preliminary works have started at Beausejour in Vieux-Fort.

The Saint Lucia Labour Party calls on the Government to answer the following:

1. Will the land for the race track be leased for US\$1 per acre for 99 years?
2. Has an environmental impact assessment been completed and accepted by Government?
3. Has the race track received Development Control Authority (DCA) approval?
4. The Framework Agreement provided for the establishment of an Escrow Account in a foreign jurisdiction, has the Government listened to the

public outcry and required that the Escrow account be held in Saint Lucia?

5. The Framework Account provides for the holding of CIP monies by the developer in the Escrow account to fund races and pay for the operations of the race track, has the Government listened to the public and rejected that the sale of our passports be used for the Developer to operate the race track?
6. If the Escrow Account is to hold CIP money as stated in the Framework Agreement, has the race track been given CIP approval?
7. How much finance is the developer contributing to the Project and how much is requested as CIP financing?

The Saint Lucia Labour Party is once more calling on the government to dialogue with the people of the island on the unacceptable sections of the agreement, we reserve the right to bring our protest to the streets if government fails to heed to our just requests.

NATIONAL INITIATIVE TO CREAT EMPLOYMENT (NICE)

The Saint Lucia Labour Party is very clear that termination of the NICE workers at this time is wicked and malicious and yet another act of vindictiveness and victimization by the UWP against those they perceive to be their political opponents. In their efforts at softening their cruelty, the UWP has attempted to paint the NICE programme as one where the Labour Party rewarded its supporters. This was clearly stated by the Minister of Equity when he declared that 90 % of the NICE workers were SLP supporters and there would be no political fallout, imagine the livelihoods of hardworking Saint Lucians being measured in terms of political fallout. No argument, whether that the programme was temporary or that it was not in keeping with the original concept, is unacceptable when thousands of honest hardworking Saint Lucians are depending on a NICE job to be able to care for their children, pay their medical bills, and buy food for their families.

If NICE was a temporary programme to be replaced when more employment is created, the question is has the UWP Government created any new employment to absorb the NICE workers or anyone for that matter?

If NICE was no longer in keeping with the original plan, the question is whether NICE is providing valuable services to the country and whether its impact on communities and families not worthy of its continuation?

The Saint Lucia Labour Party will not remain quiet while thousands of Saint Lucians are made to cry as promised by the UWP Government. We are in support of **ALL** the NICE workers and call on the UWP to recall the letters of dismissals until adequate employment can be found for these displaced workers.

ST. JUDE'S HOSPITAL AUDIT

A lot has been said by Hon. Guy Joseph on the Audit Report into the St. Jude's Hospital. An unbudgeted sum of almost one million dollars was paid to undertake a Technical Audit. The last pronouncement from the Minister was that the report was in the hands of the Attorney General.

The time has come for the people of Saint Lucia to know the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

The Saint Lucia Labour Party has asked that the Minister present an official copy of the Report for public discussion. He has refused to do so. Accordingly, the Labour Party will table a Resolution at the next meeting of Parliament for the Report to be made a document of the House and to be debated. The Report was financed from taxpayers' monies and the public deserves to hear a debate on the contents.

CITIZENSHIP BY INVESTMENT PROGRAM

The SLP has presented to the Speaker of the House a Motion requesting that the changes made by the government to the CIP programme be reversed. We expect to debate that motion at the next sitting of the Parliament.

ERNST & YOUNG

The government has admitted that accounting firm Ernst & Young are involved in the preparation of the 2017 budget. We know that accounting firms like Ernst & Young through their partners in Saint Lucia provide various services to private firms and individuals, it remains to be asked can information on

proposed budget or fiscal measures be shared with their clients before they are implemented by the government.

Further, the Opposition would like to know the cost of the audit to the taxpayers of Saint Lucia.

PUBLIC SERVANTS

It has become a habit for the government of the UWP to malign and attack hard working civil servants. One minister accused civil servants of being corrupt not to be trusted and were destabilizing the government. Our public servants have been accused of leaking information on government secrets. Government expenditure must not be a secret and the public has the right to know when taxpayers money is being used for the payment of dubious expenses and questionable contracts.

ENDS.

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