



# **BUILDING A NEW SAINT LUCIA**

## **THRONE SPEECH**

By

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Governor-General of Saint Lucia

**On the occasion of the Second Session of the  
Eleventh Parliament**

**of Saint Lucia**

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## **Mr. President, Madam Speaker, Honourable Members...**

We thank Almighty God that we are able to assemble today to usher in this Second Session of the Eleventh Parliament of Saint Lucia. A new parliamentary year is an occasion for reporting and projection, as much as it is for reflection. Above all, this is an opportunity for us as one nation to determine our country's future, predicated upon a more people-centric approach to government, which [gives primacy to] the development of every citizen irrespective of social status, economic endowment or political orientation.

We are, all, responsible for the future of Saint Lucia. It is the responsibility born of nationality. 'I am Saint Lucian' – 'moi c'est gens St. Lucie; c'est la moi sorti; is there that I born' – we quote our Nobel Laureate the late Sir Derek Walcott; we post '(hashtag) #758', but do we pause to appreciate the full import of being Saint Lucian? I am Saint Lucian – I am fiercely proud of my country, I am responsible for this land that I love so much, I am responsible for myself, I am responsible for my fellow Saint Lucians.

Our small nation confronts tremendous challenges. My Government believes that if we are to overcome them we must be visionary, we must be courageous and steadfast - we must, together, chart the course toward building a new Saint Lucia. Success requires us to be introspective and critical. We must celebrate and consolidate our achievements, while acknowledging our shortcomings. We must temper emotion with reason; we must be sufficiently magnanimous to set aside the few things that divide us and embrace every opportunity for common thought and action to attain the universal good.

My Government is acutely aware that in any true democracy '*... the rough and ready understanding of the people is sure at last to be the controlling power...*' This statement is as true today as it was in 1864 when it was written by James Russell Lowell in reference to President Lincoln. Dissent is an undisputed attribute of the democratic process, and it is from such dissent that decisions that reflect the will of the people emerge.

Our people's continued participation in the decision-making process is, therefore, vital. We ask every Saint Lucian to commit to the sustained development of our country. We urge each citizen to opt for a life of '*engagement*' and fix our sights on the ultimate good, even in the light of decisions on which we are not all agreed.

**Misyé Pwézidan, Madanm Speaker,**

Nou ka wimèsyé Dyé Tou-Pwisan pou posibilite-a l pwézanité nou-an pou asanblé an Kay Konsit sala jòdi-a pou ouvè dézyenm sèsyon yonzyenm Paleman péyi-a. Kon lakoutim, nou ka sèvi lokasyon-sala pou wéfléchi asou kondisyon péyi-a: ki sa ki ka maché byen, ki sa ki pa djè kòdyal, ki sa ki ka afèkté nou, ki démach, ki mannèv nou ni pou antoupwann pou pousé Sent Lisi douvan, pou bati an Sent Lisi nèf. Sa pa lè pou nou gaspiyé tan, pou chaché chikann enitil épi yonnalòt, pou lévé konba ében wivòt épi yonnalòt. Poutji? Paski nou tout ni wèsponsabilité-a pou pousé péyi-a douvan, pou asiwé ki i fè pogwé, pou wè ki i éwisi an sé tan-an ki ka vini-an. Nou wèsponsab paski nou

sé Sent Lisyen, nou sé sitwayen Sent Lisi. Lè défen Sir Derek Walcott té di bay tout jan latè-a ki i sé jan Sent Lisi, sé la i sòti, sé la i fèt, sété pou fè yo sav kouman i té enmen péyi'y, kouman i té santi kò'y wèsponsab pou wè ki péyi-a fè kalité pwogwé-a ki té kay fè'y jwi siksé-a i méwité-a. Konmen di nou ja janmen doubout pou mandé kò-nou vwéman sa sa vlé di lè nou di nou sé Sent Lisyen?

Dé mwa ki pasé, pandan sélébwasyon twant wityenm lannivèsè endépendans péyi-a, lézotowité mandé nou pou wéfléchi asou an pawòl senp. **“Mwen sé Sent Lisi”** (an Anglé, “I am Saint Lucia”). Sa ti mo pawòl sala vlé di sé, “Nou sé Sent Lisi. Sé fo nou pwan wèsponsabilité pou kò nou, pou Sent Lisi, pou dévlopé kò nou, Sent Lisi, pou pwan démach pou anméliowé kondisyon-nou, kondisyon Sent Lisi; kondisyon nou tout-piti kon gwan, wicha kon lépòv, wouj, jòn, vè ében blan. Nou sé Sent Lisi. Nou pé pa toujou dakò épi yonnalòt, mé pou lapéti siksé péyi-a, sé fo nou trouvé mannyè pou di yonnalòt “Atan”. Epi fiksé zyé-nou

asou dévlopman diwab labèl Helenn nou-an. An Chanson  
Nasyonal péyi-a nou tout dakò ki, sé jou sala

Sa pa tan wivòt èk konba

Té twoublé lavi nou tout

Mètnan, syèl-la éklési

An lawout nèf ouvè pou nou

Annou pa kité lèspwa lawout nèf sala, lèspwa Sent Lisi nèf  
sala, tounen lèspwa mal papay. Sé fo lèspwa sala pwodwi  
fwitaj an labondans. Sé wèsponsabilité nou tout,  
wèsponsabilité chakan di nou.

## **SALUTE TO SIR DEREK AND SIR DWIGHT**

Mr. President, Madam Speaker, over the course of the past  
year, Saint Lucia bade final farewell to two of her illustrious  
sons. The passing of Sir Derek Walcott and Sir Dwight  
Venner was a great loss to our nation. Even while we  
mourn, however, we should celebrate their achievements  
and honour their memory. Their lives have been woven

inextricably into the tapestry that is Saint Lucia. They brought renown to our country nationally and internationally and serve as testimony to the reality that, small though we may be, we are a phenomenal people. In their distinct ways, Sir Derek and Sir Dwight are models to be emulated as we endeavour to contribute to the development of a new Saint Lucia.

This excellence is demonstrated time and time again in other spheres of life in Saint Lucia. In this regard I take this opportunity to congratulate our under 15 young men for again winning the Windward Islands Cricket tournament. To repeat such a feat for a fourth time is testimony to their hard work and dedication and that of their management and coaching team. Gentlemen, you have made us proud. Your success reaffirms that as a people we can aspire and we can achieve.

Mr. Speaker, Madam President, My Government's vision for building a new Saint Lucia is based on the need to lift our beloved country out of the quagmire of economic

stagnation and social apathy and to arrest the moral decline that confronts us at present. With this mission in mind, my Government will introduce novel programmes in education, health, the social sector, climate change, energy and justice reform.

## **INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION**

Mr. President, Madam Speaker, my Government views education as an investment in our people, in the future of the country and in our human capital.

In this regard, my Government intends to embark on a new initiative which will incorporate programmes geared at educating our citizens from the “*cradle to the grave*”. In advancing this goal, greater emphasis will be placed on Early Childhood Education covering all children from 0-8 years.

An Education for Democratic Citizenship programme focusing on the soft skills and on National Pride, will be introduced into the curricula of primary and secondary



schools at the beginning of the new academic year in September 2017. Modules have already been developed and the training of teachers in that regard is ongoing.

Recognizing the need for every citizen to gain access to education and to embrace the philosophy of lifelong learning, my Government intends to establish a First Generation Initiative to provide pathways for at least one child from low income households to access tertiary education.

My Government also intends to expand educational opportunities by placing greater emphasis on e-learning. To this end, we will ensure that ICT Centres and facilities are accessible to all communities for education, innovation and entrepreneurship. We propose, further, to introduce technology integration and innovation into the curriculum to prepare our students for the technology-driven world.

Saint Lucia's education system must equip our citizens with the requisite skills for gainful employment. Through the National Skills Development Centre (NSDC), a number of our citizens have already acquired skills that enhance their

employability and entrepreneurship. My Government applauds the efforts of the NSDC and will continue to promote its programmes, with the support of the private sector. Technical Vocational Education and Training will be enhanced through the award of the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) to artisans, tradesmen and technicians to boost their competitiveness in the local as well as the regional job market.

Mr. President, Madam Speaker, my Government is of the firm conviction that in an equitable education system, persons with special needs ought to benefit from the same level of access and quality education as others, in order to attain their full potential. With this in mind, my Government intends to develop a National Policy on Special Needs, which will provide, among other things, for the establishment of a Special Needs School and Transition Centre.

To enhance the competitiveness of our citizens, my Government intends to advance the transition of the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College (SALCC) to a University

College. While continuing to provide the current tertiary level offerings, the University College will seek to specialize in Hospitality and Culinary Arts, as well as Nursing, to attract persons from the region and further afield.

Mr. President, Madam Speaker, Saint Lucia continues to attract medical and off-shore educational institutions. My Government, therefore, has a duty to ensure that the programmes offered by these institutions meet quality standards and are internationally recognized. Consequently, the **Accreditation Bill** and the **Caribbean Accreditation Authority for Medicine and other Health Professions Bill** will be enacted very early in this new Parliamentary Session. The Accreditation Bill provides for the process and mechanism of accrediting a programme of study offered by a tertiary institution and the award it confers, and establishes a National Accreditation Council. The Caribbean Accreditation Authority for Medicine and other Health Professions Bill will give the force of law to the Agreement Establishing the Caribbean Accreditation

Authority for Education in Medicine and Other Health Professions, which was signed in 2003.

### **Misyé Pwézidan, Madanm Speaker**

Diwan lanné-a ki pasé-a lanmò vizité dé gwan gwèk péyi-a – Sir Derek Walcott épi Sir Dwight Venner. Annou sèvi sé dé jantiyom-sala kon mòdèl pou mannyè nou ni pou antanmé gwo twavay-la ki bizwen fèt la pou bati an Sent Lisi nèf. Gouvèdman ka pwan douvan épi plisyè progwam nèf i kay entwodwi an ling di lédikasyon, lasanté, lasistans sosyal, lénèji, chanjman klimatik épi sistenm jistis péyi-a.

Gouvèdman ka konsidiwé lédikasyon yon lenvestisman ki ni pou fèt an pèp péyi-a, épi ki fo pwan kou dépi nanfans jiska la vyéyès. Nou kay wè, pa èkzanp, an pli go léfo asou pwogram pou piti zanfan dépi nesans jiska laj di wit an. An lòt projé kay endé omwen yon jenn moun an chak fanmi ki pa ni moyen pou kontiné létid-li o nivo kòlèj ében univèsité. Gouvèdman kay kontiné wanfòsé sé pwogwam NSDC-a épi sipò sé létablisman konmès péyi-a. I ni lantansyon osi

pou établi an lenstitusyon pou moun dézabil – sa ki avèg, sa ki soud, sa ki mwèt ében ki ni dòt pwoblenm dévlopmanal – paski yo ni dwa wisivyè menm kalité, menm nivo, lendikasyon kon lézòt.

Kòlèj Sir Arthur Lewis kay kontiné twavay pou òfè pwogwam ki pli avansé pasé sé sa yo ka òfè-a kouwanman – pwogwam o nivo univèsité. An menm tan-an Gouvèdman ka avoudwé wè Kòlèj-la spésyalizé an lantwennman twavayè an lendoustwi hotèlyè péyi-a sito sé sa ki entéwésé vini kwizinyé. Osi, I ka avoudwé wè Kòlèj-la pousé pli vivman fòmasyon nòs pou sèvis santé péyi-a, mé osi pou sa ki entéwésé twavay lòt péyi.

### **Misyé Pwézidan, Madanm Speaker**

Pli an pli nou ka wè tout sòt enstitusyon ka vini établi program-yo an péyi-a. Gouvèdman ni an obligasyon pou asiwé ki sé pwogram-la yo ka òfè-a, solid, èk pa pyès bagay

pach-pach. Konsa touswit nou kay entwodwi lwa pou wéglé létablisman sé enstitusyon-sala.

## **AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO HEALTH SERVICES**

In the course of this year, our health sector will undergo major reforms. My Government has declared its objective of ensuring that we have a universal health service that delivers high quality care in an efficient and cost-effective manner. To ensure this, my Government will address the issues of governance, management, service quality and financing.

Our people will receive a health service that is patient centered and provides a seamless continuum of care that meets the health needs of every resident, regardless of age, socioeconomic or health status. We are in the final stages of a design which will allow us to implement an integrated governance mechanism that will ensure the harmonization of our health development efforts.

Government is aware that we will need to raise additional revenue to adequately fund these health services. With the support of the European Union, we are designing a strategy that would embrace the concepts of fund pooling and strategic purchasing. The strategy will examine very carefully the development of a national health insurance model for financing health care. This is essential for the sustainability of the health sector. The strategy will address the issues of funding, the package of services and cost, purchasing and contracting, consumer choice, administration and regulation.

In the area of mental health my Government intends to establish robust community mental health teams that integrate communities, families, patients, public and private stakeholders in a mutually supportive environment. In this way mental illness will be detected early, and the right therapy provided. This will facilitate the rehabilitation and reintegration of patients who have suffered a major breakdown.

Our country will therefore have a single mental health service that integrates the National Mental Wellness Center, the general hospitals, the polyclinic and health centers and community mental health teams. The objective is to create optimal mental health and to reduce institutionalization of patients who have mental health problems.

**Mr. President, Madam Speaker**

There is no doubt that Saint Lucia is seriously challenged in the health sector. However, with co-operation, clear understanding and the commitment of all, we can overcome these challenges. My Government therefore calls on all Saint Lucians to join the effort to achieve a better quality of life for all of us.

**SOCIAL SAFETY NETS**

Mr. President, Madam Speaker, we cannot speak about building a new Saint Lucia if we do not embrace all our



citizens in this effort. In order to do so we must inspire confidence, induce hope and above all, adhere to the principles of equity, social justice and empowerment.

Mr. President, Madam Speaker, this year my Government will reform and rationalize the Public Assistance programme, so that we have a leaner, more efficient, targeted and structured package of support, administered at the household level. No longer will support be automatic. It will be based on the specific needs of the individual household member, and the continuation of that support will be conditional upon the commitment of these individuals to embrace new practices and patterns of behavior.

## **ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE**

Mr. President, Madam Speaker, climate change is a reality. It poses a severe and persistent challenge to sustainable development and it is a threat to the very survival of small island developing states such as ours. Rising temperatures,

changing rainfall patterns, sea level rise and increasingly intense storms and droughts pose ever-greater risks to our water supply, food security, health, biodiversity, tourism, coastal lands, critical infrastructure and housing.

Key to Saint Lucia's survival in the face of climate change will be the building of climate resilience. My Government will therefore pursue climate change adaptation aggressively in all sectors, in an integrated manner.

In addition, Mr. President, Madam Speaker, due consideration will be given to addressing the matter of loss and damage arising from climate change, where our ecosystems or economic sectors are impacted beyond their ability to cope.

My Government will also pay urgent attention to meeting the targets outlined in Saint Lucia's Nationally Determined Contribution under the 2015 Paris Agreement. These targets include significant reductions in greenhouse gas

emissions through a transition to renewable energy and increased energy efficiency.

Mr. President, Madam Speaker, responding successfully to the challenges posed by climate change will be costly and we will not be able to adapt or mitigate fast enough relying purely on our own domestic resources. Therefore, my Government will place particular emphasis on securing climate financing from various sources.

Climate change affects us all and ought to engage the attention, not solely of technocrats, but of every citizen of this country. For this reason, my Government will pay particular attention to enhancing engagement with social partners. In this way, we can facilitate broad participation and a truly national response.

## INITIATIVES IN ENERGY

Mr. President, Madam Speaker, we live in challenging economic times which force us to take innovative approaches to ensure continued social and economic development. One approach that can help to make our economy more resilient is further economic diversification beyond the traditional pillars of Agriculture, Tourism and Manufacturing, all of which are highly sensitive to external shocks. The **promotion** of renewable energy can create significant opportunities for investment and job creation. Its development also offers us the opportunity to reduce our continued reliance on imported fossil fuels.

For these reasons, Mr. President, Madam Speaker, my Government will seek to broaden Saint Lucia's economic base by nurturing the development of a domestic Energy sector. This will be pursued through a multi-pronged Strategy which will address, among others, acceleration of demand for renewable energy and energy efficiency services, investment promotion, education and awareness-

building, innovation and the creation of an enabling policy environment.

## **ECONOMIC AND INVESTMENT INITIATIVES**

Mr. President, Madam Speaker, real growth and development are distinguished by a Government's ability to meet the current needs of its people and industries without compromising the opportunity for future generations to meet their needs. My Government is committed to revitalizing the priority sectors of Tourism, Agriculture, Housing, Industry and Commerce in partnership with the Saint Lucia Development Bank (SLDB).

Recognizing the fact that proper investment security is critical for the future of Saint Lucia, my Government will enact the **Sovereign Wealth Fund of Saint Lucia Bill**. This Bill will provide for the establishment of the fund, which will make secure investments, help maintain the long-term

economic and social development objectives of my Government and sustain fiscal or macroeconomic stabilization.

### *Tourism*

Mr. President, Madam Speaker, over the past ten months Saint Lucia has continued to be a magnet for investment, particularly in the Tourism Sector. With this in mind my Government is seeking to establish the Saint Lucia Tourism Authority by enactment of the Saint Lucia Tourism Bill.

The Authority will operate to advance and facilitate the efficient growth and development of the tourism industry, to implement suitable marketing strategies for the effective promotion of the destination and to encourage the establishment and enhancement of appropriate amenities, facilities and destination services. The Authority will also facilitate linkages between tourism and other sectors of the economy.

## *Tourism and Construction*

Mr. President, Madam Speaker, with the construction industry being one of the largest employers in Saint Lucia my Government is committed to directing a significant amount of revenue to this sector with projects to be implemented in 2017. My Government has been working on the Pearl of the Caribbean Project, as well as on a number of other private sector projects across the island, which are expected to be implemented from this year onwards.

## **AGRICULTURE**

Mr President, Madame Speaker, notwithstanding the decline in the contribution of the agricultural sector to our Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which now stands at approximately 3.1 percent, agriculture remains a vital sector of Saint Lucia's economy. However, with the decline of the banana industry, there has been an evident change in the structure of the sector. Other crops, particularly root crops

and livestock production have become the buttress of the sector.

The high susceptibility of the island to natural disasters, as well as the adverse effects of climate change have contributed to the contraction of the banana industry and to the Agricultural sector overall. My Government will therefore ensure that **Climate Smart Agricultural policies and programs** are adopted to meet the related challenges of food security and climate change.

Despite the many challenges facing the banana industry, my Government considers that industry an important component of its agricultural development thrust. Government believes that this industry can continue to play a vital role in the economy of this country, assuring an earnings stream, creating employment and ensuring food security for the thousands of households who reside in our rural communities.

Many of the interventions necessary to ensure the viability of the banana industry require a proactive approach on the



part of Government. The Ministry of Agriculture will therefore adopt a more active role and maintain responsibility for providing the institutional and regulatory framework to meet the essential services requirements of the industry. In this regard, Government has been in discussions with overseas companies to expand our export of bananas to the French market from 2018 onwards.

In addition, my Government will introduce Policies, Strategies and Programmes to promote the diversification of the agricultural sector. One key component of the strategy will be to allow for the exploration and exploitation of niche markets for non-traditional products.

**Misyé Pwézidan, Madanm Speaker,**

Diwan lanné-sala, la kay ni anchay chanjman an sèvis santé péyi-a. Gouvèdman vlé mété an plas an sèvis ki kay potjiwé tout lézabitan péyi-a tout sa yo kay ni bizwen an ling di twètman maladi. Evidanman, nou kay ni pou chaché mannyè pou touvé lajan pou pèyé pou sé sèvis-sala.

Kouwanman, épi sipò Linyon Uropéen-an, lézotowité-a ka twavay pou dévlopé an mannèv pou finansé sèvis sala.

### **Misyé Pwézidan, Madanm Speaker,**

Klima latè-a an chanjman, Sa ka afèkté tout péyi, mé sitou ti péyi kon Sent Lisi. Toutswit, sé chanjman-sala kay détèminé ki kantité dlo péyi-a kay ni, ki kantité manjé nou kay sa podwi, ki mannyè sa kay afèkté santé-nou, ki kalité donmaj sa kay mennen asou lendoustwi péyi-a, asou sé chimen péyi-a. lòjman péyi-a, anfen asou tout péyi-a. Sé jou-sala dézas ka pwan kou si vit – avan nou sòti anba yonn, anlèt ja asou nou – nou pa kay sa mennajé pa kò nou. Konsayé-a nou kay ni pou alé ayè pou lasistans. Gouvèdman ka kwiyé asou tout moun pou fè sa yo pé pou mennagé mennas-sala.

## **Misyé Pwezidan, Madanm Speaker**

Lè nou tann palé di dévlopman diwab, sé fo nou konpwann sa sa vlé di. Sa vlé di mannyè péyi-a ka mennaje zafè'y épi sa'y posédé pou potjiwiyé pou li pwézan, osi byen pou sé tan-an ki ka vini-an. Pou adwèsé sé dimann-sala, Gouvèdman kay wédoublé twavay-li asou sé sèktè-a l vlé bay pwowité-a: sa vlé di, Tourism, Agrikilti, Lòjman, Lendoustwi épi Konmès epi sipò Bank Dévlòpman Sent Lisi-a. An ling di Tourism, Gouvèdman kay entwodwi an lwa nèf pou wéglé dévlòpman sèktè-sala. An Agrikilti, négosiasyon épi plisyè konpani Konmès lòt péyi ja byen avansé pou nou gwandi lèkspotasyon fig asou maché fwansé-a apati di lanné dé mil dizwit.

## **AUGMENTING SECURITY AND ENSURING A MORE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE JUSTICE SYSTEM**

Mr. President, Madam Speaker, Saint Lucia, like many of our neighbours, must tackle domestic criminal activity, as well as crime visited upon us from abroad, while facilitating

trade in goods and services across our borders. My Government intends to introduce a coordinated border management system which will enhance synergies among the Customs and Excise Department, the Immigration Department, the Marine Unit and the Quarantine Division of the Ministry of Agriculture. In so doing, we will provide better security, ensure trade facilitation and rationalize the use of resources in these four major agencies.

Saint Lucia has undertaken obligations within the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas and the Revised Treaty of Basseterre to permit the hassle-free movement of CARICOM and OECS citizens respectively. My Government, in complying with our treaty obligations, while at the same time securing our borders, will amend the Immigration Act to incorporate the Advance Passenger Information System, with automated electronic data interchange and the screening of advance passenger information by the CARICOM Implementing Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS).

Mr. President, Madam Speaker, addressing the issues currently facing the Justice System is a key priority area for my Government. Justice and the rule of law are among the most durable strands of the fabric of society. Mature democracies are characterized by their ability to provide efficient, accessible justice to all people. My Government is of the view that justice and the rule of law must underpin and girdle every developmental action proposed for our country.

Mr. President, Madam Speaker, my Government has undertaken to provide a justice system that is administered in a prompt, efficient and effective manner. We are committed to revamping the office of the Crown Prosecutions Service. A new Director of Public Prosecutions has been appointed and we have seen more than 300 cases disposed of in the Criminal Courts within a space of six months. It is our intention to provide the requisite resources for addressing the number of cases still pending before the Criminal Courts, while promoting long term systemic and administrative efficiency.

During the year 2016, the Criminal Division within the Registry of the Supreme Court, efficiently and effectively handled thousands of calendar appearances/court sittings during the year. My Government has taken note of this achievement and applauds the extraordinary diligence, sacrifice and professionalism of all involved in the justice system.

My Government is pleased that we have succeeded in re-opening the Forensic Laboratory, which we intend to make fully operational with minimum delay. It is our intention to provide world class services not only to Saint Lucia but also to the rest of the Caribbean region.

My Government, with the support of the IMPACT JUSTICE Project, financed by the Government of Canada, will be providing training for our police, as well as the Attorney General's Chambers and Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, in a range of areas. For the police, training will include cybercrime investigation, financial investigation, surveillance and sexual offence investigation.

Mr. President, Madam Speaker, the initiatives outlined above will be supported by the enactment of critical legislation during this parliamentary year. The **Witness Protection (Special Measures) Bill** seeks to protect the identity of witnesses who may be at risk should they testify and their identity be known. The **Electronic Monitoring Bill** will reduce the number of persons sent to our Correctional facilities on remand, particularly young offenders.

The **Electronic Crimes Bill** aims at preventing criminal activities perpetrated through an electronic system and facilitating the collection of electronic evidence relating to criminal activity. The **Child Justice Bill** will establish a criminal justice process for children accused of committing offences that aims at protecting the rights of children as provided for in international instruments. It will establish the minimum age of criminal responsibility and establish a procedure for assessment of children, as well as an initial inquiry as compulsory procedures. The Bill will incorporate diversion of cases away from the formal court procedures,

ensure that children are tried in a family court and extend sentencing options available in respect of children. Above all, the Bill will entrench the notion of restorative justice in respect of children.

Mr. President, Madam Speaker, the report of the CARICOM Implementing Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) has had adverse consequences for Saint Lucia internally as well as in our relationships with external partners. My Government continues to work assiduously to free ourselves of this albatross and to ensure that identified deficiencies are addressed, the trust and confidence of our people are regained and our international image and reputation restored.

## **INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

Mr. President, Madam Speaker, while the business of this Parliament focuses primarily on duty to our country, we need to be cognizant of the international context within which we function. This Parliamentary year is commencing



at a time when many countries around the world are being plagued by political and social upheaval. Extremism appears to be on the rise; brutality and intolerance seem to be the order of the day. We continue to witness violent attacks on the innocent, mass migration and displacement of entire peoples. These events underscore the significance of peaceful transition of power, the value of democratic processes and the need for ongoing dialogue within all societies.

Change invariably brings anxiety. In our country and our region, the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union has been the subject of considerable debate. Similarly, there have been questions as to the full implications of the change in administration of the United States of America. We observe the election process underway in France, deliberate on the possible outcomes as regards France, the European Union, and its territories with which we have close relations.. In all respects, it is the intention of my Government to maintain strong ties with our traditional partners and to deepen those ties in mutually

beneficial ways. My Government will also seek to establish new relationships as we pursue our developmental goals

Within the Caribbean family, my Government will continue to contribute to the deeper integration of CARICOM and the OECS. We will seek enhanced functional cooperation and a greater role for these organizations in addressing such critical issues as high indebtedness, crime, healthcare, education and diplomatic representation. Similarly, my Government will endeavour to engage more effectively with partner countries in the Association of Caribbean States, as we seek to embrace more of our non - English speaking neighbours in concerted action in response to common issues and challenges.

### **Misyé Pwèzidan, Madanm Speaker**

Sent Lisi, kon plisyè dèt péyi an wéjyon-an ni pou débat aktivité kwiminèl an péyi-yo menm, osi byen sa ki ka fèt pa lézétwanjé. An menm tan-an I ni pou fasilite konmès ki ka antwé épi sòti an péyi-a. Pou wéglé sa pli mèyè,

Gouvèdman kay établi an Dépatman nèf pou potéjé épi mennajé bòn péyi-a. Dépatman-sala kay mennen ansanm Ladwenn, Limigrasyon, Polis Mawen épi Ministè Agrikilti.

### **Misyé Pwézidan, Madanm Speaker**

Sistenm jistis péyi-a ka ban nou maltèt. Mé sé fo nou pa dézèspéwé. Syèl-la ja koumansé anbéli. An sis mwa, Twibinal Jistis-la éwisi mennen about pli pasé twa san plent kwiminèl, èk lanné pasé i éwisi tjenn plisyè mil lodyans lanné pasé. Gouvèdman ka pwan lokasyon sala pou aplodi siksé wimakab sala. Mèsi pou sakwifis sala épi twavay wèd sala ki té nésésè pou podwi kalité wézilta sala.

Bagay ka boujé piti a piti. Labowatwa médico-légal-la – sa nou kwiyé an langlé “Forensic Lab-la – ouvè alafen. Gouvèdman canadyen-an kay sipòtè fòmasyon manm Polis, Biwo Potjiwè Jénéwal-la épi sa Diwèktè Pouswivan Piblik-la (an anglé nou ka di “Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP)”. (Padon, mé nou ni pou entwodwi sé mo kwéyòl nèf sala an diskou piblik-nou, si nou vlé pousé kwéyòl-la

douvan). Pou sipòté sé pwogram sala, Gouvèdman kay mété sèten lwa an plas. Pami yo: An lwa pou potéjé lidantité témwen ki pitèt pé an danjé si moun konnèt kimoun yo wé. Yonn ki kay anpéché moun sèvi machin élektronik pou konmèt kwim; épi an lòt ki kay mété an plas démach pou pwan épi manmay anba laj ki konmèt kwim.

Malèwèzman, Misyé Pwézidan, Madanm Speaker, Gouvèdman ka débat toujou épi zafè Wapo IMPACS-la pou éséye awivé about sitwasyon difisil sala.

Misyè Pwèzidan, Madanm Speaker, Anchay chanjman ka pwan kou oliwon laté-a sè jou-sala. Anchay pasdwa ka fèt, anchay vyolans, anchay déga. Natiwèlman sa ka fè nou antjèt. E mi dènyèman, Langlité desidé kité Linyon Uropéen-an; la ni an ladministration nèf an péyi Laméwik; èk Lafwans kay chwézi an Pwézidan nèf mwa pochenn-lan. Mè Gouvèdman Sent Lisi kay kontiné tjenn bon wapò-a nou ni-an épi tout sé péyi-sala pou bénéfis nou tout. Kanta pou CARICOM épi OECS-la, nou kay twavay kò é lam pou

wanfòsé bon konpwann-lan nou ni pami nou-an pou mété bagay anòd pou sòvgad pwòspèwité wéjyon Kawaib-la.

## **CONCLUSION**

Mr. President, Madam Speaker

I cannot conclude this address to the Nation without expressing Government's deepest condolences to the families of those who so tragically lost their lives during last month's terrible explosion in the Cul de Sac Valley, and those who have subsequently succumbed to their injuries. We mourn their untimely passing. May they rest in peace. While we can never fully feel the pain and the grief of the loved ones who have been deprived of the love and company of a father, a husband, a brother, a partner, a relative, a friend or a co-worker, we empathise with them and pray that God, in His goodness, will grant them the grace, the strength and the resources they need to deal with their loss.

Mr. President, Madam Speaker, our nation has been blessed with men and women of valour, aptitude and intellect. The renewal of our country is not a single occurrence. It is, instead, the consequence of daily, persistent, incremental action, of frail human endeavour shored up by our unwavering faith in God and resultant conviction of success.

One of the world's great statesmen reminds us that *'we must show, not merely in great crises, but in the everyday affairs of life, the qualities of practical intelligence, of courage, of hardihood and endurance, and above all, the power of devotion to a lofty ideal...'*

I therefore issue to all Saint Lucians a call to take up the gauntlet of transformation – to infuse into the national psyche our distinctiveness, strength of character, genius and individual endowment. Let us with singularity of purpose, commit ourselves to fashioning our new Saint Lucia.

Thank you, Mr. President, Madam Speaker, Honourable Members of Parliament, Ladies and Gentlemen. And now it is my distinct pleasure to formally declare open this Second Session of the Eleventh Parliament of Saint Lucia.