

GOVERNOR GENERAL OF SAINT LUCIA on
the Occasion of the Formal Opening of the
Second Session of the TENTH PARLIAMENT
OF SAINT LUCIA

April 23

2012

*...Let our story be a story of hope and courage despite all
the troubles of our difficult past. Let not the poet write
about us in depressed and diminished words, let not our
story be sung in a sad and mournful key.*

"All Things are Ready if our Minds be So."

William Shakespeare : Henry V; Act 4, Scene 3

Mr. President and Members of the Senate,

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly,

I would have liked to bring you some great news; some glad tiding which would set your world to right. Alas, this is not the case; the world is in turmoil, restless and uncertain.

On this occasion, among the nations of the world, I am reminded of the terrible tragedy that has befallen Greece and mindful, perhaps, of the connections between the Greek civilization and our tiny nation.

Eight years ago, Greece celebrated the triumph of the twenty-eighth Olympiad. Now, it has found itself mired in debt and austerity and must walk a fiscal tightrope with an uncertain net below. There are many tragic stories which have come to us from the Greeks; stories of states which were once great. Plato, for example, tells us of Atlantis, a civilization advanced for its time which suffered calamitous failure while Homer in his Iliad recounts the demise of Helen of Troy.

I refer to this only to emphasize that we cannot allow The Helen of the West as we proclaim ourselves to be, to become a tragedy like Helen of Troy. We must ensure that our journey through these times and the decades yet to come, maintains a humble but resolute desire for peace and success.

Let our story be a story of hope and courage despite all the troubles of our difficult past. Let not the poet write about us in depressed and diminished words, let not our story be sung in a sad and mournful key.

Though we may not have the recollection of stories told thousands of times for a thousand years in a thousand towns as some nations do, nor the vastness of financial wealth that others possess, we have and can champion within ourselves an uniqueness, a genius, a pride that far overshadow our currently humble means.

Let our history be written by none other than ourselves, Saint Lucians. This is the task, the mission, at hand.

THESE ARE TROUBLING TIMES

Fellow Saint Lucians, as you must already know, these are troubling times for us and for the world. The global economy is in turmoil. However, while we can take some comfort in our general circumstances - spared as we are from war, and pestilence and famine - we cannot afford to slumber into oblivion.

We cannot afford to see our many achievements as a people undermined by our own complacency, nor by the kind of selfishness that abandons the weak, the vulnerable, the less fortunate. We cannot continue to think of individual progress as something good, without also considering the good which we must each bring about for the country as a whole, so that all who live, work and enjoy life here must feel themselves engaged in that same great enterprise, which is, the advancement of this country and its people.

OUR HOUSE OF FAITH

This is a time when we must call on our reserves of energy, determination and perseverance. It is a time to pull together, to move Saint Lucia forward, and in so doing reshape, if not the present, then the future which we intend to live in.

This is the task of nation building which we must do for ourselves, for this is our rock, and upon this rock we must build our house of faith: faith in ourselves, in our country, in God, and in our destiny as a caring, enlightened and enterprising people. While there are those, here and abroad, who would help us in this great task, for the most part, we as Saint Lucians must do this for each other and for ourselves.

We cannot await, nor take for granted anymore, the customary help even of our traditional friends and neighbours. They are grappling with their own economic challenges which are deep, pervasive and prolonged.

Our friends in Europe are hampered by prolonged stagnation, with the Euro Zone expected to enter into mild recession, returning only to modest growth in the second half of 2012. And even this tentative outlook is clouded by ongoing uncertainty, concerns about high sovereign debt and depressed demand.

This outlook will continue for as long as the sluggish global economy weakens demand for European exports, keeping business and consumer confidence at low levels, despite some stabilization observed in the financial sector.

In the United States of America, the threat of another recession is retreating slowly, but signs of economic recovery in North America are highly dependent upon the European scenario, where major policy adjustments are yet to be effected.

Meanwhile in Asia, growth prospects are also hampered by weak global demand and could be wiped out by any further rises in oil prices or disruptions in the supply.

NO STRANGERS TO ADVERSITY

Consequently, for the time being, and sadly, for the foreseeable future, we are largely on our own, and as a nation must rely on ourselves and on each other if we are to prosper. This lesson we already know. This lesson we have already lived. This lesson we have already mastered, and now must make the central pillar of our daily philosophy.

The Saint Lucian people are no strangers to hardship. We do not run from adversity. We know the value of perseverance and the strength of unity. We understand the concept of community. Even if we sometimes temporarily lose sight of these fundamental tenets of our collective upbringing, we have demonstrated time and time again, that in our darkest hour, we are capable of great resolve, great acts of humanity, heroism, courage and kindness.

These times demand that we remember: remember a day when money and opportunity did not divide us but gave us reason to come together, to collaborate, knowing that if even one of us succeeded to the summit, it would be a triumph for the family, the community, the nation.

We need to remember and rediscover these qualities within ourselves and in each other, and know that together we can join in the common enterprise which is the salvation and success of fair Helen.

For too long, too many of us have been content to feel that the job of shaping the nation's future is the responsibility of Government alone. For too long too many of us have felt that we have a right to stand by and wait for the fruit of good fortune to fall from the tree which has been planted by the sweat of others. For too long, we have stood by expecting someone else to solve the problems which we ourselves have created and chosen to live with, keeping our skills and our talents to ourselves, counting our pennies and our problems, pretending that we are not also responsible for building this island of ours into a better place.

Fellow Saint Lucians, this pretence works only in the mind, so it is there that we must start our transformation. The time has come to revisit all these assumptions. This country needs each and every citizen to be concerned; to be motivated beyond individual self interest, to be energized by the prospect of a better way for all.

LET OUR GOOD EXAMPLE SHINE

We must not be afraid to let our good example shine. We must let our good intentions, our good deeds, inspire others, especially our children who need nurture beyond material things.

We have to give them confidence, our attention, our time, our knowledge of the right road to travel, the straight and narrow of hard work and discipline, respect and determination. We have to feed them with love and enlightenment so that they can address each other and disagree when necessary without anger and violence.

A REAL PEOPLE OF CHARACTER

In Derek Walcott's award winning work, *Omeros*, Saint Lucia is equated to an island in the Greek archipelago, a land of simple but proud people, souls who live heroic lives in their own right. Two decades on from his great personal achievement, the scenes and sights are not of theatrics alone, but can still be experienced: on our journeys through the countryside, while we collect seashells on a sandy beach, hear the whispers of young children at the back of the class, or within the bustle of Castries Marketplace on market day, even now that it is a globally recognised shopping experience. We are a people with real character and natural warmth. We are bound together by many threads, threads which are strong not so much individually but when interwoven and finely knit.

The year twenty twelve, Mr. President, Mr Speaker, is an Olympic year. We are reminded of the Olympic Games held eight years ago at which Saint Lucia proudly marched onward into a newly built stadium in the ancient city of Athens, the first among all the nations to do so. The fate of the Greek alphabet meant that we derived such a noteworthy position of honour. Undoubtedly, we were all proud of this distinction, however small was the team that paraded under our flag. As our illustrious Nobel Laureates have demonstrated, there can be no doubt that smallness of body, or of number, need not govern greatness of soul, heart and mind. Even the myths and records of present-day great nations were once tales told within small families, in tiny hamlets, in forgotten fishers' coves.

DEMOCRACY WITH EQUITY

We observe worldwide, today and throughout history, that the pursuit of democracy arises when people want to find common ground and balance. We see the Arab Spring still on and we observed the pinnacle of our own democracy at work just a few months ago.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, democracy without equity is unsustainable; like a raft heading towards the treacheries of a waterfall, the waters of discontent and disenchantment can speed up ever so calmly before it is too late to discern the

dangers ahead. We have seen the sunrise of new states such as South Sudan, the sunset of old dictators and threats, the birth of new technologies, and the gaping rifts that have emerged in economic systems which some once thought were impregnable.

A few short years ago, in two thousand and four Facebook was born. On its eighth anniversary in February twenty twelve, it recorded over eight hundred and forty five million persons registered, which would make it the world's third largest country by population. Facebook even played a major role in the many revolutions in North Africa and the Middle East.

According to Facebook market estimates, one in three Saint Lucians have an account. The immensity of our connectivity afforded by broadband, wireless hotspots and social media also means that we have no choice but to compete even more as civilisations converge to be that more innovative, that more creative and ever more willing to adapt. We must champion ourselves to produce more creatively, to innovate with our every step, to think more deeply about our nation, our oneness, our commonality.

My Government is committed to participatory democracy that embraces all sectors of society. It will embrace social media to stimulate vibrant discourse and public education via non-traditional means.

OUR COMMON ARCHIPAELAGO

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, less than a decade ago, in my address to this Honourable Parliament, we shared a dream that we could craft a new map of our mental space, that our pathways could be lit up to see beyond the maze of geopolitics and internal barriers which prevented our togetherness. We saw ourselves walking hand-in-hand with our Caribbean brothers and sisters. Now, there are still many new hurdles to overcome in this new competitive worldwide stadium but we might cause fewer hurdles on our track if we found that oneness we can create. Our desire to embrace our Caribbean archipelago continues in tangible ways. Many Saint Lucian businesses have now expanded operations into other OECS territories, particularly St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Antigua & Barbuda and in Grenada. Also, the first OECS Parliamentary sitting will be held in June this year, marking a milestone in our common governance. Our common smallness and challenges augur well for our continued social and economic cohesion. My Government will continue to pursue efforts that will bring us closer together as one Caribbean people.

A NEW, CREATIVE ECONOMY

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, in the face of every challenge, there lies inside an even deeper positive possibility. A master plan for change means a redefinition of our multidimensional, multisectoral spaces and finding a new code for exciting our society's consciousness. We can only achieve this by finding our commonality and

celebrating our identity. Like the Greeks, we must change our firmament to celebrate our own greats; to promote new constellations that acknowledge all our achievements.

We must embrace the Creative Industries as a critical aspect of our development, both for economic good and for national pride. My Government is actively seeking ways to unleash the creative power of our people in their ability to develop, to design, to express. Artists and creators must be assured that they are given a place of respect and consideration, not only through one ministry, but throughout the totality of Government.

A PATHWAY FOR INCLUSIVE CHANGE

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, the baker cannot bake bread for himself alone, nor can the builder build homes for herself alone. Finding a pathway for inclusive change that propels us forward, while not jeopardizing our patrimony and our principles, is no easy feat, but my Government is committed to our success as a nation, and calls on all Saint Lucians to commit the same. We must disown enmity and find peace in our common purpose.

However, Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, to upload these changes into our social, economic and political DNA, our society must affirm a common desire to see a better Saint Lucia. It may seem popular in these times to see ourselves only through our sectoral and individual perspectives. However, staying in your section for but a little while longer does not protect your entire section from being enveloped by larger global forces. All sections of our socio-economic sphere will have to bind together to realise a competitive, feasible nation.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, my Government is aware that individuals may feel overwhelmed at times to think of the implications of what change may bring, and many wonder whether they will cope. Some fear erosion of their lifestyles or the failure of their businesses. I want to assure them that they are not alone. Each one of us cannot do this on our own. Our challenges are not insurmountable if we move forward together. These life-changing steps we must not fear. Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, the desire for a better quality of life for all our citizens and residents demands that we find better ways to sustainable, equitable growth.

THE URGENCY OF OUR TIMES

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, the urgency of the times requires us to stiffen our muscles, summon our courage, to take action on our inherited problems. We have become notorious for “dithering” on decisions that are vital to our collective well-being. Let us consider for a moment our unwillingness, our fear perhaps, of tackling the myriad of problems which face us.

We failed to act on our water company, WASCO, so the company continues to languish and our water woes increase. We commenced the process to establish Universal Health Care and it has been left in abeyance. We all knew that the future of our banana industry was bleak but we offered vain hope where pragmatism was what was needed. The result : banana fields lie idle and abandoned, now ravaged by disease. Despite the several years at our disposal, we have not been able to select replacement crops.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, if we are to benefit or make use of the tepid recovery that is underway in the global economy we need to position ourselves now by summoning the fortitude to resolve our long-standing problems. To survive in this new world, we may be required to revisit and redesign or if you prefer, refashion policies we once held sacred. Put differently, we may have to take decisions we never contemplated in the past.

MOVING TO A FAIRER TAX SYSTEM

Of particular consideration this year is to ensure that my Government finds efficient ways to make our taxation system fairer, with the burden shared more justly. Our modes of doing business, particularly with respect to public sector financing, have not kept pace with the changes in global economic activity and rules. Furthermore, our economy itself has shifted away from taxation based primarily on incomes and the import of goods and we find ourselves with but a small proportion of individuals and corporations actually paying anything at all on their incomes after deductions. We must now find a better way to ensure that the growing services components of our economy supports our tax base, while in fact providing a better balance in the prices of goods consumed.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, my Government is committed, without reservation, to fashioning better ways of protecting those with severe economic challenges. These changes to our tax system, though extensive, are not beyond our abilities as one people. The changes that are necessary to adjust to a new tax system will in fact make our productive sectors more professional, better managed and more competitive. These changes must of course be balanced with safeguards for citizens to sustain a decent quality of life.

But we must, however, work hard to agree on a common position. The reasons are compelling. The overall fiscal deficit widened to E.C. \$254.4 million dollars, equivalent to 7.6% of GDP in 2011/2012. This deficit is being financed entirely by borrowing from both domestic and external sources. This is unsustainable.

Every single day, every single month that we delay in taking corrective measures to our economy, brings us closer to the edge.

A TIME FOR THE COMMON GOOD

This is a time to search for the common good. My Government urges citizens to share their thoughts, ideas and solutions.

Mr. President, Mr Speaker, depression fears expression. From Facebook to the farm, citizens have expressed opinions on the proposed Value-Added Tax and my Government welcomes this broad dialogue. It recognises its role in coalescing the national will in the face of all these fears.

Though the storm of economic uncertainty still lingers globally, my Government is keeping calm and will approach these changes with care, diligence and certainty of purpose. We do not want to have a depressed nation. My Government will not agree to any measure that would be too onerous, too burdensome or unreasonable for our people. This is not a time to look inward only. This is not a time to be insular. This is not a time to be inactive. It is undoubtedly a time to collaborate, to seek cohesion, to seek a common good, a common will, a common strength, and a common purpose.

Misyé Pwézidan, Misyé Speaker

Mwen té kay avoudwé vini isi-a jòdi-a pou pòtè bon nouvèl, pou di'w tout bagay an nòd, pou di'w péyi-a sennésòv. Mé, malèwèsman, jès pa dwèt. Tout oliwon latè-a, bagay an siwèksyon: lékonomi anchay gwan péyi an fayit, sitwayen ka fè konba épi gouvèdman-yo an lawi péyi-yo. Moun ka hélé toupatou: pa ni twavay, pwi machandiz ka mouté, épi an menm tan-an lézotowité ka mandé pèp-la pou fè pli and pli sakwifis.

Mé sé fo nou pa désèspéwé. Sé pa Sent Lisi yonn ki an sitwasyon-sala. Jik gwan péyi ki té ni mwayen an tan pasé, asé mwayen pou endé lézòt péyi kon san-nou-an, ka trouve kò yo an go difikilté atjwèlman. Nou pa sa dépann asou yo kon avan pou lonjé lanmen ban nou. Lè-a ja wivé pou nou endé kò-nou, pou kwiyé asou wézèw-nou, asou fòs-nou, détinasyon-nou, asou kwéativité-nou, lafwa-nou pou bati péyi-a nou ka kwiyé san-nou-an.

Sé an twavay ki ni pou fèt. Sé an lison nou ja apwann dépi lontan. Nou Sent Lisien konnèt sa'y vlé di twavay wèd; nou konnèt sa yo ka kwiyé tan manyòk; nou konnèt miz. Ou pé menm di nou ja gwajé mizè. Mé nou pa té moun pou kité twakasman défè nou, kwazé lèspwi-nou, détwi jèwté-nou. Lè ou tann palé di "koudmen", ou konpwann kisa sa vlé di - sa sété vwéman kawaktè Sent Lisien.- lonjé lanmen bay yonnalòt, sipòté yonnalòt, kaché défo yonnalòt, hosé né yonnalòt, wéjwi an siksé yonnalòt.

Me, dènyeman, adan pami nou pwan labitid dépann asou lézòt pou tout sa yo bizwen; asou gouvèdman sitou, asou légliz, asou vwazinaj-yo. Tou bonnman sé jou-sala, adan di nou vlé labizwen tou fèt. Nou vlé doubout èspéwé manjé fwi twavay épi laswè lézòt san fè an chif pou endé kò-yo;yo pwan labitid asiz épi atann lézòt pou touvé

wépons pou pwoblenm yo kwéyé pou kò-yo. Adan di nou pa pawé pwan wèspansabilité pou aksyon-nou menm, jijéwè òfè kò-yo pou endé konmin-yo, ében, vil-yo ében péyi-yo. Sa sété pa lattitid sé moun-lan ki bati péyi-a nou konnèt jòdi-a, épi tout siksé-a épi bon wilonmen-an nou ka jwi-a, épi nou ka pwan pou lajan kontan-an.

Sé pou nou viwé adopté sé lattitid sala si sé pou nou wanjé sitwasyon péyi-a ka touvé kò'y-la an sé tan difisil sala. Sé fo nou fè'y, pa sèlman pou kò-nou menm, mé pou sé manmay-la ki ka vini-an. Nou ni lobligasyon-an pou endiké yo, pou byen élivé yo, pou moutwé yo valè twavay, disiplin, wèspé épi détèminasyon, pou moutwé yo mannyè pou agi épi yonnalòt, épi menm mannyè pou pa dakò épi yonnalòt san violans ni lawaj.

Misyé Pwézidan, Misyé Speaker, Misyé, Médam,

Gouvèdman sav anchay moun méfyé tout sé chanjman sala yo ka pwopozé-a. Tout sa ka akablé yo. Yo pa asiwé ki mannyè sé démach nèf sala kay afèkté yo, fanmi-yo, biznis-yo. Me Gouvèdman ka di yo pa bizwen pè. Si nou tout mété tèt-nou ansanm, nou tout kay jwi sé bennéfis-la.

Mé sé pou nou doubout kalandjé, épi pwan sé disizyon-an ki nésésè-a, menm si yo difisil. Mé nou enmen dispité. Byen défwa pwogwé pou nou sé lavé lanmen, swiyé atè. Nou té ni disizyon pou pwan asou WASCO, pa èkzanmp; nou palé, palé, palé, épi anyen di fèt. Nou koumansé twavay asou asiwans santé, mé nou sispann li. Nou té wè lendoustwi fig-la té an twaka, i té malad, mé chak fwa nou té simye mété an plasta asou maleng-lan, kon yo ka di, plito nou té chaché an vwé djéwizyon. Mé nou pa sa kontiné konsa, Misyé Pwézidan, Misyé Speaker, Misyé, Médam, To ou ta, chouval péyi-a kay ni pou chanjé pa, pou pwan lawout difisil-a, si sé pou nou pa wété bòdaj chimen-an, épi gadé siksé épi dévlòpman pasé.

Avan i twò ta, annou soukwé sonmèy sòti an zyé-nou, annou lévé, annou bay kò-nou ganm, annou bay kò-nou dévès, annou mété tèt-nou, sajès-nou, kouway-nou, konfyans-nou, tjè-nou, lèspwi sen nou, tout kò-nou èk lam-nou ansanm pou touve sé solisyon-an nou ni bizwen-an, pou pwan sé démach-la ki nésésè-a, pou mennen Sent Lisi douvan, pou pwan plas-la i méwité-a anpami sé lézòt péyi latè-a.

AN AMBITIOUS LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMME

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, my Government plans to be exceedingly active on the legislative front in this new session of Parliament.

Defining the Legislative Agenda

My Government intends to take a more planned approach in defining its legislative agenda. In addition to routine legislative requirements, greater attention will be

given by ministries to ensuring that our economic and social policies are supported by the requisite legislation and that this is given priority in the legislative agenda. Consequently, we can expect to see a robust legislative agenda addressing issues relating to Economic Development and Tax Reform, Employment, Health, Crime and Security, Education, Tourism, Agriculture, Alternative Sources of Energy and the wide range of concerns relating to our women, children, young persons and seniors.

Business and Commerce

Earlier this year, my Government announced that it would proceed with the implementation of Value Added Tax. As I explained earlier, we accept the necessity to reform the tax base in Saint Lucia to ensure greater fairness and a more predictable revenue stream. Consistent with its declaration, my Government will, early in this session of Parliament, introduce a Value Added Tax Bill. Already there has been much consultation on the policies that have informed the drafting of this bill.

For some time now, we have also been streamlining the regulatory framework for our insurance sector, in line with requirements for the harmonization of legislation to ensure a common regulatory space in the Caribbean. Therefore, my Government plans to advance the work of previous Parliaments and introduce an Insurance Bill for enactment.

Legislation aimed at advancing the business environment will also include a Trade Export Promotion Agency Bill and a Competition Law and Policy Bill. These Bills, as indeed other proposed legislation, will require extensive discussions with stakeholders.

It is important, particularly in this environment, to strengthen the regulative protection afforded our citizens, and Parliament shall be invited to enact the long delayed Consumer Protection Bill.

Creation of a Commercial Court

My Government is anxious to improve the ease of doing business in our country. It is vital that we retain our competitive edge in the Commonwealth Caribbean and indeed, among the developing nations of the world. We must arrest the slippage that occurred in recent years.

In this session, my Government, after consultation with the OECS Supreme Court, will introduce legislation to establish a Commercial Court with a separate and distinct jurisdiction to handle exclusively, all matters pertaining to business and commerce.

Reform to Health Sector

Reform of the Health Sector remains a priority for my Government. We are on the cusp of dramatic changes in the Health Sector with the commissioning of two new hospitals, one of which, St Jude, arose from the ashes of a disastrous fire that claimed the lives of loved ones. These two hospitals come on the heels of a modern psychiatric facility. What this means is that Saint Lucia will now have the most modern health infrastructure in the Eastern Caribbean. But these buildings can become mere monuments if we do not change the management systems we have inherited and reproduce in them the old ways and habits of the past. We have a unique opportunity to change the way we do things at our public hospitals.

My Government has agreed to “statutorise” the new national hospital and to that end, will introduce legislation in this parliamentary session to achieve this. My Government will ensure that the existing rights of persons currently employed at Victoria Hospital will be fully protected in the transition to the new hospital.

Reform to Family Law

My Government is anxious to advance the reform of Family Law. We had, for that purpose, reviewed a number of bills developed as part of the OECS Family Law project. Sadly, this was not carried forward. My Government views this matter with some urgency and will bring before Parliament legislation aimed at providing more concrete arrangements for the protection of children against abuse and violence, and also provisions pertaining to child support. My Government proposes to deal with the issue of domestic violence more decisively. Our legislative focus will also include other vulnerable groups such as persons suffering with HIV/AIDS and the elderly, reinforced by a climate of respect for human rights and dignity.

Law and Order

My Government came into office emphasizing the need to ensure that our citizens feel safe and secure, at all times. Law and Order was described as “the first pillar of development” by my Government in its other life. This requires that we continue with the modernization of our Police Force. In that regard, we have initiated the process of reviewing our existing Police Act, Cap 14.01 and intend to prepare a new Police Bill for consideration.

It will be important to widen our consultations beyond the Police and key stakeholders, to include the public.

In this Parliamentary Session, Parliament will also be invited to consider an Electronic Monitoring Bill to monitor and track certain categories of individuals on bail and on parole. Anti-Gang Legislation will also be introduced to bring an end to the use of gangs as vehicles and facilitators of crime and criminal activity.

We shall also tighten enforcement of our Traffic Laws and make our roads safer. Legislation will support the introduction of requisite tools to deal with speeding on our roads and the use of alcohol and other drugs by drivers.

In securing our borders, my Government will continue to implement the machine readable passport system and will introduce legislative amendments to ensure the complete implementation of this initiative.

If we are to have success fighting drug trafficking and corruption, we must ensure that we are able to confiscate the proceeds of criminal activity. Existing legislation will be strengthened in that regard. We acknowledge the trans-national nature of this problem and the need to harmonize our efforts, consistent with international standards and our international obligations. Consequently, my Government plans to undertake substantive amendments to the Money Laundering (Prevention) Act Cap. 12.20, the Proceeds of Crime Act, Cap. 3.04, the Anti-Terrorism Act, Cap. 3.16, the Registered Agent and Trustee Licensing Act, Cap. 12.12 and the Financial Services Regulatory Authority, Act Number 13 of 2011. There is need for more careful regulation of Non-Governmental Organisations with a view to ensuring that they are not used as conduits for terrorism financing or to launder the proceeds of criminal activity. We will introduce legislation to address these concerns. We are also considering the issue of civil forfeiture, mindful of the constitutional requirements and safeguards afforded to our citizens.

The requirement for international co-operation and mutual assistance in criminal matters necessitates that we expand our adherence to certain treaties and other international agreements. As we do so, we will continue to urge the support of Parliament to enable the passage of legislation to give domestic effect to these agreements.

The Tourism Sector

In the area of Tourism, a Tourism Operators (Registration and Licensing) Bill will be tabled to reinforce standards across the tourism sector. In relation to standards, my Government welcomes the adoption of national standards such as the Code of Practice for Tour Guides and the Code of Practice for Inbound Tour Operators.

Cognizant of the extraordinary measures which the industry had to adopt to survive, my Government plans to amend the Tourism Incentives Act, to consider granting every property which is currently the beneficiary of existing incentives, new incentives as if they are commencing operations for the very first time.

Updated Legislative Framework for Agriculture

With respect to Agriculture, new legislation will be introduced and some existing laws will be updated. Our first priority is the enactment of an Agricultural Incentives Bill. This Bill will, once and for all, clarify the range of incentives that will be available to the farming community and bring to an end the capricious approvals of incentives to the sector. This Bill will be supported by a Sale of Agricultural Products Bill aimed at regulating and controlling the trade in agricultural products.

To control the movement of animals into and out of Saint Lucia an Animal Health (National and International Movements and Disease Prevention) Bill will be introduced. A Veterinary Surgeons Bill will also be tabled before Parliament and legislation will be introduced to regulate certain matters consistent with Saint Lucia's international obligations relating to Plant Protection, Fisheries and Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals.

Updated Communications Legislation

In order to continue to maximize benefits from the telecommunications sector, there is need to modernize and consolidate some of the existing legislation. Against this background we will introduce an Electronic Communications Bill.

Modernization of the Public Service

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, the final group of proposed legal reforms relates to the Public Services, a matter that is at the heart of Government. To be successful in these times, a Government and the citizenry it serves, require an efficient, organized and dedicated Public Service. My Government, consistent with the requirements of our Constitution, will introduce a Public Service Bill to modernize employment in the Public Service.

My Government has commenced the process of reviewing the Fire Service Act, Cap 14.04 and will also bring to Parliament a new Fire Service Bill. This will be complemented by a comprehensive Fire Code.

Amendments to the Correctional Services Act will also be introduced to strengthen the environment within which this service discharges its mandate.

By all accounts this is an ambitious legislative agenda. My Government cannot do it alone. All of this we must do, not alone anymore, but together.

Misyé Pwézidan, Misyé Speaker

Gouvèdman ni anchay lwa pou pasé diwan sèsyon Paleman sala: lwa ki kay gidé épi wéglé dévlòpman ékonomik péyi-a, pa èkzanp, wéjim taks péyi-a, twavay, santé, kwim, sékouwité, endikasyon, tourism, agrikilti, lénèji, épi lwa ki ka konséné fanm, manmay, jennès épi gwan moun.

An ling di biznis, Gouvèdman kay entwodi tax VAT-la, (èskizé mo anglé-a; nou ka touvé an mo kwéyòl pa li touswit) pou wéglé mannyè moun kay péyé taks. Kon i yé atjwèlman-an, sé pa an gwan kantité moun ében biznis ki pa péyé taks asou salè-yo, apwé Gouvèdman wimèt yo sa yo dépansé asou bagay kon asiwans, lentéwé asou lajan bank pwété yo pou achté kay yo, dépans pou dépendan yo, épi bagay konsa. Anchay diskisyon ja pwan kou asou zafè VAT-la, épi sé sé wézilta sé diskisyon-sala ki kay désidé ki sa ki kay alé an lwa sala.

An ling di santé, Gouvèdman kay entwodi lwa ki kay wéglé mennajman lopital nèf-la, paski si nou pa chanjé mannyè nou kay mennajé sé lopital piblik nou-an, sa nou kay ni sé go édifis sèlman, pa kalité sèvis santé-a pèp-la méwité-a.

Misyé Pwézidan, Misyé Speaker,

La ni anchay twavay ki ni pou fèt. Gouvèdman pa sa fè'y pa kò'y. Sé nou tout ki nou pou vini ansanm pou wè ki'y fèt.

Sé pou nou vini ansanm an kay-nou, an lékòl-nou, an kay lapawès-nou, an biwo nou épi ofis-nou, anba pyé mango, bòdlanmè, an jaden-nou; anfin toupatou, pou pwan sé disizyon-an an ki an lentéwé péyi-a. Nous sa twavay ansanm si nou mété lidé nou asou'y, paski la pa ni anyen ki pa sa fèt si lidé nou tout dakò.

NOT ALONE BUT TOGETHER

The temper of the times requires us to come together.

We must come together in our homes, in our schools, in our community halls, in our boardrooms and offices, under the mango tree or the street lamp, in the fields where we sow and the fields where we reap. We must come together to summon the will and the courage to make decisions in the best interest of the country.

It is time to restore that middle ground where we can meet each other and organize our affairs, engage as government to civil society, business to business, person to person.

We need to engage each other in proactive and responsible ways. Let us not shout across the fence of divided opinion but sit in the circle of mutual respect and the kind of willing compromise that shapes the best solutions for the greatest number.

There are difficult issues to be tackled in almost every sector: chronic problems of resource scarcity and resource wastage; inefficiencies which hamper productivity; outdated policies; unproductive practices; weak management; and poor work ethic; the violence of ignorance, insularity and poverty.

These are our enemies. These are the forces that must be eliminated from our minds, our attitudes, our daily existence. And together we can do this if we are willing, for all things are ready if our minds be so.

And so Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, it is my pleasure to now formally declare open this Second Session of the Tenth Parliament of Saint Lucia.