

Establishment of a Secretariat for Homecoming 2010

Background

In April 2008 the Government of Saint Lucia decided that special attention had to be given to the concerns of Saint Lucians resident in other countries. In June 2008, at a meeting held with the Saint Lucians living in New York, the Prime Minister committed himself to facilitating the reintegration of Saint Lucians living overseas into Saint Lucia. This commitment was reinforced with the appointment of Dr June Soomer, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary for CARICOM and OECS, as the person who would be responsible for Diaspora issues. In this regard, a Regional Integration and Diaspora Unit, was established within the Office of the Prime Minister. One of the missions of this Unit is to facilitate the deepening and strengthening of connections between our nationals overseas and their homeland. The Saint Lucian Homecoming 2010 is being organised by the Homecoming Coming Committee and the Saint Lucia International Association. Homecoming will coincide with 14th Biennial Convention of the Union of Saint Lucian Overseas Associations in July 2010. The major activities will take the last week in July but there will be other activities held throughout the year.

In July the Prime Minister agreed that the scope of the activity would necessitate the establishment of a Secretariat to ensure that all the activities planned for the year are carried out seamlessly. He therefore recommended that Mrs. Paula James head that Committee. It is proposed that the Secretariat is housed in the Office of the Prime Minister.

Other Members of the Secretariat

1. Ms Verena Calderon
2. Ms Aretha Regis
3. Mr. Merphilus James

Which groups are involved in Homecoming 2010?

- **The Saint Lucian Homecoming 2010 Committee**

The overall objective was to establish a broad-based committee to develop a strategy for the Homecoming and to successfully implement that strategy by the end of July 2010. Other objectives are as follows:

- To design the overall communications and marketing strategy for public sensitization including setting of timelines for the achievement of objectives.
- To ensure effective implementation of the strategy for public sensitization.
- To coordinate the programme with the overseas missions and consular offices
- To engage in dialogue with the Union of St Lucian Overseas Associations to ensure that all activities are coordinated.
- To engage Saint Lucians living overseas who are not members of associations to join in the Homecoming activities
- To encourage Saint Lucians at home to participate in the Homecoming activities.

Members of the Committee are:

1. Ambassador June Soomer – Chairperson and Head of the Diaspora Policy Committee
2. Mr. Egbert Andrew – Deputy Chairperson
3. Mr. Jean Francois Sonson – Head of the Finance and Budget Committee.
4. Mrs. Daune Charley John – Head of the Sponsorship Committee
5. Mr. Leevie Herelle – Head of the Museum Committee
6. Mrs. Mary Polius – Head of the PR Committee
7. Mr. Angus Philogene – Head of the Saint Lucia International Association and Head of the Programme Committee
8. Mr. Louis Lewis – Member Sponsorship Committee
9. MS Aretha Regis – Member Finance Committee
10. Mrs. Marie-Ange Leonard – Member – Ministry of Home Affairs
11. Mr. Darrel Montrope - Member – Ministry of Tourism (To be replaced)
12. Mrs. Pauline Medar – Member – Ministry of External Affairs (to be replaced)
13. Mrs. Paula James – Head of the Secretariat

▪ **The Saint Lucia International Association (SLIA)**

The Saint Lucia International Association (SLIA), was founded in 1999. The original intent of our association was to bring together Saint Lucians who immigrated,

laboured and lived overseas for extended periods of time, and for love of country or other reasons, decided to repatriate to island home, Saint Lucia. At present the membership stands well over 200. Membership in the club is open to you if you are a Saint Lucian by birth, naturalization or marriage. This group is represented on all committees.

▪ **The Union of Saint Lucian Overseas Associations**

The purpose of the **Union of Saint Lucian Overseas Associations (USLOA)** is to assemble biennially in a country agreed upon at the preceding convention to be hosted by the member Association of that country and there to express their views and concerns of Saint Lucians overseas in matters relating to Saint Lucia, their members and the people of Saint Lucia. The 14th biennial convention will be held the last two weeks in July 2010. The current president is Mr. Bertram Leon

What are the Plans

1. Development of a Saint Lucia Strategic Plan for the Diaspora and a Diaspora Policy.
 - a. A committee comprising Ambassador June Soomer, Dr Edsel Edmunds, Mr. Cletus Springer and Mr. Henry Joseph has been established.

2. A youth summit that will get all our young people involved in the discussion of the direction for their country, as we believe that our youth will ensure the sustainability of this effort. This will be preceded by a youth video conference during Nobel Laureate week under the theme “promoting excellence in Saint Lucia.” In this regard the following has been done:
 - a. A committee has been established comprising representatives from the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the National Youth Council, CARICOM Youth Ambassadors. This committee will be responsible for the youth summit.

- b. The Governor General has agreed to promote the Youth Videoconferencing as part of Noble Laureate week.
 - c. A meeting has been held with the OAS regarding sponsorship for the Youth Videoconferencing.
 - d. A meeting will be held with the UNDP Youth Programme regarding sponsorship for the Youth Summit
 - e. A meeting was held with the Minister of Social Transformation on the activities concerning the Youth.

- 3. A partnership fair that will result in the twinning of small businesses, service organisations, community groups, with individuals, families, professionals, business people and interested groups of Saint Lucians throughout the Diaspora.
 - a. A committee to manage the process is been set up and a meeting will be held in mid October with this committee
 - b. Meetings have been held with the OECS Small Enterprise Development Unit to hold seminars with the group.
 - c. The proposed venue is the Beausejour facility.

- 4. Cultural Activities
 - a. A committee will be set up to manage these activities
 - b. A concert displaying the talents of both Saint Lucians in the Diaspora and local Saint Lucians will be planned.

- 5. Management of the Website.
 - a. A website has been established but is currently undergoing review
 - b. The Minister of Tourism has pledged support for the management of the website.
 - c. Mr. Merphilus James will manage the website.

- 6. The Walking Museum
 - a. Mr. Leevie Herelle is chair of that committee which will present its report at the next meeting of the Homecoming Committee

- 7. Community Activities.
 - a. The SLIA will be heading these activities

- b. Representation from each community will be part of this committee.
- 8. Finance and Budget
 - a. This Committee is headed by Mr. Jean Francois Sonson and will present the budget by the end of October
- 9. Competitions Committee
 - a. There will be a variety of competitions throughout the year. These will include:
 - i. Why I am Proud to be a Saint Lucian. In this competition secondary schools students will be expected to upload their videos to the website. Prizes are being sought for the various categories/age groups/schools.
- 10. Awards Committee
 - a. The Governor General has agreed to be the Patron of this Committee. She has already sourced medals which will be presented to Saint Lucians in the Diaspora who have made outstanding contributions to their new communities and to Saint Lucia.
 - b. A Committee has been set up to assist her in setting criteria and for selection of the recipients of the medal. Members of the Committee are Lydia Elliott, Pearl Lake and Lucy Joseph.
- 11. Receptions/Cocktails
 - a. A committee will be set up to manage these activities.
 - b. It is expected that there will be three such activities
 - i. An awards cocktail hosted by the Governor General
 - ii. A welcome Reception hosted by the Prime Minister
 - iii. A farewell ball hosted by the Saint Lucia International Association.
- 12. Financial Incentives Committee
 - a. The Prime Minister has asked for a committee to be established to examine special investment incentives for people living in the Diaspora

- b. A committee consisting of the Ambassador, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of External Affairs has been established.