



Commerce means Business

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MINISTRY OF COMMERCE, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, INVESTMENT AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Mission Statement

"To actively promote and facilitate, in close collaboration with the Private Sector, the establishment of a dynamic investment and trading environment, which anticipates changes in global circumstances, whilst strengthening and enhancing the productive capacities and competitiveness of Industry and Commerce, encouraging good business practices and promoting consumer interest."

Editor's Note

Welcome to the second issue of "Commerce means Business," a publication of the Ministry of Commerce, Business Development, Investment and Consumer Affairs, produced by the Commercial Information Centre (CIC).

Let me first start by welcoming everyone to the New Year and wishing you all God's richest blessings for 2014. May all your goals and aspirations become a reality and your endeavours be fulfilled. May we all also continue to work assiduously to achieve the vision and mission of the Ministry.

In this issue of Commerce means Business, we touch on some of the main activities which were held in the months of October and November 2013 following our first issue of Commerce means Business. Several interesting articles are featured in this issue, such as, the Business Exposium which was held in observance of Global Entrepreneurship Week, as well as, the Annual Saint Lucia-Taiwan Partnership Trade Exhibition.

Other interesting articles are also portrayed by our proficient staff from the various departments, such as, the poultry plant and furniture sector site visits; the vegetable chips discussions and the Consumer Affairs Department workshop. We then conclude with our staff profile and highlights on some of the new publications available in CIC for staff use.

To wrap up a special poem which was written by one of our staff members is featured to remind us of the importance of remaining positive in 2014.

The Ministry of Commerce, Business Development, Investment and Consumer Affairs is pleased to present this publication to our readers with the hope that we can continue to satisfy your appetite for knowledge and information, through our bi-monthly publication of Commerce means Business.



Happy Reading!!

**Lydia Dariah - Information Officer/Editor
Commercial Information Centre**

Business Exposium - Networking for Growth



Opening Ceremony



“Global
Entrepreneurship
Week -
Networking
for
Growth”

As part of activities for Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW), November 18th - 24th, 2013, the Small Enterprise Development Unit (SEDU) of the Ministry hosted a Business Exposé/Symposium duly titled "Business Exposium".

The Business Exposium which was held on November 18th and 19th 2013 at the Indies Conference Room, Gros Islet, was aimed at bringing together business owners, managers, entrepreneurs, investors and persons aspiring to be entrepreneurs into one business forum. It was designed to provide information and services to existing and potential entrepreneurs, as well as, to allow persons the opportunity to share ideas, communicate and collaborate in order to develop their respective businesses.

The selected theme, “Networking for Growth” was quite fitting as initial feedback has pointed to increased collaboration among participants resulting in new opportunities and new ideas emerging. Importantly, one must take into account that each person or organization has something different to offer to the business world, and through networking, we pull together the different skills, talents and knowledge of our partners to increase our own capacity. By networking effectively, there is no telling what direction one’s business or business idea can take.

Borrowing from the phrase “no man is an island”, it is fitting to highlight the fact that we need each other to build our businesses and build our business ideas. Think - What do the Government, Banks, Insurance companies, Marketing Agencies, etc. have, that I can make use of? What are my own weaknesses? How can I use the strengths of the organizations, businesses, and others around me to compliment my business, and vice versa? Networking is about viewing your weaknesses as opportunities and pulling together the different resources available to you in order to achieve real growth.

**Mr. Peter Lorde, Deputy
Permanent Secretary attending to
clients**



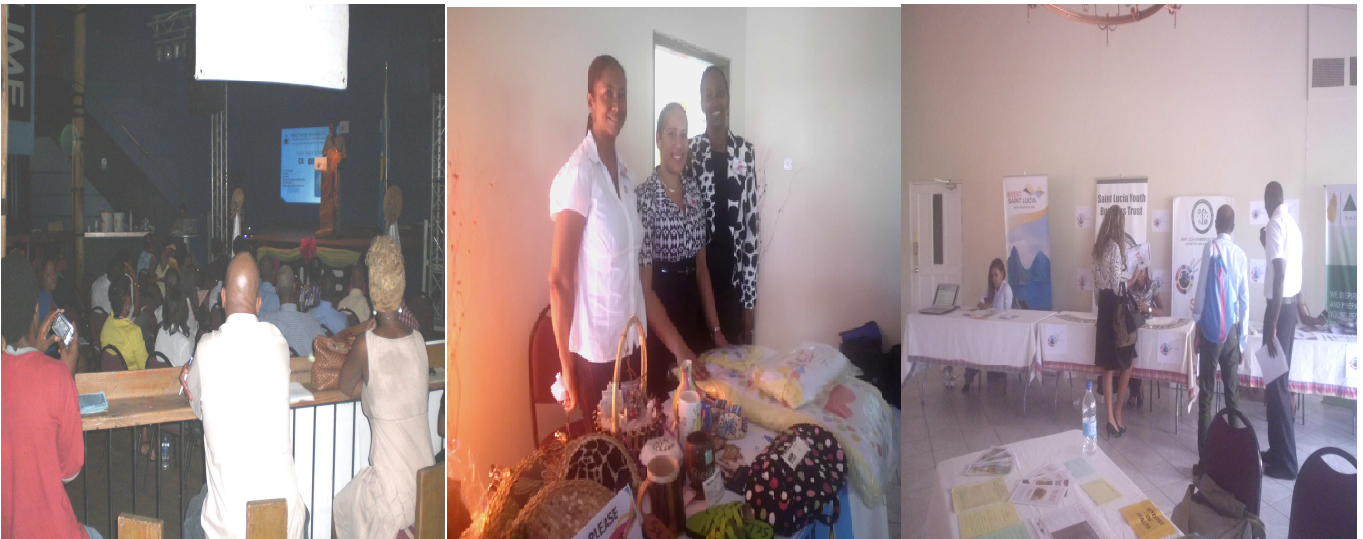
Business Exposium - Networking for Growth Cont'd

SEDU is pleased that the exposé/symposium was able to facilitate this networking process. With the regiment of featured speakers and presentations which included Financing for Small Business, Value Added Tax (VAT), Investment Opportunities, Entrepreneurship and Identifying Business Opportunities, the "Exposium" certainly catered to a diverse audience. While the department is still sifting through the data, preliminary results indicate that:

- *Well over 200 entrepreneurs and business owners at various levels participated - providing and receiving information and service.*
- *Approximately 80 young persons from Secondary Schools and the National Skills Development Centre were sensitized and encouraged to consider entrepreneurship.*
- *A select group of 22 innovators had the opportunity to present their businesses to a mixed audience including bankers, technical officers, business professionals, fellow entrepreneurs and potential investors receiving feedback and advice on the way forward.*



The Management and staff of SEDU would like to thank all who participated in this special GEW event which made it a success. SEDU was able to inspire, connect, mentor, engage and hopefully, instill an awareness of positive change to the business world.



Highlights from the Business Exposium

*By: Mrs. Ruthanne Carasco-Phillip
Business Development Officer*

Minister for Commerce Visits Poultry Processing Plants

On Tuesday 12th November, 2013, Minister with responsibility for Commerce, Honorable Emma Hippolyte visited two local poultry processors namely, DG Farms Ltd and Hyline Poultry Ltd. The Minister's visit was organized primarily to meet with the principals of the respective businesses in an effort to obtain first hand, the challenges faced by the poultry producers and take onboard recommendations for improving and enhancing the poultry industry. Accompanying the Minister, were technical officers from the Ministry of Commerce and the Veterinary Division of the Ministry of Agriculture.

The processors highlighted issues such as insufficient throughput as one of their primary challenges as they both operate way below capacity. This constraint is primarily as a consequence of farmers' hesitancy to invest in primary production; an apprehension which stems from the high cost of inputs (i.e) feed and the significant level of working capital necessary to efficiently operate a viable chicken pen. The processors espoused their satisfaction with government's efforts in encouraging the investment by Caribbean Grains Ltd, a feed manufacturer located in Vieux Fort. This investment has assisted tremendously in providing farmers with timely and consistent good quality feed and has given a boost to the local poultry sector. It is hoped that the entry of Caribbean Grains Ltd into the local market will invigorate confidence in local investors and result in more poultry farmers contributing to lowering Saint Lucia's import bill, particularly as it relates to chicken imports.

Between the two local poultry processors approximately fifty five (55) persons are directly employed in the industry. Combined, the two establishments process approximately 3500 birds daily and provide direct employment for approximately 40 contracted farmers. These farmers rear the broilers over a six to eight week period after which are sold to the processors for consumption in the domestic market. Currently, the processors have approximately in excess of 10% market share and are aiming with the assistance of the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Commerce to increase that market share to 40 % within the next five years.



*By: Mr. Guillaume Simon
Commerce & Industry Officer*

Saint Lucia-Taiwan Partnership Trade Exhibition

The Ministry of Commerce, Business Development, Investment and Consumer Affairs in partnership with the Embassy of the Republic of China (Taiwan) successfully hosted the 6th Annual Saint Lucia -Taiwan Partnership Trade Exhibition at Bay Walk Mall, 5th Floor, from November 08-10, 2013.

Over thirty-five companies from both Saint Lucia and the Republic of China (Taiwan) took part in this year's event. The event showcased a wide range of goods and services from both countries including: woodcraft, apparel/fashion accessories, building materials, leather, appliances, art and specialty foods. The event was well received by attendees and exhibitors alike. More than half of the participants reported significant sales of the products over the three-days and most have reported an increase in business as a direct result of the fair.

The opening ceremony of the event saw dignitaries like the Honourable Prime Minister, several Ministers of Government, heads of departments of the various ministries and members of the diplomatic core. Remarks were delivered by the Minister of Commerce, Hon Emma Hippolyte and other ministry officials. The speeches were preceded by a cultural presentation by theatre arts students of the Castries Comprehensive Secondary School which added some flavor by mixing traditional and folk music and dance with modern day soca. The performance was well received by patrons. This is the second year the school agreed to perform at the opening ceremony and last year's masquerade was just as mesmerizing as this year's performance. The event was officially declared open by the Governor General Her Excellency Dame Pearlette Louisy.

Official Opening of the Exhibition by the Ambassador of the Republic of (China) Taiwan, Governor General and Minister for Commerce, through symbolic ribbon cutting



Highlights from the Exhibition



*By: Ms. Cindy Eugene
Marketing Specialist*

Vegetable Chips Discussions

On October 29, 2013 officials from the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Agriculture met with 10 local producers of vegetable chips (plantain, breadfruit, cassava, banana) to discuss issues and constraints affecting the growth of the sub-sector which forms part of the agro-processing industry. Such discussions and assessments are in keeping with the mandate of the Ministry to undertake sectoral analysis on a periodic basis.

Discussions from the meeting led to the producers recognizing that changes in the global environment, as well as, trade agreements have an impact on sector performance and viability. Domestic issues of tax reform, such as, the Value Added Tax (VAT); the high cost of energy; rental costs; competition from like products, among other challenges also make operating in a global environment difficult especially for cottage industries.

As part of strategies to deal with the challenges faced by the producers of chips, officials of the Ministry of Agriculture emphasized the need to differentiate products and the use of indigenous material which could be more appealing to domestic and foreign consumers. Suggestions were also made for producers to join clusters, networks or co-operations as a way to reduce operating cost.

The Ministry of Commerce highlighted the urgent need to revise the current business model by individual operators and illustrated the advantages of the synergies which can be beneficial to all producers. Consultations are ongoing with the producers to assist in the continuous and sustainable development of the sub-sector.



By: Ms. Ava Marius
Commerce & Industry Officer

WTO Regional Workshop

A World Trade Organization (WTO) Regional Workshop on Market Access Related Issues for Caribbean Countries was held in Saint Lucia from October 28-31, 2013. Market Access can be defined as the totality of government imposed conditions, regulations and measures under which a product from one country may enter another country.

This workshop was held in the context of the WTO Biennial Technical Assistance and Training Plan for 2013-2014. Mr. Xiaobing Tang and Mr. Xiaodong Wang from the Market Access Division and Ms. Alya Belkhodja-Trocme of the Economic Research and Statistics Division of the WTO facilitated the workshop. The attendees of the workshop comprised of trade officials, as well as, persons involved in the implementation of trade policy from the Caribbean Community. Saint Lucia's participants included representatives from the Ministry of External Affairs, International Trade and Civil Aviation and the Customs and Excise Department. Ms. Natalia James, Professional Cadet and Ms. Lydia Dariah, Information Officer of the Ministry of Commerce also participated in the said workshop.

The workshop was aimed at enhancing participants understanding of certain issues that affect market access and WTO related rules that regulate customs valuation, rules of origin, import licensing and tariffs. WTO tools on tariff and trade data such as the Integrated Trade Intelligence Portal (I-TIP) and the Consolidated Tariff Schedules Database (CTS) were also introduced to participants.

The workshop was very stimulating and the wealth of information delivered by the facilitators elucidated certain aspects of the WTO General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, such as, tariff negotiations (Art XXVIII bis) as well as, the Agreement on Import Licensing, such as Article 5 on Notifications which outlines the import licensing procedures a member state must follow when notifying the WTO of its licensing procedures. Examples of notifications were also provided to better comprehend the requirements of Article 5. The workshop concluded with some practical case scenarios where participants had to apply their knowledge of the trade concepts learnt throughout the workshop to the various cases.



By: Ms. Lydia Dariah
Information Officer

CAD Holds Workshop on Consumer Credit Act

The Consumer Affairs Department (CAD) has been very ambitious in its drive towards ensuring that consumers are treated fairly when transacting business in the market place by adequately and continuously informing consumers of their rights and responsibilities. In addition, one of the basic and inalienable rights to which every consumer is entitled to is, "The Right to Information" which is defined as the right to be given truthful and honest information on a product or service, in order to make informed choices and decisions. The right to be informed goes beyond avoiding deception and protection from misleading advertisement to include information about warranties, guarantees, labeling, care instructions and the store's policy on refunds, exchanges, servicing, credit notes, delivery and other service costs.

It is on this notion that the CAD held a two day workshop on October 9th and 16th 2013 with the Management of Best Buy/Jubilee Trading. The workshop commenced with opening remarks by Mrs. Merlicia Williams-Davy, Information Officer, CAD, who highlighted the timeliness of the workshop and the need to have greater public-private sector dialogue on critical elements related to credit sale agreements and obligations of traders.

Mr. Philip Mc Clauren, Director of Consumer Affairs made presentations on the types of consumer credit transactions namely; conditional sales, credit sales, hire purchase and lay away plans. Various elements of the Consumer Credit Act No. 29 of 2006 were critically analyzed, such as, Part III of the Act on Hire Purchase Agreement. Summary case laws on hire purchase were also discussed which was aimed at giving the Management of Best Buy/Jubilee Trading practical examples of judgments taken in various cases involving consumer complaints.

The second component of the workshop focused mainly on the rationale for consumer protection in Saint Lucia; the role of the CAD; consumer rights and responsibilities; obligations of traders and consumer credit regulations; forms and procedures.

CAD Holds Workshop on Consumer Credit Act Cont'd

The Management of Best Buy/Jubilee Trading seemed very refreshed by the two day workshop and used the opportunity to fine tune some of their operating procedures in order to better serve the needs of consumers.

The enthusiasm and avid interest shown by Best Buy/Jubilee Trading, demonstrates the willingness of private sector entities towards ensuring that their business practices are in line with the laws and regulations governing consumer credit.

The CAD hopes to continue working with the business community, as well as, consumers in order to strengthen their awareness on consumer rights and responsibilities.



Management and Staff of Best Buy/Jubilee Trading with Staff of the Consumer Affairs Department

*By: Ms. Lydia Dariah
Information Officer*



Kweyol Day

In observance of Creole Heritage Month, the Staff of the Ministry celebrated Jounen Kweyol on Friday October 25th, 2013. The Ministry was decorated with the traditional madras cloth and a display corner of local foods, kitchen tools and utensils used in the earlier days such as the coal pot, grater, pots and pans were showcased.

The day commenced with prayers, songs of worship and psalms in creole by staff. A creole breakfast was then enjoyed by all which included salt-fish, bakes, cocoa tea, smoke herring and souse. The staff also enjoyed the company of media personnel from Choice TV who were very enticed by the Creole breakfast. The Minister for Commerce, Business Development, Investment and Consumer Affairs, Honourable Emma Hippolyte also graced the jounen kweyol celebrations with her presence and signified the true meaning of jounen kweyol with her beautiful, locally made creole attire.

The celebrations continued into lunch with staff enjoying homemade, piping hot pig-tail bouillon, as well as, green fig and chicken back and for dessert fudge, cake and tablet, while mellowing to the sound of sweet cassav and folk music.



*By: Ms. Lydia Dariah
Information Officer*

Minister for Commerce Visits Local Furniture Manufacturers

The Ministry of Commerce, Business Development, Investment and Consumer Affairs in keeping with its mandate to encourage industrial development and provide technical assistance to the private sector in Saint Lucia on Tuesday 8th October 2013 undertook in conjunction with Unicomer (Saint Lucia) Limited trading as Courts St Lucia Ltd, a tour of local furniture manufacturers. Officials representing Unicomer (Saint Lucia) Ltd including its General Manager, Mr. Derek Luk Pat and officials from the Ministry of Commerce accompanied the Minister for Commerce, Hon. Emma Hippolyte, on a visit of the six manufacturers namely:

- F & T Furniture Upscale Ltd located at Bois D' Orange
- Celestial Furniture Design Ltd and Ebeneza Foam Ltd located at Corinth
 - Timothy Gaston Furniture located at Morne Du Don
- Classic Furniture Ltd and Furniture City Ltd located respectively at Dennery and Mon Repos

The objectives of the tour were:

- To familiarize the Minister for Commerce with local furniture manufacturers and to have a first hand view of the scale of operations of furniture manufacturing companies and the variety and quality of locally made furniture.
- To encourage greater functional co-operation between the Ministry of Commerce, Business Development, Investment and Consumer Affairs, Unicomer Ltd and local furniture manufacturers.
- To further strengthen the relationship among furniture suppliers and Unicomer St. Lucia Ltd.

According to a press statement by Courts (Saint Lucia) Ltd, "Since its inception in July 1981, Unicomer (Saint Lucia) Limited, trading as Courts St. Lucia, has been integrally involved with the local furniture suppliers and has had the pleasure of being part of the evolution of furniture manufacturing which has resulted in today's furniture range that speaks of quality, durability and fashion. All are proudly retailed at Courts stores island-wide."

Minister for Commerce Visits Local Furniture Manufacturers Cont'd

Minister Hippolyte stressed that the visit was a real eye opener and a demonstration of the tremendous creativity and potential that exists within the local furniture industry. The Minister spoke to the need for local furniture manufacturers to not just satisfy but surpass customer expectations and move to the next level of creating a “local brand” for St. Lucian made furniture. Minister Hippolyte reaffirmed government’s commitment to building the local furniture industry in collaboration with all strategic partners and called for the continued support of consumers and businesses for locally made products.



(L-R) Ministry officials, Hon. Emma Hippolyte, Unicomer (Saint Lucia) representatives with General Manager Mr. Derek Luk Pat and Mr. Matterson Preville, Manager of Cellestial Furniture Design Ltd, one of the furniture manufacturers visited

*By: Mr. Guillaume Simon
Commerce & Industry Officer*

Let's Meet the Staff - Ms. Meuris Dos Santos



Ms. Meuris Dos Santos entered the Government Service in June 1990 as a Library Assistant with the Central Library. Having served at the Central Library for several years she was then transferred to the Ministry of Commerce in September 2008. She currently serves as the Information Assistant at the Commercial Information Centre with the Ministry.

Ms. Dos Santos holds a Bachelor's Degree in Management Studies from the University of the West Indies, as well as, a UWI Certificate in Public Administration and a Library Certificate from the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College.

Her major role as an Information Assistant is to assist in the continuous improvement and enhancement of the Commercial Information Centre through the collection and dissemination of quality information and services in order to adequately meet the demands of users.

She enjoys her current job given the interaction she gets with different clients and entrepreneurs and the assistance she affords to those persons. With time she would like to make a greater contribution to the work of the Ministry.

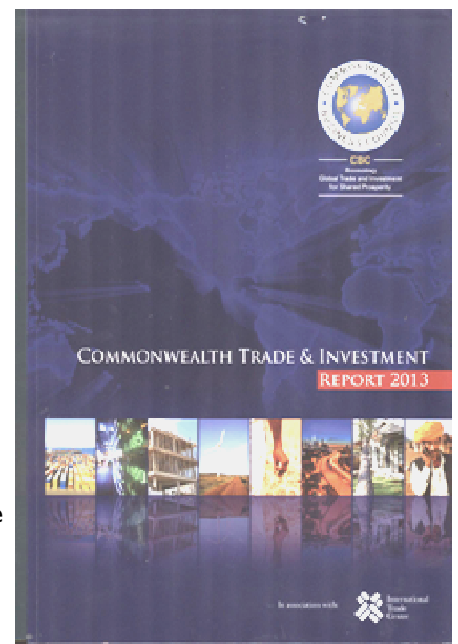
What's in CIC



CIC presently has available the latest issue of the magazine "Entrepreneur." This issue provides very resourceful information on building business ideas and enhancing one's entrepreneurial skills.

Also available is the Commonwealth Trade & Investment Report for 2013. In this publication articles are provided on Trade in the 21st Century; Investment Trends & Opportunities; Trade, Finance & Capital Markets; Agriculture; Energy & Transport and ICTs.

Feel free to visit CIC to have a read of these insightful publications which can further enhance your knowledge on Entrepreneurship and Global Trade Issues.



POSITIVE THOUGHTS

Do you ever wonder, why?
Why? The direction of my thoughts, linger
Linger, thinking of
Your words un-spoken, yet so meaningful, so powerful
My thoughts linger to that precise moment
I knew these words would remain
Determination, reliance, confidence, enthusiasm
My thoughts linger
Tears of hope, your smile, your words of encouragement
Un-spoken but true - my thoughts remain positive, because of you.

Ruthanne P. Carasco-Phillip

The Ministry of Commerce, Business Development, Investment and Consumer Affairs welcomes your comments and suggestions towards improving this publication. We would also like to welcome and encourage all staff members to submit articles for our upcoming issues of Commerce means Business.

Kindly email the Commercial Information Centre at cic@govt.lc with your articles and feedback.

Thank you to all those who contributed to this second issue of Commerce means Business.
We look forward to your continued contributions.

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