



VAT Simplifying the collection of Tax.

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **For Immediate Release**

#### **PRICE CONTROL JOINS VAT FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

**Castries, August 15, 2012;** The VAT implementation Project Office is pleased with the response to its on-going island wide community engagements to date. The Project Office issued a call to communities to come out and learn about the Valued Added Tax through direct first-hand information, which it provides in a face to face setting, in English and Kweyol as warranted.

VAT Coordinator Adria Sonson described the response as ‘favourable’ and ‘encouraging’ but notes that over the course of the three months since the Community meetings gained momentum, it is patently clear that the price of everyday consumer goods remains the area of greatest concern for Saint Lucian consumers.

Consequently, said Ms Sonson, the VAT Implementation Project Office has conferred with the Ministry of Commerce as the agency under which resides the responsibility for Price Control, with a view to accompanying the Project Office on these islandwide meetings.

“What is clearly apparent is that the implementation of VAT has brought home the fact that our people are in dire need of information on pricing regimes, and on where government has control and where it does not.”

She said that in the pipeline there is a collaborative approach between the Ministry of Commerce and the VAT Implementation Project Office to introduce a sustainable information tool that will equip consumers with knowledge on their rights, the requirements of merchants, and systems of redress with respect to the purchase of goods and services.

“Now, with the imminent VAT implementation consumers are getting wise to the fact that we have as much of a responsibility to monitor the mercantile environment and be proactive and vigilant on the matter of our rights. But it starts with the empowerment of the consumer and the Project Office is keen to at least begin to champion their empowerment,” Ms. Sonson concluded.

Throughout August, several Community meetings have been scheduled primarily in the south and south-western communities, while requests continue to come in from community based groups, churches and community foundations.

The VAT Implementation Project Office will be accompanied by representatives of the Ministry of Commerce who can facilitate public education of issues relating to Tax and general consumer issues. Below is the itinerary at this time.

DATE	VENUE	TIME
Monday August	Victory Pentecostal , Vieux Fort	7:00pm
Tuesday August	Wesleyan Holiness Church, Castries	7:00pm
Wednesday August	Southern Cooperatives Society, Vieux Fort	5:00pm
Wednesday August	Augier Combined School	5:30pm
Saturday August	Choiseul Village Market	5:30pm
Saturday August	Laborie Village	5:30pm
Tuesday August	Mongouge Primary School	5:30pm
Tuesday August	Dacretin Mothers Hall	5:30pm
Wednesday August	La Grace Combined School	5:30pm
Wednesday August	La M aze Human Resource Deve lopment Centre	5:30pm
Wednesday August	Babonneau Pentecostal Church	7:30pm

-ENDS-

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