



*VAT Simplifying the collection of Tax.*

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

### **VAT OFFICE TAKES THE SUBJECT TO SECONDARY SCHOOLS ISLANDWIDE**

**Castries, May 23, 2012;** With extensive education central to its mandate, the VAT Implementation Project Office is preparing to launch a youth oriented campaign within the coming weeks, a key highlight of which is **an essay competition specifically targeting school based youth.**

VAT Coordinator Adria Rose Sonson explained that the rationale for the competition is that taxation touches the lives of all citizens. Consequently, all effort must be made to educate across all demographics on why and how taxes are determined, collected and remitted, and factors that call for reformation of such systems.

To this end, students will be given the option of two related topics, research for which will fully demystify these questions. The topics are (1) **How will the implementation of a Value Added Tax (VAT) in Saint Lucia affect me?** or (2) **The Value Added Tax (VAT) is said to be “A Tax for us All.” What does this mean?**

“We are engaging with youth as they will soon be taxpayers and the decision-makers of the country. Their participation, especially through competition requires research, enables them to formulate their own positions and become knowledgeable in these all too important civic matters.”

The VAT Coordinator stated that the implementation of the new tax regime also provides students of business and economics with a real world case study for the critical investigation of taxation and its concomitant issues and considerations.

“As with any new initiative, the proof of the pudding is always in the tasting.” By that I mean that everything will not be perfect come September 1, because systems are only able to be refined through trial and error. This is an opportunity to observe and build knowledge for students of business and economics as much as it is for policymakers and technocrats,” Ms. Sonson remarked.

A Taxation specialist herself, Coordinator Sonson also expressed the hope that students’ participation in the essay competition would also spark an interest in the field as a career choice.

**The competition is open to Form 1, 2 and 3 students.** Essays should be submitted in a sealed envelope on or before July 13, 2012 and addressed to **The VAT Implementation Project Office Essay Competition, Bridge Street, Castries.**

Communication Office Lisa Goodman says prizes will be well suited to students and will take the form of laptop computers, kindles and other technologically oriented communication tools and resources.

“More information will be made available through direct marketing approaches within the school system, on the VAT website and our VAT Facebook page. It is our intention to publish the winning entries online, and in the local newspapers.”

The VAT Implementation Project Office is responsible for preparing Saint Lucia for the implementation of a Value Added Tax system. The education and sensitization of the general public is a key component of the project.

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