



**CARIBBEAN  
REGIONAL NEGOTIATING MACHINERY**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**May 18, 2006**

**ST. LUCIA PRIVATE SECTOR “NOT AFRAID OF COMPETITION”.**

The St. Lucia private sector is not afraid of global competition, but need negotiators to focus on the relevant business concerns in the export market before they can support a more open local market. This was the view of the participants at the CRNM sponsored Trade Power dialogue held April 18, 2006.

Mr. Brian Louisy, Head of the St. Lucia Chamber of Commerce, in his opening remarks stated that “trade was the single most important issue facing the St. Lucia private sector and we have to pull ourselves up by the bootstraps to take on the competition”. Mr Louisy commented that “smallness was not an excuse for competing, but an aid in competition by providing more flexibility. We must understand the nature of competition which impact us and make recommendations to aid in securing market share both locally and in export markets.”

Ronald ‘Boo’Hinkson, in his presentation bemoaned the bureaucracy in the domestic market to simply move around the region with his tools of trade. Mr. Hinkson stated “we cannot begin to negotiate with the USA and Europe if our own domestic customs procedures are onerous and continue to frustrate musicians who bring precious promotional exposure to St. Lucia.” Mr Hinkson also stated that “ there are problems as a musician to do business with the USA as I cannot get my royalties without a social security number. Furthermore, can negotiators help me to get a visa more efficiently, and reduce the discretionary power that the visa officials in the embassy possess?. That’s what I want to see addressed in these negotiations, for not only me, but the smaller musicians who have it rougher to sell their music globally.”

Ms. Kathy Felix of st Lucia distillers ltd indicated that although their company is a leading layer regionally, they have made a strategic retreat from external markets because of significant losses to penetrate North America and Canada. Ms. Felix commented that “we cannot navigate the Monopoly created by the Liquor Board who goes as far as setting prices with little sensitivity to your production cost as a small brewery.” Ms Felix further commented that the USA and Canadian product testing prodecures were too bureaucratic taking as long as 6 months in Canada’s case, for your product to be approved for import. Issues such as these are critical for St Lucia Distillers Ltd. if we are to take on global competition on our own soil.”

Mr. Chris Husbands of Union Vale Estates in his presentation stated “ we must monitor food standards constantly to ensure that our own standards are current.” Husbands further commented that “ negotiators must push for more resources for our Plant quarantine and plant inspection services to ensure that we meet global food safety standards to access export markets”.

The CRNM in Partnership with the St. Lucia Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture hosted the event which was part sponsored by the IADB through its MIF program for Private sector Outreach.