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**A New Journey in Global Citizenship**

**Remarks by**

**By**

**Hon. Dr. Kenny D. Anthony**

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**at**

**The Global Announcement of The Saint Lucia Citizenship By Investment Programme**

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**GLOBAL CITIZENS – NEW FEATURE OF WORLD CIVILISATION**

It has been a long and deliberative journey. For many of you, this is your industry, your livelihood, and your professional space so it is easy to assume that establishing a citizenship by investment programme is a matter of course. But for a politician, it can be an arduous decision. One which, if well executed, can lead to national prosperity and minimal criticism. On the other hand, if executed badly can reap severe criticism and electoral calamity.

The issue of awarding citizenship for commercial benefit is ideologically laden. Those who approve point to the significant income earned, and an upswing in economic activity. Those who disapprove are quick to argue that it is passports for sale, it reeks of corruption, it allows for suspect characters to become citizens and ultimately, it leads to the desecration of identity.

**BORN INTO A COLONIAL SETTING**

Truth be told, I firmly believe that citizenship should always be a statement of national pride and an expression of national sovereignty. I was born in a colonial setting. I was nurtured in the fight for national identity and self-determination. My consciousness was defined by an assertion of national pride. But in my twilight years, I am a political leader in the age of globalisation – itself, a contradiction of nationalism. It is the globalisation spirit, where boundaries and identity defined by the nation-state are diminishing, which is propelling the new character of a global citizen! And with global citizenship comes the need for multiple citizenships.

**A PERMANENT FEATUE OF WORLD CIVILISATION**

I have never yearned to acquire a second citizenship. But in the 1950s and thereafter, many of our people sought better livelihoods and new challenges in faraway lands due to the abject economic and social conditions left by colonialism. In a curious way, they were pioneers of global citizenship.

Today, our young mobile generation empowered with technological interconnectivity are wired to seek new lands, new opportunities as if it is just part of their DNA. So how can I say to a young Saint Lucian who dreams of working in a major financial institution in some metropole, and wants citizenship of that country to protect his employment and livelihood, that he is wrong to do so? Likewise, how can I say to the family living in a troubled land and wishes a second citizenship for safe and easy travel that they are wrong to do so?

In this era, we have the intensification of the phenomenon of global citizens, persons willing to move from country to country, residing in multiple cities in their lifetime. The demand for a second or even multiple citizenships are now a permanent feature of our world civilisation.

**PARADOX OF POVERTY IN PARADIS**

We also live in world where small is synonymous with being disadvantaged. Leading a small-island state is an acceptance of immense difficulty and challenge to provide civilised standards of living for citizens. Now we have to contend with new problems and challenges.

We are the worse victims of the effects of climate change – the consequence of man’s war with the environment in search of unbridled profits and economic expansion. The frequency of natural disasters are having a telling effect on our capacity to provide sustainable livelihoods for our people. Yet we are deemed to live in a paradise. A classic paradox of poverty in paradise.

A midst the challenges we remain a people resilient and sculptured in struggle and survival.

I have come, in the vein of a practical and pragmatic leader to accept that the world is changing. The institutional insensitivities which so often pervade international discussion on development prove that the requirements and resources needed to achieve economic growth and equitable development will not be forthcoming. We need to think beyond the traditional approaches, outside the prescriptive menus, to deal with our problems. Offering citizenship through investment has now also become a viable alternative. The data and statistics are there to prove its effectiveness as an investment tool.

But the necessity to consider alternative approaches, and in this case citizenship by investment, must always be in a context of understanding who we are as a people and an acceptance that we are not just offering citizenship or a passport but we are offering an identity, a people and our place in the world.

**WHO ARE WE?**

Small as we are, we have shaped the world. We have contributed to world civilization as we know it today. We have done so in a remarkable way by giving to the world two Nobel Laureates, earning us the description of the highest number of Laureates per capita in the world. Derek Walcott –literature, and Sir Arthur Lewis-economics and these individuals have shaped the fortunes and influenced the thinking of many countries. We have also left our mark on many emerging countries with intellectuals and thinkers serving in public and private sectors, shaping thought and practice. Saint Lucia is a nation of accomplishments. Our contribution to world civilisation is way beyond what is expected of our land size, population and GDP. So in some ways, we have always been global citizens. I won’t be surprised to see statistics which states that there are more Saint Lucians living outside Saint Lucia than in Saint Lucia.

It well known that we have a passion for education. Our young people have an unquenchable thirst to secure knowledge. We are a group of people who are fascinated by securing experiences in places of learning, seeking new challenges and adventures in distant lands.

We are not just about artistic talent and intellectual accomplishment. We are a special and extraordinary island. We are the owners of a unique patrimony - the Pitons – World protected, World Heritage site. As Saint Lucians, we have a responsibility to protect it not just for our country but for humankind, because it is so extraordinary, so rare, it cannot be replicated anywhere else. It is the common heritage of all mankind, and all Saint Lucians have a role to safeguard it.

We come from a land of romance. When I use the word “romance”, I am not using it in the traditional sense that you and I know. I am using it in the sense of the extraordinary beauty of our ecological patrimony. You simply cannot expect to come to Saint Lucia without feeling the beauty that it conjures. That romance is translated to other things, our personality, our product, our language, our culture. That is why today, Saint Lucia has been rated as the number one wedding and honeymoon destination in the Caribbean and is among the top in the world.

**UNDERSTANDING OUR PERSONALITY**

But there are other secrets about the Saint Lucian person that cannot be replicated anywhere else: we are a warm, hospitable, generous and engaging people. It is one thing to have a beautiful country, beautiful topography but it is really the people that inhabit that land that makes the vital difference. We do not have to train our people to be hospitable, to be generous, to be engaging, to be kind. It is natural, it belongs to us. It is not servitude, it is not polished smiles and learned lines. It stems from a passion to please, and a love to share. That is why we have been so successful at marketing our country.

Some say it is all explained by our mixed culture, bequeathed by our unique history and turbulent past, seven times French and seven times British. We are a mixed people, with a mixed culture. We are a mixture of Africa, of France, of England. We are also a mixture of the environment that created us.

Our African ancestry has given us a passion for dancing, has given us our creativity in music, in artistic expression. And the French have given us a “joie de vivre,” and then the British have helped to tame the French side of us, have helped mould our personalities, perhaps better manage our emotions, and contain our excesses.

We love to be defined by our ‘Kweyolness’. It is really what defines us. The authenticity of the Saint Lucian, who he/she is really lies in our kweyol culture, our kweyol language, our kweyol lifestyle and that is what makes our personalities so different, so full of life, colour and character.

This is my Saint Lucia. We have always dedicated ourselves to shaping the world because we believe we can make a difference to world civilisation. Similarly, we expect that when we offer citizenship, we want our new citizens to enrich our Saint Lucia, enhance our global standing and ensure that our proud heritage endures.

I trust that you can now appreciate why I am a jealous guardian of Saint Lucian citizenship. Notwithstanding, I have accepted the need to move beyond the constraints of my sentimentality to approve the establishment of a programme and to be here today to announce that Saint Lucia is implementing a Citizenship by Investment Programme.

**A MODEL OF CONSENSUS**

We have taken considerable time to study the industry – its characteristics, its pitfalls, the criticisms, the praises, the errors made – and to ensure that we learnt best from those that went before us.

Once we were satisfied that it was a viable option worth pursuing, we established a National Task Force, with broad based representation, to examine various programmes, determine whether Saint Lucia should pursue a programme, and if so, what should be the characteristics of such a programme. Once completed, the Task Force submitted its report to the Cabinet of Ministers for review.

The Cabinet of Ministers accepted the Report and asked the Task Force to disseminate it for public review and feedback. Upon receipt of public feedback, Cabinet agreed to table the necessary legislation in Parliament.

The legislation was supported by all elected members. We therefore launch this programme without political rancour, with the blessing of both Government and the Opposition. This is a remarkable statement of national consensus, a rarity in the competitive politics of our region.

We believe that our programme must be guided by a clear strategic objective and implemented with defining principles.

Overall, we will always be guided by balancing our investment needs, attracting the best placed persons to become citizens and managing the number of new citizens. Importantly, we want to translate our reputable efficiency and integrity to the management of the programme.

**A DIFFERENTIATED APPROACH**

Accordingly, the programme will be characterised by the following:

The programme must be transparent. This starts with all stakeholders appointed by Government to be publicly announced and Gazetted. Additionally, the Minister with responsibility must table an annual report in Parliament. The Minister must provide an account of what monies are used for and allow Parliament to debate the report.

The programme must be well regulated. This involves an independent Board which will provide oversight of the functioning of the Unit and ensure due compliance with all regulations and laws of Saint Lucia.

The programme must be well managed. This involves engaging the best qualified persons who will receive the highest level of training. The Unit will provide clear guidelines and timeframes which must be adhered to. We expect the Unit to function at a high level of efficiency and output.

The programme must be differentiated and exclusive. This involves requiring applicants to have a net worth of US$3 million to qualify for consideration. Additionally, we have set a limit of 500 applications annually.

The programme must be consistent with our national priorities. This involves offering a menu of options for investment and clearly defined areas of economic activity, in line with our development needs at this time.

We hope that this will ensure we use the programme for strategic developmental reasons whilst attracting persons who are best placed to invest in Saint Lucia.

The programme must be consonant with our value for our citizenship. This means the acceptance of new citizens will not be a transactional relationship. It has to be an interactional relationship. Once someone becomes a citizen enjoying all the rights and benefits of citizenship, we will ensure that the necessary space and opportunity is created to enjoy and to contribute to national development.

I don’t need to provide extensive details on this occasion. The Regulations, governing the programme will be shared with you. They provide further details on each aspect of the Programme. I invite you to review it and to share your views with us. It is going to be a daunting yet exciting journey for us. We are comforted by the support of the many friends which we have made over the last two years and I trust we will continue to receive your support and guidance. We have come here not only to announce our programme but also to learn from you. The presence of several of our lawyers and professionals for this event attest to this.

In conclusion, I take the opportunity to formally announce that the Saint Lucia Citizenship Programme will commence accepting applications for citizenship by investment on January 1st, 2016.

I thank you.