

Statement on the Freedom Bay Development within the Piton Management Area.

The purpose of the Piton Management Area (PMA) was never to prohibit all development, but to manage it in a way that will not negatively impact the outstanding universal value of the World Heritage Site.

The Integrated Development Plan (IDP) for the PMA, also known as the Hyder Report, identifies several Policy Areas that divide the entire PMA into zones, and indicates the areas where various types of developments may be permitted, as well as areas where there should be absolutely no developments. The IDP was accepted by the World Heritage Committee. The Freedom Bay development falls within Policy Area 4. Policy Area 4 has been identified in the IDP as an area where developments, including touristic developments, are permitted.

However, there are other issues that should be explained.

The threat to the World Heritage Status of the PMA received in 2011 and previously in 2009, was in response to developments that potentially compromised the outstanding universal value of the PMA. Permission had been granted for several development projects by the last UWP Administration, despite a promise to place a moratorium on all development projects within the PMA until a Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) study had been conducted. **This study is intended to determine, among other things, the scale and nature of development activities that can be undertaken within the PMA.**

After the intervention of Minister Hon James Fletcher at the 36th Session of the World Heritage Committee (WHC), held in Russia in June 2012, the WHC agreed not to place the PMA on the list of World Heritage in Danger, pending the conduct of a Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) study. It is anticipated that once this study has been completed, its findings will guide future development within the PMA.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), which is the technical advisory body to the WHC, has the responsibility to assist Saint Lucia with the development of the LAC study. A contract exists between the Government of Saint Lucia and the IUCN to this effect.

The Government of Saint Lucia, through the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Energy, Science and Technology, has been in constant dialogue with the IUCN throughout the period from August to the present on this issue. Initial payments have been made to the IUCN for this work, as well as an allocation in the Budget Estimates for the financial year 2012/13 to finance the LAC study. Unfortunately, the IUCN has not yet been able to facilitate the conduct of the LAC study.

With respect to the Freedom Bay project, the permission granted for the development states clearly that it must be in conformity with the findings of the LAC study and that it must be confined to Policy Area 4. Again, **it is important to reiterate, that the proposed Freedom Bay development is within Policy Area 4, where development is permitted according to the guidelines of the PMA Integrated Development Plan.**

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