



# SAINT LUCIA NATIONAL TRUST

TEL: (758) 452-5005/31495 P.O. BOX 595 CASTRIES, ST. LUCIA WEST INDIES  
FAX NO: (758) 453-2791 Email: natrust@candw.lc Website: www.slunatrust.org

**Patron: Her Excellency Dame Pearlette Louisy  
Governor General of St. Lucia**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**July 5, 2017**

## **SLNT PRESS RELEASE CLARIFICATION**

The Press Release issued by the Saint Lucia National Trust on Friday, June 30<sup>th</sup> appears to have caused confusion as to what the release does or does not mean (or what it says, and what it does not say). There seems to be the feeling among some persons that the Trust has said that it "supports" DSH. This is indeed a very wrong interpretation.

What the Press Release says is that the Trust is not opposed to development as long as such development will contribute to the long-term socio-economic benefit of citizens, and environmental sustainability of the nation. In addition, the Release states that the, "Trust considers the much-debated details of the related framework agreement between the developer and the Government to be outside of its sphere of competence". By way of example, the Trust has not involved itself in the debate on the merits or otherwise of the project financing arrangements through the Citizens by Investment Programme. Nevertheless, the Trust remains concerned about the fate of the Makoté Mangrove, an important RAMSAR site; the Maria Islands and its related ecosystems and endemic species; and the ecological and environmental assets in Pointe du Sable as well as the potential impacts of the proposed development on the livelihoods and recreational pursuits of persons dependent on these assets". This then opens the door for discussions on how development can occur in a manner that respects all of the issues that touch and concern the mandate of the Trust.

To be clear, the Trust is not backing down from the principled positions that it has adopted over the last few months. For example, for reasons that have already been expressed, the Trust remains fundamentally opposed to the construction of a dolphinarium at the National Landmark. A detailed, written position on this issue has been communicated to the Government.

The fundamental point to be made is that the Trust is not a political entity. Once the organisation becomes politically motivated, it loses all its credibility. The Trust has gone to great lengths to remain politically neutral and ***must remain an independent entity*** and not an agent of any political party.

There must be a working relationship between the Trust and the Government of the day. Both parties are mutually supporting stakeholders. They should not, eternally, speak past each other like two ships passing in the night. Regarding our subvention, the Prime Minister has indicated a willingness to consider financial support to the Trust contingent upon the submission of a business plan that provides

a basis for the utilization of the financing requested. We have noted that some have taken umbrage at our decision to submit the requisite documentation. However, it is customary for the Trust to provide the Government of the day with its annual Work Plan which outlines all our projects and programmes. In fact, the Trust requested a meeting with the Prime Minister to present our Work Plan since July 2016 and although this did not materialise, we did submit our 2017/18 budget through the usual channels and believe the Prime Minister's request is an opportunity to re-engage on this matter.

The point has also been made in relation to the DSH project that more engagement is required to iron out some of the issues that fall within the Trust's mandate. For those persons who would wish for the Trust simply to take an activist approach to resolving differences of views, they must realise that this is not the approach the organisation takes when dealing with controversial issues. The approach of the Trust is not, and should never be political. The Chairperson and the Council must ensure that the Trust is not used as a political platform or as a platform for personal activism.

The Trust and the Government must come to an understanding regarding how they can work together. This **does not** mean that the Trust has to compromise on its advocacy in relation to any principled position that it has but there must be a working relationship between the Trust and the Government. However, the current environment does not cultivate such a relationship. This state of affairs has impacted on the work of the Trust, its members, staff and Council and cannot be allowed to continue.