



PERMANENT MISSION OF SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES TO THE UNITED NATIONS

# **PRESS RELEASE**

## **Sir Louis Leads Active Vincentian Delegation at United Nations General Assembly**

UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK: – The opening of the 64<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly provided the backdrop for a week of active and intense diplomacy by Deputy Prime Minister Sir Louis Straker and his Vincentian delegation. Sir Louis held one-on-one meetings with the Emir of Qatar and the Foreign Ministers of eight other countries. Sir Louis also played a leading role in the efforts to reach agreement on the ways to address climate change. Additionally, the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) delegation also was part of meetings with CARICOM, the United States and the United Nations Secretary General. The Vincentian delegation was also hailed for their historic role in signing and ratifying important arms control treaties, and their forceful statement before the United Nations General Assembly.

### **Dynamic Bilateral Diplomacy**

Sir Louis, who is also Minister of Foreign Affairs, Commerce and Trade, forged new links with the State of Qatar. The Emir of the oil- and gas-rich Arab Emirate, His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, held private talks with Minister Straker and his delegation on a number of potential areas of cooperation and partnership. The Qatari Minister of State for International Cooperation; Acting Minister of Business & Trade, H.E. Dr. Khaled bin Mohamed Al-Attiyah, was also present at the meeting and has pledged to follow-up upon the agreements made during Sir Louis' meeting with the Emir.

Additionally, Sir Louis held 30-minute bilateral meetings with Ministers from eight countries. He met with the Hon. Mr. Stephen Smith, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Australia; the Hon. Mr. Peter Kent, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs of Canada; H.E. Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cuba; H.E. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt; H.E. Mr. Reinhard Silberberg, State Secretary and Deputy Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs of Germany; H.E. Mr. Manouchehr Mottaki Foreign Minister of

Iran; H.E. Mr. Jean Asselborn, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg; and H.E. Ms. Antonella Mularoni, Minister of Foreign and Political Affairs of San Marino.

Deputy Prime Minister Straker discussed a number of pertinent issues with his ministerial counterparts, including the International Airport at Argyle, scholarship opportunities for Vincentian students, avenues for development assistance and technical cooperation, the international economic and financial crisis, climate change, and United Nations matters.

### **Climate Change Leadership**

Sir Louis led his delegation to a Climate Change Summit held by the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). The one-day summit, held at the American Museum of Natural History, was an opportunity for the 39 small island developing states of AOSIS to establish a common position on critical aspects of climate change ahead of critical upcoming negotiations in Copenhagen, Denmark, which may establish a new framework for addressing global warming.

At the AOSIS meeting, Sir Louis was widely applauded for his forceful call for solidarity among all island states, and for his timely comments on deforestation and carbon capture. The Vincentian Foreign Minister played an important role in forging the consensus that led to a common AOSIS declaration on climate change, which will inform their future climate negotiations.

Sir Louis also participated in a special Climate Change Summit organised by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon. This Summit, which was attended by Heads of State and Government of over 100 countries, was designed to strengthen the commitment of world leaders to achieving a lasting and meaningful climate change pact next year.

### **A Strong Stand Against Deadly Weapons**

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines became the 100<sup>th</sup> signatory to the Convention on Cluster Munitions when Sir Louis signed the treaty on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2009. That same day, SVG also became the 150<sup>th</sup> state to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. Sir Louis was recognised during a special signing ceremony at the United Nations for SVG's historic role in the fight against the proliferation of weapons.

### **CARICOM Meetings with UN and USA**

United States Secretary of State Hilary Clinton held an hour-long meeting with foreign ministers of CARICOM on Friday, 25<sup>th</sup> September. SVG was represented at the meeting by Sir Louis and H.E. La Celia Prince, SVG's Ambassador to the United States and Permanent Representative to the Organisation of American States. The meeting covered a number of topics of importance to CARICOM-US relations, including regional security, trade, and immigration matters.

Earlier that day, Sir Louis led the SVG delegation in a meeting of the CARICOM Council for Foreign and Community Relations (COFCOR). The meeting, which was attended by foreign

ministers from throughout the CARICOM region, dealt with a number of matters on the UN agenda, including the global economic crisis, the coup d'état in Honduras, and climate change.

On 26<sup>th</sup> September, Ambassador Camillo Gonsalves participated in a "Mini Summit" between CARICOM and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon. The Summit featured a frank exchange of views on the role of the United Nations in CARICOM's development. The leaders of Guyana St. Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago participated in the Summit, as well as the foreign ministers of other CARICOM Member States.

Additionally, Sir Louis attended and participated in a meeting of Commonwealth Foreign Ministers, who discussed the upcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting to be held in Trinidad and Tobago from November 27-29.

Sir Louis and Lady Straker were also the guests of U.S. President Barack Obama at a social event, which coincided with President Obama's first address to the UN General Assembly.

### **A Forceful Address to the UN**

Ambassador Camillo Gonsalves delivered a forceful address to the United Nations on 29<sup>th</sup> September, in which he assailed the inequalities that maintained a status quo of exclusion and marginalization for poor countries. Ambassador Gonsalves detailed the challenges facing SVG and called for a united approach to solving global problems. "The challenge of the discontented is to rise above the ancient animosities and artificial balkanization to achieve the clarity of vision, unity of purpose, and political will to finally and successfully storm the castles of stagnation and status quo, and to drive our peoples, our politics and our planet into a new era of genuine inclusiveness, equity and meaningful people-centered progress," said Ambassador Gonsalves.

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The delegation of SVG for the General Debate of the 64<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly included Hon. Minister Sir Louis Straker, H.E. Ambassador Camillo Gonsalves, H.E. Ambassador La Celia Prince, H.E. Consul General Cosmus Cozier, Deputy Consul General Cyril Thomas, Counselor Ms. Nedra Miguel, Attaché Mozart Carr, and Mr. Nathaniel Alexander