

Owia Salt Pond Project Opens

November 03, 2009

Owia, ST. VINCENT: Officially the site was handed over to the St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) Ministry of Tourism today in front of the Deputy Governor General Monica Dacon, Cabinet Ministers – Hon. Girlyn Miguel and Hon. Selmon Walters, Permanent Secretary Laverne Grant, Hon. Consul for SVG in Northern Ireland Christopher Stange, invited dignitaries, community representatives and children from the Owia Government School, whom sang the National Anthem.

Restorative work on the Owia Salt Pond was completed at a cost of EC \$1.7million funded by the European Commission's Tourism Development Fund (TDF). The Owia Salt Pond is one of 14 tourist attraction sites currently being upgraded. The work of the facility started in 2008 with the installation of additional washrooms, gazebos, visitor centre, large steps down to the salt Pond and a children's playground.

Minister of Tourism, Hon. Glen Beache explained the sites are not only being developed for visiting tourists, but for Vincentians. Tourism is about the development and integration of communities. The upgraded site at Salt Pond will help increase economic activity in Owia. The man on the street must be able to make money out of tourism. Tourism is now the main earner for the St. Vincent and the Grenadines economy.



**Owia Salt Pond
St. Vincent and the Grenadines**

In 2008, SVG recorded \$298 million in earnings related to tourism. Minister Beache highlighted we can do better and called for a united effort between government and private partners to boost the tourism sector. The Minister also outlined plans for the establishment of a Hospitality and Marine Institute in St Vincent and the Grenadines, expected to begin mid 2010, and on completion, will be the only one of its kind, in the Caribbean.

Parliamentary Area Representative for North Windward and Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Hon. Montgomery Daniel also addressed the audience. Daniel said that since he was elected to represent the area, he has tried his best. He mentioned the \$33 million fishing complex in Owia, repairs to the school, clinic and arrowroot factory in the village. Minister Daniel said that the village of Owia is blessed with natural beauty, and it is only fair to enhance the resources in the village. He said that the enhanced facility at Salt Pond will be managed by a community committee.

Bo Hjalmeffjord, Project Officer for Delegation of the European Commission and Andrew Wilson, Director of the National Parks, Rivers and Beaches Authority also spoke to the crowd. Both explained their satisfaction of the outcome and efforts of the SVG Government for the people.

Other completed tourism projects to be unveiled this month are: Dark View Falls, Layou Petroglyph Park, Vermont Nature Trail, Black Point, Cumberland Beach and Nature Trail, as well as, Rawacou Recreational Park.

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