

Caribbean Week One Love Festival Officially Launched in Northern Ireland

09 August 2014

Belfast, NORTHERN IRELAND: Belfast basked in Caribbean sunshine today with the official launch at Belfast City Hall of the 'One Love Festival' during Caribbean Week 2014, which runs August 9th-16th.



Centre: Deputy Lord Mayor of Belfast – Cllr. Maire Hendron; Dr Christopher Stange – Hon. Consul for St. Vincent and the Grenadines to Northern Ireland & Chair of ACSONI; Clover Watts – Chair of ACAN and Carnival dancers

The main countries involved were St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad & Tobago, St. Lucia and Guyana; promoting their history, culture, food and life in and amongst Northern Ireland communities.



Deputy Lord Mayor playing steel pan with elected representatives (MLAs) and community leaders



Festival organizers, sponsors, staff and volunteers

The festival is organised by the African Caribbean Support Organisation Northern Ireland (ACSONI) in partnership with the Association of Caribbean Nationals (ACAN) with support from the Consulate for St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) to Northern Ireland and Jamaica National. Main funders include: Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, Northern Ireland Arts Council, Belfast City Council and the Belfast Festivals Forum and Community Relations Council.

Today's launch at Belfast City Hall featured a procession of carnival performers dancing to the tropical rhythms of steel pan and samba drummers; a Caribbean food-fest, SVG Tourism, Jamaica National and an exhibition highlighting the Caribbean Diaspora's positive contributions to civic life and diversity in Northern Ireland.



**R-L: Vincentian Yolande Robertson-Greene –
Mistress of Ceremony & Deputy Lord Mayor**

SVG Tourism Exhibition

Deputy Lord Mayor of Belfast – Cllr. Maire Hendron and Dr Christopher Stange – Hon. Consul for St. Vincent and the Grenadines to Northern Ireland & Chair of the African Caribbean Support Organisation Northern Ireland (ACSONI) provided official remarks with Vincentian Mrs Yolande Robertson-Greene Mistress of Ceremony and artists: Geddes Yates of Tropical Heatwave and MaGwere entertaining the packed Great Hall.

Cllr. Maire Hendron said, "I am delighted to join with ACSONI and the Caribbean Community in launching and celebrating 'One Love Festival' and Caribbean Week 2014. Festivals play an important part in the lives of the people in the City, boosting tourism and business. We should all feel a personal responsibility to help build Belfast - a welcoming, diverse and inclusive City."

Dr Stange commented: "I would like to acknowledge the invaluable contribution made by the Caribbean Diaspora in Northern Ireland in creating a prosperous shared society. On behalf of the SVG Government, I am delighted to extend my profound sentiments to all our Caribbean neighbours and unique civilisation. Caribbean Week is about recognising this region of the world and its great people."

One of the Festival highlights will be a theatrical production inspired by the music of reggae legend Bob Marley. "One Love – The Musical" echoes the theme of the entire Festival, sending a clear message to people enslaved by hate and indifference to put this aside and celebrate life and the things we all have in common. The production takes place at the MAC on Thursday 14th August.

The week's programme also includes:

A Caribbean concert featuring an eclectic mix of live reggae, soca, calypso, R&B, blues and soul from artists such as Kaz Hawkins, Manukahunney and a cadre of musicians with roots from Belfast to Barbados (Black Box, Friday 15 August)

Cultural and Story Telling workshops in the Titanic Quarter

Intercultural Live Lounge Talk Shows

The big sound system and dancehall culture at a reggae dancehall night featuring Explosion Sound System

Caribbean cultural food nights at the Windrush Island Café, University Road, Belfast

Summer Family Health, Fitness & Sports Day (Queens PEC, Sat 16th August)

ENDS