

**Brief remarks by Ambassador Mikael BARFOD, Head of EU Delegation to Barbados and Eastern Caribbean on the occasion of the walk through of the New National Hospital for St. Lucia, 14 July 2014**

- A very brief version of the established protocol: Hon. PM, Hon. Minister of Health, human services and gender relations, H.E. the French Ambassador and other diplomats, government officials, representatives of companies associated with hospital and the media,
- I am very delighted to be here today to witness the near completion of the hospital. Conceptualisation of the hospital project dates back more than 10 years. At that time, the Government of St. Lucia decided on a rationalisation of the country's health sector so as to ensure optimum delivery of health care.
- The Government of St. Lucia recognised that the more than 100 year old Victoria Hospital had become obsolete in delivering 21<sup>st</sup> century health care.
- This was the biggest project ever executed by the EU in the region – and of a particularly complex nature. So, as one may expect, some significant setbacks and challenges were faced. I have to commend both the Government of St. Lucia and my present and previous colleagues in the Delegation for their perseverance and dedication that has gotten us here today. So, I'm very happy to announce today that, "the rest is history".
- This new hospital is a very tangible testimony to the fact that the European Union delivers!
- This hospital, as I noted above, is the largest infrastructure project ever executed in the Eastern Caribbean by the EU. It has been constructed at a cost of EC\$130 million (€38 million). I will leave it up to the mathematicians among you to translate that into a per capita contribution – but I can assure you that it is substantial.
- The EU is proud to have partnered with the Government to build and fully equip, what will be the most modern hospital in the English Speaking Caribbean.

- The hospital has as part of its new features: state of the art equipment, an emergency centre, an intensive care unit, operating theatres, paediatric centre and radiography department. A very large part of the equipment has been sourced from the best suppliers the European Union has to offer – so this will be a centre for cutting edge technology and health services.
  - I have to commend the government for choosing this wonderful location for the hospital. Set here on the hillside overlooking the Caribbean Sea; it appears perfectly suited for rest and recuperation.
  - In an age of scarce resources and stifling energy costs for the region, I am also encouraged to note the many sustainable design features. As an example, wards in the wings are without active air conditioning. Instead, they rely on channelling the Trade Winds through the configuration of windows and blinds making this hospital very energy efficient.
  - In addition, the hospital is designed to resist regional hurricanes and earthquakes, and is thus set to serve Saint Lucia for a long time.
  - Apart from this magnificent building, the EU is also supporting St Lucia's health sector reform programme with an amount of almost 7 million euro. The programme started early 2013, and will go on for a period of four years.
  - The Prime Minister has promised a name for the hospital which reflects the EU-St. Lucia partnership; I am happy to hear that a name has been found and will be announced shortly.
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