



Press Release

Permanent Mission of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations

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SVG's UN Mission Participates in Independence Celebrations

BROOKLYN, NY, 28 OCTOBER – The St. Vincent and the Grenadines Permanent Mission to the United Nations has been an active participant in the Diaspora's celebrations of SVG Independence 2007. The Mission has made its presence felt at a number of functions hosted by the Council of St. Vincent and the Grenadines Organization (COSAGO), culminating with Ambassador Gonsalves' feature address at COSAGO's annual Gala Independence Luncheon.

The Gala Luncheon, held at the Crystal Manor in Brooklyn, was a sold-out event, attended by hundreds of Vincentians in the Diaspora. Also in attendance was United States Congresswoman Yvette Clarke, who added her words of congratulations on SVG's independence. As always, Consul General Cosmos Cozier and his deputy, Cyril "Scorcher" Thomas, featured prominently in the celebrations.

Ambassador Gonsalves' feature address was delivered under the theme "Celebrating 28 Years As A Nation: Building A Modern Civilisation." Ambassador Gonsalves stated that Vincentian independent spirit and determination was far more than 28 years old, citing the sacrifice of National Hero Joseph Chatoyer as an example. He asserted that while the date of Independence was important, it was also simply a milestone in a greater journey of independence.

This greater journey of independence was characterized by Ambassador Gonsalves as a "post-colonial revolution," and he traced the history of the colonial economy and SVG's current attempts to transform itself into a modern state. He listed some of the many social, political and infrastructural advances that he claimed were part of a "multifaceted and complex process of interrelated reforms" geared towards modernising the country.

Ambassador Gonsalves cited the following as signs of progress: Constitutional reform; bold foreign policy; the Education Revolution; advances in tourism and agriculture; the construction of new police stations and a new prison; the Modern Diagnostic Centre at Georgetown; the Rabbacca Bridge; new low-income homes; the Windward Highway; the Cross-Country Road; and the International Airport at Argyle.

Stressing the metaphor of a "journey" of independence, Ambassador Gonsalves listed many famous Biblical travels, and stated that faith is often tested on journeys. However,

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Ambassador Gonsalves asserted that “It is an unpatriotic and backward act for any Vincentian to lose faith in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Challenge policies, yes. Question political parties, of course. But never doubt the spirit and power of the Vincentian people.”

Vincentians in the Diaspora were applauded for their continued and important remittances, but were also urged to remit their knowledge, experience, perspective and time to SVG. Ambassador Gonsalves reminded the audience that their stature and status had improved since they first moved overseas, and he said that their contributions to their homeland should improve as well.

On the previous Sunday, 21st October, hundreds of Vincentians gathered at St. Marks United Methodist Church in Brooklyn for an Independence Thanksgiving Service. Consul General Cosmos Cozier read excerpts of Prime Minister Dr. Hon. Ralph Gonsalves’ Independence Address to the Diaspora, and also addressed the congregation himself. Ambassador Gonsalves was also called upon to speak briefly to the congregation. The sermon at the multid denominational service was delivered by Rev. Dillon Burgin. A number of members of the CARICOM diplomatic and consular corps were present at the service. Deputy Consul General Cyril Thomas and Deputy Permanent Representative Lennox Daniel were also in attendance.

On Saturday, 20th October, COSAGO hosted a sold-out Cultural Showcase in Brooklyn, which featured performances by Scorcher, Bomani, De Man Age, Lively and Philly Dilly. A number of talented Vincentians also sang, played steel pan, performed drama and poetry, and danced at the cultural showcase. Ambassador Gonsalves, Consul General Cozier, Deputy Permanent representative Lennox Daniel also attended the showcase.

This Saturday, 3rd November, Ambassador Gonsalves will travel to Philadelphia to join Vincentians in that community for their Independence celebrations.

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The full text of Ambassador Gonsalves’ address to the COSAGO Gala Luncheon is included with this Press Release. Please email mission@svg-un.org if you do not receive the speech.