
**F I N A L
R E P O R T**

**ST VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES
COUNTRY POVERTY ASSESSMENT**

2007/2008

LIVING CONDITIONS IN A CARIBBEAN SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATE

*Volume 3
REPORT ON THE
INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT*

FINAL REPORT

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*Volume 3
REPORT ON THE
INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT*

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The role of institutions in economic and social development has now been well documented following the revisit of modern thinkers of the contributions of classical scholars like Marx and Max Weber. North (2005) and Lewis (1950 and 1955) have demonstrated the role of institutional factors in the transformation of economies¹. The World Bank in its World Development Report 2002, focuses on the role of institutions in enhancing the opportunities for poor people to engage in markets and to become empowered such that they can actively engage in reducing their own poverty.² The capacity to reduce, and as well, the susceptibility to poverty are conditioned by institutional factors.

For the purpose of the present exercise, institutions are both organisational forms and regularised patterns of behaviour, and are shaped by the culture and mores of a society, and in turn, modulate arrangements for living in the society. As formal structures, they may take the form of governance and administrative structures in the society, or as entities established by citizens themselves to manage relations among themselves. The first will include governmental organisations, organised and

run by the state. The second include Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), which in turn include Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) and Grass-Roots Organisations (GROs).

There are also institutional structures that relate more to patterns of behaviour. The modes of treatment and care for vulnerable children, the elderly and pregnant teenagers all reflect culture and values and are institutional arrangements in themselves. The present exercise will focus more on the former than on the latter. However, in the Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA), people in their own communities have established which institutional arrangements of the latter type have relevance in their treatment of poverty and poverty reduction. Inevitably, while St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) shares with its neighbours, a common history of slavery and indentureship, there are distinct features of its history and of its institutions that have rendered it different from the surrounding economies and societies.

This volume will examine the contribution made by public and private sector organisations and NGO's in the provision of services to residents of SVG. We have disaggregated these services into four categories according to the nature of intervention – developmental, preventive, remedial, and supportive.

Institutions that are categorised as “developmental” contribute to capacity

¹ North, Douglass, *Understanding the Process of Economic Change*, Princeton University Press, 2005

Lewis, W.A., 'The Industrialisation of the British West Indies,' *Caribbean Economic Review*, 1950.

Lewis, W.A., *Theory of Economic Growth*, Irwin, 1955

² World Bank, *World Development Report, 2002: Building Institutions for Markets*, 2002.

building, and equip individuals and/or groups with the wherewithal to grow and expand. They do this by assisting in capacity building and empowerment and are critical to long term well-being. Training institutions are examples of institutions engaged in developmental work.

Institutions that perform functions that are “preventive” in nature assist in protecting individuals or groups from risks or vulnerabilities. Youth programmes may focus on preventive work by encouraging young people to become involved in constructive activity, as a counter to lure of alternative enticing examples of high returns from drug peddling in some communities. Youth programmes may be oriented to behaviour-modification strategies to change negative social and economic outcomes – for example, behaviours and attitudes associated with teenage pregnancy, especially among poor youth.

Remedial organisations restore individuals or groups to a state of wholesomeness following their having been subjected, or having succumbed, to particular social challenges. Teenage girls who become pregnant may be assisted in returning to school and in avoiding a repeat pregnancy until they are better able to plan their child-bearing. Supportive agencies provide assistance to those in need, who do not have the capacity to respond to social and economic challenges on their own. Public assistance for the aged recognises that they have passed the stage of being able to support themselves.

1.1 Research Process

The National Assessment Team (NAT) selected the organisations and institutions for the conduct of the research for the Institutional Analysis (IA), in collaboration with the Team of Consultants (TOC). A team comprised of a member of the TOC and (usually) a member of the NAT, visited with the head or with someone designated to speak on behalf of the organisation or institution, and conducted a semi-structured interview.

The objective of the interview was to establish:

- a. The primary remit of the organisation, that is its objective, vision and mission;
- b. The perspectives of the management or leadership of the organisation in respect of the task at hand and the external environment that it faced and which is the focus of its attention;
- c. The modalities of its current operations, and the source of the resources at its disposal;
- d. The extent to which it is contributing to the improvement of living conditions in SVG and in particular to the lives of the poorer members of the society; and
- e. The ways in which it might be possible for the organisation to improve its contribution to society if more resources were available.

In sum, 57 organisations were interviewed.

1.2 Scoring of Institutions and Organisations

A rating scale from one to five was utilised, with five representing the highest level of effectiveness in reducing poverty or in positively contributing to the quality of life of residents of SVG. While the use of any rating scale cannot escape elements of subjectivity, the information presented in the summaries in this document does help substantially in establishing how well the institutional networks have performed. Additionally, being at some remove, the TOC can argue for its being a dispassionate observer in presenting an independent review.

In the final analysis, the IA must be contextualised against the information generated in other aspects of the study - the Survey of Living Conditions/Household Budgetary Survey (SLC/HBS) and PPA - in order to paint a complete picture of quality of life and the roles played by institutions in SVG, in that regard.

1.3 Methodological Challenges and Gaps

An important delimitation of the exercise is that the focus was not on the internal organisation of the agency or about its organisational health and structure. An interview of one hour or less could not pretend to establish whether an organisation had the 'right' internal structure and processes to meet the objectives for which it was established. Any commentary in this regard is based on the limited information that can be gleaned from interviews and from secondary information that interviewees were prepared to share.

1.4 Structure of the Report

The report presents the collated information according to the economic and social sectors identified as the activity of primary interest. The sections are organised according to the following themes:

- i. Institutions and the Economic Sectors
- ii. Facilitation and Regulatory Agencies
- iii. Institutions in Social Development and the Social Services
- iv. Institutions in the Delivery of Social Services
- v. Infrastructure and Public Utilities
- vi. National Security and Human Rights
- vii. Institutions in the Grenadines

2.0 INSTITUTIONS AND THE ECONOMIC SECTORS

The economy of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) displayed signs of growth towards the middle of the present decade after experiencing trade shocks in the decade of the 1990s, which had arrested the process of transformation that began following political independence. The strategy of development pursued on the achievement of political independence was founded on the diversification of the economy, through the upgrade and reorientation of export agriculture, establishment of an export-oriented light manufacturing sector, the development of tourism and, subsequently, the development of an off-shore Financial Services Sector. In that regard, the country pursued programmes broadly similar to its Caribbean neighbours.

The protection afforded to the members of the African-Pacific-Caribbean countries, ex-colonies of Europe, allowed bananas entry into Britain and its European Partners under preferential conditions. The United States, through the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) and Canada through CARIBCAN also permitted trade related benefits to a number of Caribbean countries, including SVG.

The 1990s were a momentous period, with the dismantling of a range of protective elements in trade agreements. The benefits enjoyed by SVG along with other countries of the region started being eroded from the formation of the European Union, and then received the coup de grace on the coming

into being of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Banana production and export earnings from the sector fell by more than half within less than a decade.

In the immediate post-independence phase, the country developed a number of institutional structures to grow the economy and manage the transformation of the country. However, SVG was not well prepared for the decline in competitiveness of the banana industry which led to plummeting of growth in the economy. The light manufacturing sector had remained weak and growth in tourism and financial services was too limited to compensate for the fall-out in bananas, let alone reverse the sluggish economic performance.

The difficulties in adjusting the vital export sector points to the weakness or limitations of the institutional structures in the economy of the country. This section examines some of the economic institutions of the country, as well as those involved in the process of facilitation or regulation of its operations.

2.1 Agriculture/ Forestry/ Fisheries

Agriculture, dominated by bananas, has remained one of the most important sectors of the economy of SVG. During 2007, the agriculture sector contributed 9.3 percent of GDP. The Government, in its Medium Term Economic Strategy, has outlined strategic plans for agricultural sector, which aim to create an enabling environment to drive

entrepreneurship among farmers, fisherfolk and other stakeholder groups, as the basis of significantly increasing agri-food production, processing, and marketing. Beyond bananas, a range of vegetables, fruits and root crops (dasheen, eddoes, and sweet potatoes) is emerging as important export commodities.

Developments in this sector need to be contextualised against the backdrop of the following policy documents:

- Strategic Plan for Agricultural Diversification and Development, 1997-2006,
- The Agricultural Policy Framework and Strategic Plan of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS);
- CARICOM's Interventions to Alleviate the Key Binding Constraints to the Agricultural Sector (Jagdeo Initiative); and
- The Caribbean Fisheries Regional Mechanism (CRFM).

In effect, domestic policy and strategy in agriculture in SVG were expected to be mindful of thinking on regional approaches to food security, and to shifting from reliance on primary agriculture to agri-business with capacity to increase value-added.

This Section documents some the operations of the following agencies in SVG, which are deemed to be the key players in this sector of the economy, based on

interviews with the representatives of management of these organisations:

- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries;
- SVG Banana Growers Association (SVBGA);
- Fisheries Department; and
- Windward Island Farmers Association.

Some of the major challenges faced by the SVG agriculture in recent times included severe leaf spot infestations which affected just under 30 percent of banana plantations and moko disease which affected over two hundred acres. There have also been the steep increases in the price of inputs, as a result of the escalation in the prices of energy, which had a ripple effect on products deriving from the petro-chemical sector. The sector has also been plagued by low labour productivity, and declining market access in Europe, which has been the main market for the main export crop, bananas.

The most critical development over the last fifteen years, and surely since the last poverty assessment in the mid 1990s, has been the drastic reduction in preferential access for bananas from the Windward Islands, including from SVG, into market of the European Union (EU). Large swathes of land have gone out of banana production as producers could not compete with their Central American and other producers on more open markets. Indeed, ever since the country took its exit from sugar production, the late 1990s was the first time that its

agricultural sector faced a trade adjustment problem of this proportion. The capacity of its institutional structure in dealing with the trade adjustment has been a major factor in protecting its farming community from poverty. Indeed, in the absence of institutions for trade adjustment, it is likely that the farming community would have been severely tested in dealing with the requirements of reduced protection in the market place.

2.1.1 Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

The Ministry has as its mission the creation of an “enabling environment for the entrepreneurial drive for farmers, fisherfolk and other related groups to survive to increase agro-food production, processing and marketing, thus increasing employment, rural income, food security and foreign exchange earnings, while ensuring the efficient utilisation and sustainability of the Nation’s natural resources”.

There are four arms through which the Ministry works: Administration, Department of Agriculture, Department of Forestry and the Fisheries Division. The Ministry provides services to farmers, butchers, fishers, fish vendors, exporters, woodcutters, agro-processors, importers of live animals and agricultural produce, and researchers.

Services offered by the Ministry range from agricultural extension and advice, licensing, quarantine, training, wildlife and forestry management, watershed management,

plant protection and propagation, and agro processing.

The Ministry collaborates with a number of institutions in SVG and in the region in carrying out its mandate. These include *inter alia*: Inter American Institute for Corporation on Agriculture (IICA), Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), East Caribbean Trading and Agriculture Development (ECTAD), Windward Islands Farmers Association (WINFA), St. Vincent Banana Growers Association (SVGBA), Windward Islands Banana Development and Exporting Company Ltd. (WIBDECO), St Vincent Electricity Services (VINLEC), and the Central Water and Sewerage Authority (CWSA).

There is also a need to collaborate with the Ministry of Trade from time to time, for example on CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) initiatives or WTO conventions etc. There is a new Ministry of Rural Transformation which has a committee on which the MOAFF has representation. There may yet exist areas of overlap or duplication of effort, according to the management of the Ministry, but there are problems in resolving matters of turf.

The Ministry has been of the view that the development of the economy should be hinged on bananas, notwithstanding the challenges internationally. Additionally, it was felt that the infrastructure that was already in place for bananas could be used for non-banana production. Among the

priorities in terms of the new commodities and with the aim of diversification within the agricultural sector, was the production of root crops. It was felt that SVG had a comparative advantage in the production of dasheen.

On the basis of a review of the market, the Ministry recognised that such countries as Costa Rica and Ivory Coast have been producing dasheen for the international market at lower cost than could SVG. Thus, there is a need to revisit the production system to establish how value-added can be enhanced in the face of stiff competition. One approach is in investing in a state funded vacuum packing facility, but there have been some delays in getting this on stream since 2004. This would have given farmers a two-pronged approach to reaching the market. Some markets had been secured abroad, including to the United States, let alone within the region. However, the USA market was lost while initiatives were being taken to upgrade operations, and with that, prices fell, triggering a loss of confidence by farmers. There was a concern that more formal and organised systems for intra-regional trade and even the domestic market, may be needed, especially since supermarkets were “finding it easier to call Miami to get frozen vegetables.” A major objective of the Ministry is to reduce imports by giving farmers a more secure market for their produce in the domestic economy. This is work in progress. It was felt that this could also work to keep the prices of vegetables within some reasonable range given the recent escalation in the price of food. One

possible solution was a Farmers Market which would allow direct sale by farmers to the retail market. It was also proposed that young people should be encouraged from early to get involved in production by way of their getting an orientation to farming and its value to SVG. In addition, housewives should be encouraged to get involved in backyard gardening.

The Ministry has also looked at the cost of production for vegetables and is now proposing that Government either cut duties or find ways to cut direct costs to farmers by the introduction of a central bulk-purchasing facility similar to what has been done in respect of the import of pharmaceuticals.

Production with greenhouse technology had been introduced but with only marginal success with many problems to be resolved. Green Houses, covering 18 acres of lands were being used to produce vegetables. A major challenge has been in educating and training farmers. This has been a major barrier in realising the full benefits of the technology.

Other issues of immediate concern to the Ministry included:

- The need for a National Food Security Programme;
- The establishment of a processing facility for carambola;
- The need to work with the National Properties Limited: local marketing capacity, and their ability to research

markets and to help get into new markets are limited;

- The need for research on the mechanical production and harvesting of arrowroot: technical assistance from Cuba was possible based on a successful first phase; and
- Praedial Larceny.

Livestock production is an area with potential for income generation, and a programme to increase the value added in livestock production has been put in place. Currently, the subsector is an important driver in the Agricultural Sector (estimated at EC\$33.8m) with poultry accounting for 79 percent and pork products 15 percent.

Fisheries are estimated to contribute 1.49 percent to GDP. The Government has made several policy changes and legislative changes to support fisherfolk. Moreover, the National Insurance Service (NIS) and National Commercial Bank (NCB) have come together to support investment by fisherfolk in boats to increase production to meet domestic demand. There is also some trade in fisheries, mainly with Martinique and Guadeloupe.

In respect of the infrastructure generally for the entire sector, the Government has taken a number of initiatives. It has provided support to those willing to upgrade their banana operations by the introduction of irrigation. But there is need to get farmers onto idle lands. There are some 1,370 acres of prime agricultural land of which 376 acres are idle. However, there remains a

need in agriculture for inflows of private capital, and credit facilities are badly needed to increase the scale of operations across the board, from the perspective of the Ministry.

An important complement of agricultural development is training and education at all levels of the productive system. If agriculture is to develop, then training and technology needed to be improved. Recent initiatives in training included the establishment of the Agriculture Training Institute: eleven persons from the frontline at the Ministry benefitted from training at the ADPIU. There are also some related labour productivity issues.

In the most recent budgetary allocation to the Ministry, there were substantial provisions for treating moko disease, and there was an allocation for communications as part of the budget. The Ministry has also invested in improvement in quality of product output, in recognition of some of the barriers faced in entry into the market place and in retaining market share. The Ministry is supporting efforts of some producers seeking to enter the EU market with cassava products including farine, through WIBDECO, but there are stringent rules and requirements, including food testing for quality, that need to be observed.

The Lauders Vacuum Plant had been long in coming but National Properties had teamed up with WIBDECO to bring it on stream. Some EC\$10M had been invested in this plant. The operations would be private sector driven. The idea was that there

should be one company to export all agricultural products from SVG.

Land use planning has also been a related problem. There is a National Land Use Plan coming on stream, which will help hopefully, but there has been a problem with productive agricultural land being alienated to housing and other uses. Prime agricultural land is being subdivided and used for housing. This also affects livestock production. A land reform programme was initiated with loan finance from the CDB, with a lease-to-buy arrangement. Much of these lands are now idle. People had been waiting to purchase the lands. However, the Government, after investing heavily in irrigation, has been left to repay the loan, without the land being brought into production.

There is a move towards managed commercialisation for the production and export of non-banana products, with the supporting industrial organisation, including FAITRADE, WIBDECO, farmers and the general public. If young people are to be encouraged to enter agriculture, there is need to increase the technology component: the establishment of model farms for particular products might be one approach that needed to be tried in encouraging a shift to a new paradigm in agricultural production.

The ADPIU – the Diversification Programme is focusing on building commercial operations (using resources from the Government of SVG and the EU-Stabex 95, 96, 97) to work with

entrepreneurs who wish to invest in the agricultural sector. This Programme is demand-driven in the sense that persons who have new ideas are invited to come to the Unit for technical assistance towards concrete investment in the sector.

The main issues faced in stimulating agricultural production, are:

- a. Production, quality standards, and market facilitation;
- b. Market and strategic research/information;
- c. Formal agriculture business – compared to the traditional “loose” arrangement;
- d. Credit facilitation;
- e. Value added;
- f. Monitoring agriculture performance; and
- g. Research and Development
- h. Outdated Legislation – e.g. share cropping and other such loose arrangements which are very risky; instead, what is required is a move to an improved system of tenure for protection of farmers.

The pattern of requests received by the Unit has been a reflection of the challenges in agriculture currently in the country. The land tenure issue looms large in any attempt to organise agriculture to contribute to poverty reduction. The experience on the leeward side of the island has illustrated the challenge. Land tenure, or lack thereof, limited the possibilities for

development. The Unit sees itself involved in a “live development programme” in a learning laboratory, in seeking to turn a vicious cycle into a virtuous circle. One example of a success story has been the involvement of 450 farmers in small scale vegetable production.

There has been a major labour constraint within agriculture. Possibly because of the programme limitations in the response to the decline or fallout in the banana market, many farmers and workers were left on their own to find alternative employment. They voted with their feet, creating related succession issues, and the additional challenge of farms being left abandoned. The praedial larceny problem has exacerbated conditions in the sector.

The Programme has been successful in helping with support for livestock production e.g. pigs and poultry. But there is need for a National Agriculture Marketing Agency, since there are no agricultural agencies that have a marketing focus for the sector. Supermarkets also need to change their purchasing practices. They tended not to buy from farmers because they were accustomed to importing, and would argue that they can be assured of consistent supplies, delivery, and quality from external sources.

Notwithstanding the problems facing the Ministry, the ADPIU thinks that with the increasing application of technology and with the restructuring of the sector, agriculture in SVG can be rebuilt. But to do this, there was need for three good years of

work. However, the politicians tended to have a short time horizon, and to seek immediate results in a sector where change has to be well planned, and moreover, well managed.

An increasing number of families are getting into value added production on a small scale - with the jams and jellies and pepper sauce. This demonstrates that people are becoming more entrepreneurial (although this may also be linked to increasing poverty and hence the need to earn income from alternative sources).

The problem with these individual production units is that they are so small that it is difficult to command the best prices for inputs and it is not possible to guarantee production volume. For example in the case of the pepper sauce, there is a boom and bust cycle that is related to the pepper production. Relatedly, there are problems handling on the ground and getting into new markets.

The potential to produce more root crops is there but the vacuum plant is being awaited. The Unit is also looking into ways of creating value added in the following areas: calaloo, coconut water, coconut oil, coconut cream, coconut flakes, and arrowroot oil.

The Government has been working with people who would not be involved traditionally in agriculture and value added in agricultural production/processing capabilities. For example, there is evidence that one of the larger private sector firms is

now ready to engage in being part of the agri-business change. The immediate problem is that the farmers have lost confidence.

The Diversification Unit works with the Standards Bureau which (regulator) works alongside the small and micro producers, and inspects produce and conducts product testing, together with the Public Health Department. Monitoring is done on a quarterly basis and a report produced with statistics.

Staffing Issues: they are lacking and constrained in this area and are in desperate need of technical staff, the response to the moko disease, being a recent case of the problem posed by shortage of personnel. There are five teams each with seven technical persons: these are root crops, fruit tree-crops, vegetables, bananas and condiments and spices. All other staff are daily paid (non-technical staff).

By and large, then the Ministry of Agriculture has been equipping itself to treat with the crisis posed by the rapid transition that became necessary when bananas ceased having preferential treatment in the European market. The inability of the Ministry to respond earlier might have exacerbated conditions. The result has been the loss of confidence of farmers and the alienation of land from agriculture. The resuscitation of the agricultural sector is more difficult at the end of the first decade of the 21st century.

2.1.2 Banana Growers Association

The SVBGA is a farmers' association, which receives support from the government. The current board was selected - not elected - a condition which some farmers do not support. In general, the services which it provides, include establishing standards, developing markets, maintaining stability in production for farmers through some extension and other services. It also buys produce from farmers and exports to European markets. The SVBGA subsidises also the spray for leaf spot to farmers, as a social service/support to farmers, in order to reduce the negative impact on income and to allow farmers to continue to produce.

The association is seen as taking care of thousands of individual farmers trading in an international market that is highly competitive. The farmer is not able to implement programmes of disease control on his own. Thus, if "leaf spot" or other fungal diseases affect one farmer, other farmer's crops or even the whole industry can be affected. Through the collective action pursued by the SVGBA, the livelihoods of all are protected.

The system for sharing and distribution inputs was dismantled with the termination of the CESS credit facility. Given that agriculture is not like any other business, with the risk level significantly higher, farmers have had problems in operating in the new dispensation. They are unable to approach financial institutions, and need to be treated as special because they are different and their banana operations require different treatment.

TABLE 2.1: SVG AGRICULTURE EXPORTS (MAJOR CROPS) 1999-2004

	2004		2003		2002		2001		2000		1999	
	Quantity	Value (EC\$)	Quantity	Value (EC\$)	Quantity	Value (EC\$)	Quantity	Value (EC\$)	Quantity	Value (EC\$)	Quantity	Value (EC\$)
ANTHURIUM LILY	5,647	17,338	2,926	16,100	5,612	26,610	6,378	36,398	9,498	49,718	7,047	38,757
ARROWROOT	58,681	642,475	50,322	330,528	3,513	25,166	78,345	526,664	180,726	1,826,968	143,845	951,094
AVOCADO	185,134	221,879	205,830	248,017	189,544	233,332	200,060	237,670	172,936	204,772	185,425	226,158
BANANA FRESH	28,059,505	35,281,836	26,600,068	32,457,748	37,327,647	42,798,778	33,887,045	37,047,143	43,763,395	49,496,498	40,177,677	54,156,392
BREAD FRUIT	64,380	44,651	42,354	27,620	47,189	32,144	72,747	49,068	41,335	30,423	54,966	52,678
CHERRIES/PLUM (fresh)	28,731	64,647	87,965	196,176	59,547	133,185	17,682	38,444	31,716	69,241	32,429	53,090
COCONUT (not shelled fresh/dried)	271,503	302,471	272,436	811,802	380,545	461,403	891,044	1,058,313	529,140	837,697	588,284	699,165
DASHEEN	2,010,708	3,302,712	2,112,303	3,351,820	2,154,775	3,282,837	1,258,909	2,136,481	2,137,331	3,456,122	1,621,125	2,646,386
DRIED/HOT PEPPER	238,155	150,034	409,866	356,886	207,905	135,107	3,461	2,233	49,416	39,644	80,016	88,901
EDDOES	1,604,005	2,652,686	1,160,245	2,145,609	163,726	2,309,667	1,217,179	2,008,602	1,696,212	2,888,389	1,365,900	2,328,064
GINGER	251,644	639,942	426,634	600,217	502,510	703,185	478,362	670,683	459,126	495,865	419,224	586,470
GOLDEN APPLE	104,637	115,220	251,426	286,626	178,302	208,909	127,965	138,122	130,566	144,619	283,648	315,570
GRAPEFRUIT	169,652	183,424	61,065	49,685	59,492	54,396	54,003	46,054	16,560	15,241	15,621	15,057
MANGO	306,244	494,320	484,285	740,294	347,289	616,798	283,005	486,499	353,874	208,015	243,682	414,234
NUTMEG	56,941	93,099	54,654	93,461	122,007	143,289	55,042	150,808	173,362	498,574	62,328	324,589
ORANGE	81,615	54,618	23,056	16,964	37,834	25,197	40,106	26,444	59,577	38,106	12,525	8,153
PASSION FRUIT	7,157	16,152	5,721	12,842	15,264	13,839	6,651	14,870	24,352	55,381	6,682	13,056
PAWPAW	7,823	7,061	5,722	4,488	12,449	13,416	10,876	10,245	19,941	17,914	8,160	9,160
PLANTAIN	2,258,860	2,484,456	1,607,083	1,809,569	4,141,051	2,349,187	1,710,750	1,907,766	1,951,724	1,954,759	668,952	742,142
PUMPKIN	98,632	114,768	82,431	95,290	128,768	148,036	90,761	104,042	125,906	142,018	73,749	85,108
SOURSOP	6,167	4,057	9,574	7,423	6,035	3,910	12,228	7,341	9,815	5,825	7,166	11,355
SWEET POTATO	882,075	1,088,067	430,647	538,278	724,869	1,101,509	622,840	795,543	1,563,211	1,614,069	1,527,097	1,914,666
TANNIA	182,908	432,627	252,523	382,408	244,039	563,892	169,776	407,231	215,456	504,156	160,251	379,907
YAM	270,027	504,496	283,896	521,259	323,809	658,108	372,189	687,130	428,049	786,601	363,564	669,291
TOTAL	37,210,831	48,913,036	34,923,032	45,101,110	45,219,995	56,041,900	41,667,404	48,673,794	54,143,224	65,380,613	48,109,363	66,729,443

The problem is more than bananas - it is development and stability in rural areas. Bananas used to cater for the rural communities but now there is need to shift the focus from bananas to other types of agriculture. In the past, money from bananas maintained entire villages: in other words the whole village benefited from banana exports. The current exports of dasheen and other root crops are using the banana infrastructure - they are literally sharing their facilities, including the infrastructure in place for the international marketing of bananas.

The operations under the association are currently doing about 200 tonnes per week,

about half what they should be doing. The number of farmers has fallen from over 7,000 in 1993 to 1,300 in 2007. The fall is due in part to natural disasters, from which some farmers never did recover.

Bananas have also been receiving the same price in the international market for the last five years. The slightly (seemingly) higher price is because of fair-trade exports which fetch a higher price than the ordinary produce. But alongside this has been increased cost of production because the inputs, such as insecticide, have risen in price. The Government has also been providing a subsidy to maintain the price level.

TABLE 2.2: BANANA STATISTICS SVG 1992-2007

Year	Exports (Mt)	Value (EC\$M)	No. Active Farmers	Price to SVGBA (cents/lb)	Price to farmers (cents/lb)
1992	76,095	99.28	7,855	59.19	45.48
1993	58,383	63.6	7,543	49.37	33.45
1994	30,933	40.84	6,139	59.90	31.58
1995	50,013	59.09	5,991	53.61	35.39
1996	44,802	53.12	5,665	53.80	33.90
1997	31,273	39.74	4,670	57.66	30.46
1998	38,944	55.55	4,152	64.72	36.09
1999	37,438	52	3,696	63.02	41.00
2000	42,074	48.31	3,623	52.09	40.41
2001	31,918	34.86	3,360	51.07	38.26
2002	34,369	41.08	2,673	54.20	39.23
2003	23,932	30.27	2,309	56.26	36.40
2004	24,242	32.48	2,099	57.22	38.67
2005	19,385	26.32	1,737	62.83	42.07
2006	17,944	24.8	1,551		
2007			1,390		
2008					

The dasheen trade is now the basis of supermarket wars; everybody is advertising that they have the cheapest product. The Latin American producers are competing with Vincentian producers, and can sell more cheaply because they have access to large farms and access to credit. Little respect is shown to protection of workers from spraying in some of the Latin American producing countries so that monetary costs are lower than in the Caribbean.

The SVBGA does not have the money to lend to the farmers to invest. Farmers are hard-pressed to find money to spend on fertilizer (e.g. a farmer may need to make a contribution to the CESS account or pay the utility bills, which will affect the purchase of fertilizer and other inputs). But the SVBGA has been able to develop markets regionally. For example, in Trinidad and Tobago they have pushed the premium bananas, but cannot get enough produced each week, to satisfy this market. SVBGA has not been able to take advantage of markets in St. Kitts and Nevis and elsewhere in the northern Caribbean because of the unavailability of transport. There were also problems trading with Barbados earlier on because specific conditions are required for transporting and ripening. There has since been an upgrade in transport: a boat with an extractor and cooling system has been put into service.

As recently as 2007, WIBDECO started to promote dasheen and taking supplies of this produce to the UK along with the bananas. Thus, using the same

infrastructure WIBDECO is building a market in non-banana products. The Windward Island products have a ready market in the UK.

There has been a fall in the acreage used for bananas. Some of the land has been alienated for use as house plots and some has been used for the production of root crops such as dasheen and yams.

Administration costs of the association are less than five percent but there are some costs associated with the limited extension services that they provide - to deal with disease control vis-à-vis moko and leaf spot - and to distribute farmers cheques and to administer the CESS, distribution of packaging material and marketing etc. They also assist in the transportation of produce from the leeward side of the island. All the indicators show decline in the banana sector, as has been evident in Table 2.2. The quantum of exports, and, as well, the number of farmers seem to be falling.

2.1.3 Windward Island Farmers Association

WINFA is a regional organisation best known for its Fairtrade and Market Access Initiatives. In St Lucia the system is more organised than it is in SVG, in the perception of WINFA personnel. The cooperatives in St. Lucia are purported to service hotels on behalf of farmers, but in SVG there is a push to try to organise the arrangement among farmers and tourism players and stagger production so that farmers will not just produce without thinking about a market for their product.

WINFA has been in existence for 25 years, with little or no financial support. Over the years WINFA has done a lot of work to break into consumer markets in the UK and has succeeded in breaking into the Irish market as well. The Fairtrade brand is now well known in the UK and WINFA has moved to sell all bananas under the Fairtrade label. This was a struggle – but it was worth it!

Farmers need to become Fairtrade compliant and they have to be constantly trained to keep up with the competition. One of the main limitations is the low levels of education and training of the farmers. This has become increasingly important in the context of new standards. For example, WIBDECO sells bananas, vegetables and root crops such as eddoes, dasheen etc on behalf of WINFA. However, eddoes sales have dropped because of low quality. It was suggested that what could assist in this process is if the extension officers at the MOA could work with WINFA to ensure products of a consistently high quality, through farmers' training.

In 1992, there was a mission of farmers to the UK, to help them to understand the requirements of the market place, just at the point when the removal of protection was first being discussed. WINFA is sensitive to the fact that politics enters any discussion of the banana trade on both sides of the Atlantic.

With Fairtrade, for which 90 percent of funding has come from Oxfam, action has been relatively prompt, while EU funding

has taken seven years coming and farmers are still waiting on it to arrive. WINFA is hoping to get some funds that have been allocated to the Diversification Unit, but which it is unable to spend within the fiscal year – EU funds. Meanwhile, WINFA has not received support from any governments in the region although they do acknowledge in glowing terms, the contribution of Fairtrade to the region.

One of the main hindrances to progress is that there is no representative on WIBDECO board from Fairtrade, even though Fairtrade is selling most of the bananas being sold in Europe, as well as doing business on behalf of WIBDECO e.g. root and vegetable crops, in those markets.

What is needed is some way of adding hope and confidence to farmers. WINFA has recently bought a new juice factory to produce fruit juices, jams and jellies – in Georgetown. This will provide some opportunity for production using passion fruit, other fruit etc and for creating some value added.

WINFA is sensitive to other possibilities that need to be pursued, but there are hurdles to be overcome, in respect of:

- An agro-tourism project, similar to what has been done in Martinique, in a high end tourism product offering a different experience: the promoters are willing to come to SVG to set up a similar project;
- The challenge of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA):

WINFA was campaigning against the signing in its current form on the grounds that as a region, the people are not ready;

- According to WINFA representatives there is still a high level of functional illiteracy, which has hindered progress. WINFA has sought to help in the establishment of pre-schools in rural areas: in harvest period, girls were often kept away from school to take care of younger siblings, not attending school;
- High incidence of HIV/AIDS in the rural districts impacting on farming community;
- High cost of real estate: it is important to get farmers to keep their land and to earn from it; and
- Need to follow up on data - membership, work plan, projects, for all islands.

2.1.4 Discussion

SVG has a number of agencies involved in structuring the operations of its agricultural sector. It would appear that in the throes of the adjustment period of the latter half of the 1990s, the Ministry of Agriculture was not able, whether because of resource limitations, or other challenges, to respond in timely fashion, in the face of the enormity of the task. Nor was the SVBGA able, on its own, given the specialisation of its structures on banana agriculture, to assist farmers who could no longer survive with

bananas to make the switch to other agriculture.

Banana farmers traditionally had engaged in mixed agriculture, with bananas being the main commercial crop, and other agriculture supplying domestic and local requirements, and contributing supplementary income. Farmers were required to make a huge leap in switching to the other crops as their main commercial operations, in the absence of a support institutional infrastructure of the type that had existed with bananas - R & D with WINBAN, input supplies and farm-to-market arrangements, through the SVBGA. Many lost confidence and abandoned agriculture. The result was a fall in banana production but also in other crops which were produced in semi-commercial operations. The poverty witnessed in the agricultural community can be attributed to the failure in trade adjustment in the existing institutional infrastructure.

WINFA, although labouring under resource limitations, has taken a more broadly based approach that apparently seeks to bring a commercial orientation to all aspects of farmer operations, and with the market differentiation of the FAIRTRADE label, has been able to create a niche market for the farming community and some have responded.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Agriculture has been undergoing its own internal restructuring and, with policy changes, and new strategies, is perhaps better placed currently than five to ten years ago to

support the transformation of agricultural sector.

There is a National Agricultural Production Plan in place. Non-banana agriculture is now afforded some amount of physical and other infrastructure - e.g. processing operations in Cassava Factory, Coconut Water Bottling Facility, Dasheen and Root Crops Plant. Available macro-economic data suggest that in spite of continued slide in banana other agriculture has been showing growth. On the other hand the rapid alienation that has taken place with good agricultural land poses a challenge in the resuscitation of the sector and in the achievement of viable commercial operations in some of the crops in which the country may have a competitive prospect.

2.1.5 Fisheries Department

The Department is implementing its corporate plan which is running over the period 2008 to 2010. It is proposed to improve the Fisheries Division such that it can manage the challenges facing the sector. At the same time the Department has to ensure that it can abide by international and regional obligations.

The country has about 36 landing sites but there are three major markets, Kingstown, Bequia and Union Island. In respect of the fishers in the industry it is noted that many are still operating in the traditional mode, that is to say, they go out to fish when they need money and they live from 'catch to catch'. Most of them could be described as poor. They do not have much by way of assets and they may be dependent on other

fishers who own boats. They lack a sustained income which may show peaks when the season is good and troughs when things are difficult. Their level of education is low and they have no other choice but to go to sea. They would have chosen not to go to school in their early life and would have little choice in terms of their current options for earning a living.

There is also a group of beach seine fishers who are in the age group 35-60 years of age. There are fishers who are engaged in the pelagic fisheries and this group might include some younger persons. It has been a challenge encouraging younger persons to enter the industry since young people's perception is that the sector does not offer a career. However, if targeted with training some of them may elect to pursue it as a career. The training in this regard would consist of programmes in navigation.

A revolving loan scheme has been set up for fishers and other stakeholders in the industry. This has permitted some to purchase vessels of 35-65 feet in length and to acquire relevant equipment for long-line fishing and has allowed them as well to engage in harvesting efforts in the near-shore area which unfortunately had been heavily exploited. The fishers are being encouraged to reduce exploitation of the near-shore resources to allow for re-generation. Likewise restrictions are being placed on the lobster and conch fisheries.

One of the challenges in upgrading the sector is in re-tooling of the older fishers and helping them to learn more

sophisticated harvesting techniques. It may be necessary to get them in a literacy programme in the first place and the Department has been working with the Adult Literacy Department in that regard.

Efforts are being made to introduce fisherfolk to better technology and instruments for harvesting of fish as part of the effort for fleet expansion. Indeed the women folk in the industry show greater willingness in participating in training programmes but the majority of fishers are male and the females involved in the sector are persons mainly who are business oriented and are involved in the selling of the catch and dealing with the finances. The females tend to partner with males. By and large, the artisanal fisheries remain a sector of informal relationships.

Seine fishing is subject to vandalism and theft. There are instances of people cutting the seine of the fishers. There are not very good data on the artisanal fisheries. There is some basic information on the number of fishers who pay the licence fee of EC\$20 per annum. There might be about 1,000 to 1,500 full time fishers in the country. The number of part-time fishers is unknown.

On the matter of climate change, it is felt that anything that affects the marine environment negatively, would impact the fisheries sector. There is general agreement that climate change would affect the eco-system including the coral reefs and the sea grass beds. Sea-level rise would affect the productivity of the coral reefs. Moreover, coral bleaching and changes in rainfall

would impact on the salinity on the near-shore area. Thus the fish population, inexorably, is going to be adversely affected by climate change.

Thought is being given to the establishment of artificial reefs to improve productivity of the fisheries and there is a technique that is being used in Mustique which seems to have improved the coral growth. The Department is working with its OECS partners to improve the protection of Marine Conservation Parks and to conduct baseline studies and to revisit criteria for protecting marine areas.

The Department has worked with international agencies in mapping of coral reefs in SVG and in auditing through a Marine Habitat Survey, the Blue Lagoon and Johnson Point Area. It is known for example that the Blue Lagoon Johnson Point is subject to multiple use and the Department is looking at a few other areas where there can be revenue generation and protection at the same time.

It is working with the Forestry Division in respect of the Chateaubelair area. There is need for a gap assessment which would allow them to improve management systems whether in respect of protection of the coastline or the eco-system. Funds have been allocated to undertake the conch and lobster assessment such that measures can be put in place to manage stocks and there is a biologist from an international agency working with them monitoring the impact of climate change and in looking at the temperature of currents in the area of Ottley

Hall Point. The Department has worked with the Department of Environment in monitoring marine stations and they have been engaged in the examination of water quality in monitoring the marine environment around in the Tobago Cays Marine Park. There are number of marine governance issues relating to ensuring the sustainability of the Tobago Cays area. It is the intention to strengthen to monitoring capacity of the country in respect of its fragile eco-system.

In the most recent Budget 2009, the Government announced a number of initiatives including:

- Owia Fisheries Complex;
- Fishing port at Barrouallie;
- Resumption of export of fish to Martinique and Guadeloupe

2.1.6 Discussion

The challenge in the Fisheries Sector seems to less about availability of markets and even about the availability of finance and infrastructure, and more about socio-psychological factors. Most fisherfolk seem to have a pre-industrial or subsistence approach to fishing. There seems to be a need to address the psychological preparation of those who elect to be fishermen. Programmes to improve techniques, and skills and improved educational levels, have to be founded on orientation courses that engage the individual fisherman in terms of sense of self.

2.2 Tourism

In the absence of beaches offering sun, sea and sand on the largest island comparable to its neighbours, SVG has had to exploit its other natural amenities. It has been a late comer in the region to tourism led development. The country has lacked also an airport to accommodate long haul aircraft. In the Grenadines, however, high end tourism has emerged and has transformed conditions especially in the Southern Grenadines. The country has become a destination for high-end visitors, seeking idyllic locations beyond the beaten track. Employment and income growth to nationals have been the result. Expansion of cruise tourism has also brought benefits to the main island, with a number of cruise ships calling regularly at Kingstown. Thus, there are emerging two distinct markets - a cruise market with visitors to the main island and engaged in sight seeing on a one-day stay, and a stay-over market in Grenadines

2.2.1 Ministry of Tourism

The data show that the sector has been increasing in prominence. In respect of stay over visitors, there has been some slight decline from USA and the Caribbean but there were increases from Europe and Canada. However, USA and the Caribbean are still the main markets. Recession in the

USA has caused the decline and air travel challenges in the Caribbean may have been responsible for the decline in visitors from this region. There has also been an increase in the cruise sector which may suggest a shift in the travel pattern with tourist taking to cruising rather than to stay-over visits. The Grenadines in addition to St. Vincent are now ports of call: Bequia and Union Island are ports used by smaller cruise ships. The sum of US\$10 per visitor from cruises is charged at the port.

The Ministry is involved in the upgrade of eighteen sites and attractions. It is also putting in place patrol boats for the Tobago Cays which is a protected area. The cruises to the Grenadines are modulated by size of vessel. Larger ships go to St. Vincent. Thus, SVG offers a multi-island experience, with every island being different. The waterfalls, the rain forest, oldest Botanical Gardens, the Carib Community can be found on different islands. The Ministry is engaging in the upgrade of sites and user fees are designed to ensure sustainability and also to ensure that they achieve international standards.

The projects that they are engaged in attempt to include people in communities and the main objective in the approach is to establish community groups that would help to co-manage the various facilities: this means training at the local community level. Some of the attractions amenable to community management are the Owia Salt Pond, and in Overland, the Orange Hill Estate, and the Rabacca National Park. There is also the art and craft element in these projects: in that regard, the

Department of Tourism has to work closely with the Community Development Department and also the Ministry of Culture and the National Cultural Foundation in respect of folklore.

There is need to get younger people involved as well: at Owia, there can be displays and cultural presentations. For example, on National Heroes Day they can be skits put on in memory of Chatoyer. There is also the Garifuna Culture to be celebrated, with the Emancipation Celebrations being the focal point. There are also the Indian indentured workers who have contributed to the culture of the country, although their numbers were much smaller than in Trinidad and Guyana. There is the Nine Mornings Festival as well as the Carib Writings and Petroglyphs.

There has not been much work on cuisine of the country. The Ministry ought to collaborate with the Hotel and Tourism Association, in that regard. There are a few restaurants that are promoting domestic cuisine. Most of the hotels are family owned and because of this, there are not always operated as a business. There is need to bring standards up and the establishment of the proposed Tourism Authority will create the base for the licensing of establishments. While there are changes taking place there is still need for a major thrust in the upgrade of standards.

The Canouan Development Committee is coming up with a master plan for that island. There is also need for buy-in on the part of people to prevent resentment over

the expansion of tourism. This is one of the lessons of the Canouan experience where much was done without the involvement of the people. There are a number of foreign operators especially in the Grenadines. The new Airport which would be able to receive long haul jet-aircraft, would open up the Tourism Sector. It has been difficult for visitors to get to St. Vincent in the past. The population would have to be “trained” since people are not so welcoming. There have been security issues as well, especially on the marine side with some incidents on yachts but it has not become a major problem as yet. The Department rates itself at four on a scale of one to five, given what it has done in the recent past to promote the sector.

2.2.2 St. Vincent and the Grenadines Hotel and Tourism Association

The SVG Hotel and Tourism Association was first established as the SVG Hotel Association in 1968. In 1999, it was expanded to include the entire Tourism Sector. The main focus of the organisation is on advocacy, training and human resource development, product development and marketing. Currently, there are forty-six members, of whom twenty-eight represent hotels, the remainder, travel agencies, tour operations, whole sale and retail outlet, and consulting firms.

The Association services all the islands and operates entirely out of the office at the Airport. Currently, the Association has limited resources which are restricting some of its plans for expansion. Its operations are run by a paid staff with few volunteers

assisting when needed. Scheduled annual visits to the various islands are not always been carried out. General meetings are held on a quarterly basis and Directors meetings are generally held every month. Elections are also conducted every two years.

There have been some positive developments in the industry in recent times. There has been an expansion in the number of hotels, as well as in trained personnel. Most of the properties on mainland St. Vincent are locally owned and managed. Even on the Grenadines, there are properties that are ‘manned’ by locals and in some instances, locals are in supervisory positions.

Several suggestions have been put forward for the improvement of the Industry. Firstly, the Tourism Authority has to get things done with dispatch. A Training School is also needed. A Marine and Hospitality School is on the drawing board and this is to be an \$18M dollar facility. The Association hopes that St. Vincent and the Grenadines would be more aggressively and effectively marketed as a destination.

Some of the activities of the organisation include a weekly radio programme through which there are discussions to sensitise the public about issues affecting the tourism industry.

The Association engages in career guidance sessions at schools, and would like to become involved in more outreach functions, but is limited by resources.

The organisation has been successful in accessing health insurance for employees of member hotels/establishments. It has conducted meetings with the Police and Coast Guard security issues, which have brought positive results. The training of employees of the membership is also undertaken by the Association.

The organisation also has a restaurant where it employs six to seven persons. Funding of activities of the Association comes mainly from members' dues as well as from the restaurant. The Association is currently challenged by limited office space. They also face a challenge in terms of adequate human resource.

2.2.3 Discussion

While the sector is viewed as one of the "central pillars" of the Government's diversification strategy, by the standard of other Caribbean countries, and more particularly of member states of the OECS, tourism is still small in SVG, accounting for less than three percent of current GDP, compared to over thirteen percent in St. Lucia, and over eight percent in pre-Ivan Grenada. The establishment of a Tourism Authority should help in raising standards and in allowing the country to create a niche market for itself.

On the other hand, as the sector with promise before the sub-prime world wide depression, it has offered opportunity up until recently, by way of employment and income to some number of people. Tour-guiding on the largest island, and employment in hotels in the Grenadines

have provided some amount of employment to workers from the main island.

However, as the country comes to rely more heavily on the sector, it will experience the volatility that has characterised international tourism: swine flu outbreak has been the most recent occasion when the country has experienced a reduction in visitor arrivals.

Besides Agriculture and Tourism, there are offshore Financial Services and Manufacturing that comprise the traded goods and services sectors. Neither of the two has been very significant in recent years in terms of the earning of foreign exchange in extra-regional markets, nor are they known to be significant in employment creation, although in terms of industrial organisation the establishments involved are formal private sector entities subject to a clearly defined regulatory system and required to observe certain legal requirements.

While the Government has put much store on the International Financial Services Sector, it was still very small, compared to other countries of the region, when the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) placed SVG among others in 2000, on its black-list of non-cooperative countries for possibly offering haven to money laundering operations run by drug traffickers and tax evaders. Whilst it took all the necessary action to be taken off the blacklist, the most recent subprime crisis and the developments in international

finance markets in the last twelve months do not provide much basis for optimism.

The communiqué issued by the G-20 at the meeting in London suggests that there is considerable support among the large developed countries for the elimination of these offshore financial centres altogether. The most recent measure announced in May 2009 by the Obama Administration, if implemented, can reduce substantially the number of international companies using off-shore financial locations like SVG.³ It is a sector driven by external players and depends on their assessment of the possibilities still remaining for off-shore operations.

2.3 Domestic Investment and Business

In spite of the challenges in the diversification thrust of the country, the non-tradable sector has remained vibrant, on the basis of the stimuli imparted by investment by Government public administration, autonomous construction activity, and the inflow of remittances. The formal business sector is comprised of a number of long established private firms, the financial institutions and the statutory corporations. There is a large informal sector, and an underground economy, that is responsible for the movement of some goods and services and the generation of incomes. Inevitably, the formal, and

³ Mc Kinnon, John and Drucker, Jesse, 'Firms Face New Tax Curbs,' Wall Street Journal, May 4, 2009, in <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124140022601982149.html>

informal and underground economies intersect at various points.

This section examines some of the institutions and organisations in the formal domestic, private sector, or which regulate aspects of their operations.

2.3.1 St Vincent Employers' Federation (SVEF)

The organisation was established in 1965 at a time when trade unions and employers were fighting against each other. But since then, the environment has changed and the organisation is now concerned with such things as Occupational Health and Safety, issues related to human resources management, and industrial relations.

The mission of the SVEF is to *foster, develop, and promote good industrial relations, health and safety, and human resource Management practices.*

It works also to protect members' interest by negotiating on their behalf of members with Government. There is a continuing collaboration with the ILO. The organisation is committed to promoting good industrial relations, facilitating exchange of information and ideas among employers.

The organisation acts as a watchdog for legislation that affects employers. It sits on the Tripartite Committee on the economy, and is involved with other agencies in respect of minimum wages and other legislation relating to terms and conditions of service.

The Minimum Wage might be deemed to be low relative to the cost of living, but any increases have to be seen in terms of their possible ripple effect on employment. There was already a problem with commitment to work, especially among the youth: businesses were paying people to work for 8 hours but getting no more than 5 hours worth of work, sometimes less.

It was suggested that Government should try to reduce the cost of basic food items so that one can be assured of basic nutrition, even if one were receiving a minimum wage. At present there are some items that are zero-rated and therefore do not have a value added tax applied. These include all agricultural products and basic food items such as flour, sugar and some chicken parts.

On the Leeward side of the Island there is competition for labour with the drug trade. People operate as if it is legal in SVG. Indeed, there is the widely held view that

“if SVG did not have that source of income the country would be in a pretty bad state”.

In fact, some women go to “weed” (clear the undergrowth) around the marijuana plantations and they earn more than a regular day’s pay in the formal economy.

Other areas of interest include the Productivity Index: a National Productivity Centre is in the works. Some of the services provided by the centre, included:

- a. Management Development Training – human resource management; sector

specific e.g. St. Vincent Marketing Board;

- b. Negotiations of Collective Agreements;
- c. Dispute Resolution;
- d. Advocacy/social dialogue;
- e. Business Consultancies;
- f. Small Business Advisory Services;
- g. Occupational Safety and Health;
- h. Assistance to members with union negotiations; and
- i. Special Projects and training programmes- e.g. National Broadcasting Survey

The strategic Plan for the SVEF was updated as recently as May, 2006. The organisation plans to increase the amount of time and resources it spends on HR support for small companies. In-house/onsite training and information sharing are part of what is on offer, but at some cost though. The organisation wants eventually to get into research on the labour market and labour laws; and other private consultancies and eventually provide a library for labour related topics.

The organisation is financed by membership dues, and fees charged for training and consultancies. There are forty members all from the private sector. The membership fees are based on size of the company – measured by the number of employees. All of the member firms are owned domestically. It is an affiliate of the Caribbean Employers Confederation (CEC)

and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE).

2.3.2 Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber functions mainly in advocacy on behalf of its members. In that regard, it seeks to monitor the development of the economy. Its representative sought to focus on this in conduct of the interview, since the economic base of the country dictates the way it discharges its obligations to its members.

It is the view of people in the Chamber that any growth in GDP in recent times can be attributed to increased activity in the construction sector and in remittances. The economy is suffering from low productivity. Energy bills are high and growing – a situation that is unsustainable. Then there is the trade deficit – the problem is that what is being imported is seven times that being exported. Inflation is close to double digits, because of energy cost and the rising cost of food.

There is concern that the country is not creating high-end jobs. What services are being exported? Even in terms of Tourism, there is a need to look at more than just growth of the sector. Significant investments were made because of the expectation of World Cup 2006, but there is need to be careful about estimated returns.

There is also a need to address the energy mix and look towards renewable energy sources instead of fossil fuels. In a move to conserve energy, there was the light bulb project: Cuban bulbs were brought in and

households were encouraged to switch. The country and the region need to pay attention to the type and age of cars that are imported into the Caribbean. The public sector needs to set an example by not using gas guzzling vehicles.

There is need to think seriously about the adjustment necessary for climate change. In fact there are many options: there is need to start investigating.

Returning nationals brought home more than US\$136M in remittances last year (2007), 26.4 percent of GDP. The evidence is in their building homes, etc. But the country is not maximising the benefits of the Diaspora. Additionally, there is a need to build the confidence of the Diaspora: people complain that they are not treated well when they return home: there is also a need for an investment fund through which the Diaspora can invest at home.

There is some fear of non-compensation for land being acquired for the new airport, and the Government has to address this to calm fears about its approach in this area of governance.

The impact of the price of oil has triggered the search for new technology: SVG cannot remain oblivious to the need to examine renewable energy sources - wind, and solar energy. There is nothing to prevent the Caribbean from becoming involved in this search, which may well lead to sources of energy to be used in hybrids. Transportation still poses a challenge in terms of energy alternatives. The

companies, BP and Shell, are controlling the energy technology research. Their dominance needs to be challenged.

People may be set with poverty of the mind, and are bankrupt for ideas. The problem in SVG is that there is an expectation that solutions will come from elsewhere. The people of SVG need to start doing things for ourselves. The process starts with the schools. In that regard, there is need to shift the focus from poverty to wealth creation. What is needed is a shift mindset, and in the development paradigm.

What the Chamber does is to communicate via e-mail or using other media to membership on these and other issues. It seeks to harness differences instead of creating similarities – an orchestra. The differences create harmony. What is needed is to find harmony in differences. It needs to start being about respect, and not tolerance.

One of the fears of members of the Chamber that the Grenadines are being sold off to non-nationals from the North Atlantic and rich countries, to secure revenue for the Government: Bequia is being sold to build the airport! Ordinary people in St. Vincent, let alone other Caribbean people seem not to know much about the Grenadines. People from the Caribbean have not even been able to purchase land. There is a need for capital retention – for future generations.

2.3.3 St. Vincent and the Grenadines Cooperative Credit Union League

The Credit Union League is the umbrella organisation for all cooperatives financial and non-financial in SVG. It operates in accordance with the Cooperative Societies Act, No. 24 of 1999. The League is not a regulatory body: it is made up of ten affiliated credit unions. These credit unions provide a range of financial and related services to its membership, which is currently over 40,000 persons. The League aims to take advantage of synergies by coming together, in order to serve and represent cooperatives in SVG.

There are a number of trends in evidence in the movement:

- a. Many of the credit unions have opened their bonds – even the Teachers’ Credit Union (TCU) is not restricted to teachers: failure to open bonds could lead to decline as has happened to the Workers and Farmers Credit Union, which relied on workers and farmers in the banana industry, and as a rural credit union, was unable to attract members from other areas. Diversification of membership is key to survival.
- b. Delinquency is a problem encountered by all credit unions at an average rate ranging somewhere between 20 percent to 25 percent; this includes the large credit unions.

- c. The high delinquency might be explained by a long held view among the membership that their credit unions could not take them to the court to recover outstanding balances. The procedure to be followed up with delinquent loans is outlined in Act 24 (1999). However, there is need for further revision of the legal provisions to facilitate this redress.
- d. In general, the PEARLS system of accounting is not being used by Board of Management of Credit Unions except for the large ones. The League estimates at most 5 percent usage of PEARLS for reports. The small credit unions do not have the capacity to use the system.

The League provides information and guidance to Credit Unions and other cooperatives. Other services provided by the League are:

- Education and Training;
- Technical support;
- Office support services;
- Coordination of CUNA services;
- Policy development;
- Strategic planning; and
- Consultancies.

Credit Unions are in competition with the commercial banks. The League administers CUNA products. It has had some discussions with Scotia Bank on introducing debit cards, credit cards. The Credit Unions are into real estate now too.

The League was deemed to be dormant at one stage, but it is in the process of growing and the building which it occupies, is owned by the credit unions and it was bought four years ago. There are several examples of credit unions owning buildings and real estate.

The League is part of the East Caribbean Co-operative League (ECCCL) and also works with the St Vincent and the Grenadines Co-operative League.

This latter is seeking to bring under one umbrella, the following:

- Producers’ Co-operative
- Fishermen’s Co-operative
- Agriculture Co-operative

As expected there are more women as co-operators. It is felt that about 40 percent of the movement prefers to keep their funds in credit unions. This is different to Dominica, where 100 percent of the population would put their funds with the credit unions. There has been healthy growth in the movement as can be seen in the table below.

TABLE 2.3: PERFORMANCE OF THE COOPERATIVE CREDIT UNIONS IN SVG

Description	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001
Affiliated Credit Unions	9	9	10	10	9	9
Membership	44,356	40,803	37,508	33,945	31,721	31,108
Total shares, savings and deposits	147,323,701	143,414,908	124,082,012	102,167,417	92,937,766	76,270,988
Assets	210,048,894	176,696,968	162,369,160	139,563,128	120,723,344	108,916,781
Loans	125,551,439	107,877,842	92,422,708	70,360,457	63,298,173	66,332,185
Reserves	28,900,240	18,757,293	15,858,452	15,027,096	17,589,671	10,302,470

2.3.4 National Development Foundation (NDF)

The National Development Foundation (NDF) has had considerable experience in the funding of micro and small enterprises in SVG. Its clientele tend to come from among people who have a business idea, but because their social and economic circumstances, they are unlikely to secure funding from the commercial banks or other lending institutions.

Some persons would have left school at an early age to fish or to work in agriculture. But at age of maturity they may wish to buy their own boats and earn an income. The fund would hold their hands, help them to get established, give them a loan to buy their own boat and follow loan payments.

In order to identify projects that may be eligible for funding, a representative of the Fund visits project sites and investigates the feasibility of the project, and would then follow up with the loan if the project qualifies. NDF funds all aspects of the project including equipment and labour and in the case of agricultural projects. The repayment terms may be tailored to suit the type of crop. In some cases it may be necessary to help source markets in some cases, or the persons interested in the project may require relevant training.

All beneficiaries must attend a three-day orientation which treats with the subject of setting up and managing a business. They also provide some specialised training along the way.

NDF has concentrated its lending in the following areas:

- Leeward – Richmond,
- Chateaubelair
- Troumaca Bay
- Cumberland Bay
- Layou
- Clare Valley,
- Questelles
- Lowmans Bay,
- Kingstown,
- Calliaqua,
- Shipping Bay, and
- Sandy Bay (windward side).

At the time of the interview, the NDF had over 300 loans (current) to over 500 clients. There was some bad debt. Usually, loans for projects in the agriculture sector are the worst in terms of repayment, and there has also been some problem with fishing. This is due to an inability to pay as well as an inability to manage income.

The NDF lends at nine percent per annum – across the board (not on reducing balance). NDF funds up to 100 percent funding is possible with a project if the persons are poor. Generally, 90 percent and requires that the client put up 10 percent.

NDF started with grant funding from USAID when it was established. Since then funding has come from other sources. The STABEX programme was a source in 2005, and revolving credit has been sourced from a Taiwanese firm.

NDF does not limit itself to providing loans. It provides training and technical assistance as well. There is a minimal for training to cover materials and food with NIS, the VAT unit and other departments of government on behalf of its clients.

The main problems faced in lending are:

- The Recovery Problem - mortgage bill of sale on equipment may not be effective in recovery on default of a loan including for the simple reason that there may be no room to store the equipment;
- Training - those who need it most do not come - possibly because they are illiterate and do not want to be embarrassed.

NDF clients are mostly male from rural districts, and generally over the age of 30. Young people represent a high risk because they throw in the towel too early. Clients borrow to set up hair salons and barber shops. There are also lots of applications for taxis, mini busses, but the Fund does not support this type of activity. There is some focus on tourism related activities - more in the Grenadines, e.g. boats/water taxis. A representative of the fund goes to the Grenadines once a month for one day.

The criteria for securing a loan are simple:

- Evidence of citizenship of SVG and good character;
- Knowledge of skill in the area for which loan is being made;

- Information on the price of raw materials and cost of importing them where necessary.

Clients who initially have been helped with loans by NDF have graduated subsequently to the banks.

2.3.5 Private Sector Executive

An interview with a private sector individual with more than ten years of experience working in the country provides some other insights on the state of business in SVG as seen by one close enough to the centre stage. While this may not represent a general view, it is a perspective that exists and guides decision in at least one firm of some size in SVG.

Industrial development has been limited, according to the entrepreneur. The country was better located in industrial production in the 1980s when the industrial estate was flourishing. SVG had become well known for the production of tennis rackets. Over time, industry declined except for some amount of processing of flour and rice for the domestic and regional markets.

Agro-industry has not taken off since Agriculture has not been developing to the stage necessary to support agro-processing. The country is stuck on one crop and no real transformation is taking place. The population is trapped, and the middle class that has guided the country along its present economic trajectory has not displayed real leadership.

In the area of Agriculture, the Taiwanese Mission has been able to establish that growing is the least of the problem in production. Locally processed food can be competitive with the United States. People from Mustique go to Martinique to shop. Moreover, even if production is promoted with local products and produce, the marketing tends to be deficient.

SVG suffers a problem of trained incapacity. The more educated people are the less likely are they to get into business. The country might have inculcated an English attitude to business. Education leads one away from business. On the other hand, it is the school drop-out who tries to get into selling something. Bright people are not supposed to get into business. There is a lack of information about what is possible. At best, they will become the paid managers, but never the entrepreneurs. Profit is a dirty word. The Chamber of Commerce where many of these managers congregate, provides the locus for a network of 'big boys' who can be busy going to meetings.

Mediocrity abounds. There is a lack of entrepreneurship and drive. The fact that there is no opening of stores on Sundays has nothing to do with religion and more to do with attitudes. There is also a major dependency syndrome to be overcome. The Government itself is hampered by some of these attitudinal problems. Initiatives in tourism have to be anchored on information and strategic thinking.

Operating a 200 room hotel requires different skills to running a five room local

establishment. The agricultural sector has to be promoted but critical to this would be farmers getting into cottage industry and being equipped to do so. The development of SVG depends on the perspectives of the leadership and the people: the barriers to development can be found there.

2.3.6 Discussion

A vibrant private sector investing and expanding can stimulate growth and transformation, through building on the infrastructure developed by the Government. This would lead to employment and income growth and would contribute to poverty reduction. As the country weathered the fall-out occasioned by the decline in its important Banana Industry, its institutions were not well geared for trade adjustment, with the result that non-banana agriculture languished rather than becoming a new source for income growth and employment in the agricultural sector. Farmers voted with their feet and abandoned substantial tracts of good agricultural land. More recently, there has been some revival of non-banana agriculture, suggesting of some improved capacity of agencies supporting the agricultural sector.

The development of a light manufacturing sector suffered a major set back with the formation of North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA), let alone the other challenges, including low productivity. The sector remained small, even though it was central to the diversification strategy which has been the one of the prime features of economic policy through its various

administrations of Government since political independence. High-end tourism emerged in the Grenadines but is still miniscule in size and its contribution to GDP. International Financial Services emerged but had not made yet made any significant impact when it fell under the scrutiny of the OECD and brought the country on to the black list.

With the relative dearth of institutional structures to manage the shift necessary in the economy, the workers and farmers leaving banana agriculture, the new entrants to the labour market, seem to have resorted to the informal sector. Some number found an escape from poverty in the production of bananas in the hills. If anything, this component of underground economy became institutionalised and, in popular parlance, women go ‘to weed’ and young men would admit to being on the hills. The fact that marijuana producers at some stage were bold enough to announce the establishment of their own NGO is testimony to the fact that the production of marijuana had become well accepted and institutionalised in some sections of the society.

As seen in Table 2.4, which scores the agencies operating in the economy or having some impact on the functioning of economic actors, there were few institutions that could have been deemed to be highly effective. The reach of WINFA and of NDF was too limited to have made an impact in the face of an entire economy in the throes of trade adjustment. There was little in place to ensure that new activity or reorganised productive networks could be established, to trigger a major turnaround in the latter years of the 1990s.

TABLE 2.4: ECONOMIC SECTOR AGENCY SCORES

Organisation	Score
Ministry of Agriculture	3
SVBGA	3
WINFA	5
Fisheries Department	3
Ministry of Tourism	3
Hotel Association	3
Employers Federation	3
Chamber of Commerce	3
Cooperative Credit Union League	4
National Development Foundation	4

3.0 FACILITATION AND REGULATORY AGENCIES

The structure and operation of the economy depend in part on the nature of the regulatory and facilitation regime in place to permit the private sector the space to produce goods and services and, in that regard, to contribute to employment and income. In the absence of private sector response, there is the issue of the role of the state in directly productive activity. In a small island economy, highly dependent on the export of a limited range of goods and services, the State may have few degrees of freedom in engaging in directly productive activity. This section documents the work of some of the key agencies of the state engaged in facilitation and regulatory roles.

3.1 Ministry of Finance

The Ministry of Finance occupies pride of place in the operations of the Government and as well in the functioning of the economy. Some of the key levers of the Government in the operation of the economy are exercised through the Ministry of Finance. These are mainly of a fiscal nature – the generation of income, the allocation of transfers and the allocation to recurrent and capital expenditure of the Government. Monetary policy is the preserve of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank.

Given the narrow economic base of the country, the source of revenue to the Government is an ongoing pre-occupation of any administration. With the commitment on the part of the countries of

the region to a common external tariff and to general reduction in duties a la WTO, there has been some reorganisation of the tax structure in recent years.

In reviewing the economic performance in the first six months of 2008, the Management in the Ministry of Finance found that the revenue situation had improved slightly, although this had to be set against inflation that reached as high as 10 percent at one stage. As a source of Government Revenue, the Value Added Tax (VAT) had done well, compared with other taxes and might have raised as much as 10 percent of GDP.

The country continued to have some fiscal difficulties however. Expenditure had increased. There is a gas subsidy that has been in place but this has been reflected in revenue rather than in expenditure. The growth in the economy has been driven by construction, tourism and latterly by agriculture. There are some challenges with the sector however. There has been a concentration on the provision of inputs to farmers rather than providing them with any cash resources but it is alleged that some of them have been selling their seed to farmers in Trinidad and Tobago.

The high food prices have not succeeded in triggering any substantial growth in supplies. Construction has been driven to a large extent by foreign direct investment and also by investment being made by returning nationals. There is an Alien

Landholding Act. Foreigners do get permission to purchase land but they must build within two years. There has been substantial investment by foreigners in Bequia. There is a perception that Bequia is dominated by foreigners. The Government derives some revenue from the sale of crown lands. The presence of foreigners does lead to some high-end tourism and locals find employment as a result. However, there are limits on the extent to which sale of crown lands can be relied on as a sustainable source of revenues.

There is a large informal sector and some of it is actually legal. A fair amount of it is comprised of marijuana production and trade. There is fishing and much of the catch may be sold elsewhere or on the high seas. There is a roaring trade conducted by the hucksters and it is alleged that their imports and exports for example with Trinidad and Tobago may not be fully documented. The IMF estimates that these undocumented flows could be as much as 30 percent of GDP. Another flow that is not measured is remittances. The growth in domestic expenditure is in part revealed by the value added tax.

The fall out from bananas has led to an expansion of the informal sector with farmers turning to vending. The rural economy has declined and there is a major generation gap between the older people and the new generation. Farmers have to depend on their children to take care of them. Farming opportunities with other crops are not being exploited. It is not understood why there is not much more by

way of other agriculture. One reason given is that the agriculture infrastructure is still organised around bananas.

There has been a reduction in income tax to a maximum rate of 35 percent, and a rate of 30 percent is contemplated. The introduction of the VAT has to some extent compensated for the removal of income tax and the rationalisation of some other taxes. The major policy framework of the government is set through the PSIP, but this has been plagued by lack of coordination among other Departments and there have been problems of packaging projects properly.

There is also a debt management strategy and this has led to some easing of the burden on the country, especially following the support that has been given by the Government of Italy. The CDB remains the largest creditor. However, procurement of funding through the CDB is not inexpensive.

With the reduction in oil and gas prices, inflation is likely to ease but the advent of the sub-prime crisis is going to hurt the tourism sector and there is no evidence of tourists from countries like India and China compensating for the decline in visitors from the main market which is in the North Atlantic. There would be need for substantial adjustment including in the Public Service of the country.

Generally, economic conditions are not very promising for the OECS countries or is the CSME likely to lead to any improvement in

the present circumstances. In respect of support from donors, the conditions set by the EU and its scheduling of resources have not been helpful in the management in the fiscal operations and planning in SVG. The country does not have very much to export to the European Union at the present time, so it is a moot point whether the EPA would pose a problem, in and of itself.

The easing of debt allows policy makers to address the challenge of mobilisation of resources to create a platform for transformation of the economy. However, there is always need for attention to be directed at conditions faced by the most vulnerable in the society. Resources for capacity building among the poor are always the primary option, although transfers have to be maintained to those not capable of helping themselves.

3.2 Central Planning Division

The primary task of the Central Planning Division is the administering the capital budget of the Government, within the context of a planning framework set by the Annual Budget or over a Medium Term, or Multi-year programme. The Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP) is the prime responsibility of the Division. It has responsibility for coordinating the application of resources from all external sources of funding.

The PSIP is not as well coordinated as would have been desired largely because of challenge it has posed to planning within other Government Departments. The

Government may need to examine for local relevance, the New Zealand Model in the management of public sector investment projects, as well as public sector budgeting generally. The predilection to the protection of turf prevents organisations from arriving at an overview of programmes.

The largest project is the International Airport at Argyle. On completion it would have an enormous medium impact on the country in terms of employment as well as output. The Central Planning Division has collaborated in the development of a Rural Development Plan which has sought to deal with the problems of the north east for which there has been special funding. This is the area of the country that has been most severely hurt by the fall-out from the banana industry.

The Social Investment Fund (SIF) was a direct result of the last social impact study done on the North-East. There have been some achievements as a result of SIF and this goes beyond the traditional support provided by the Basic Needs Trust Fund.

The Agricultural Diversification Project has been difficult to implement, and has not achieved the results that were expected. If agricultural diversification is judged by the quantum of locally produced goods, then it could not be deemed to be a success. Admittedly the high cost of fertilizers would have pushed up cost of production. A new thrust is needed in agriculture. The country needs to move to food security and that requires the marketing of domestic produce in both senses of the term marketing.

Another issue to be addressed is the matter of maintenance of public buildings as well as the observance of codes in the construction of new buildings. The Physical Planning regime has to take account of the fact that the country is vulnerable to earthquakes, volcanoes and hurricanes. The backward and forward linkages between tourism and other sectors are still to be addressed, agro-processing and inputs from agriculture being one immediate example. The country is yet to explore such possibilities as arrowroot biscuits, organic arrowroot and the production of pure arrowroot which is needed for medicinal purposes. There is also the area of garment production in terms of uniform and draperies which can be marketed locally as well as abroad. Incubators are being contemplated as the basis for stimulating small business.

There are other mechanisms involved in the allocation of investment resources. The most recent Budget 2009 pointed to an investment facilitation agency, namely the National Investment Promotions Inc. (NIPI) and the Centre for Enterprise Development (CED) as well as the Micro-Enterprise Loan Programme (MELP), which sources funds from the state-owned National Commercial Bank.

There may well be a challenge here in terms of the institutional arrangements, with one arm of Government seeking to ensure orderly distribution of funds among a range of agencies and another seeking to ensure rapid disbursements in response to initiatives by fledgling micro and small

enterprises of which many need to be stimulated.

3.3 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Commerce and Trade

The Trade Division has functioned in its present capacity for the last ten years. Its role is to facilitate private sector firms in their contribution to the development process. Its work has to be contextualised against the initiatives being taken in the OECS countries in the face of the CSME. The recently signed EPA with the EU will create an additional challenge to the Division.

The Division has never interpreted its role in terms of identifying specific sectors to be promoted. Moreover, no studies have been done recently on any sector specifically for SVG, although there have been wider studies of competitiveness of the Caribbean that have been sponsored by the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank and the Organisations of American States. In any event, the Division has a staff of only four professional officers and is limited in the kind of studies that it can undertake.

There is the Centre for Enterprise Development that is involved in stimulating business development. The Division on the other hand, limits itself to helping firms overcome any barriers that may stand in the way of trade. The Statistics Department of the country is supposed to provide the information for monitoring trade. The Division is not aware of any firms still

securing advantages from utilising the CBI, or of CARIBCAN, for that matter. There is need at the present time, for an examination of the full implications of the EPA on the trade in goods and services, from the perspective of SVG.

Local producers will need to do their homework, if they are to take advantage of the EPA. There may be important possibilities in the area of culture, and this may be the area of greatest benefit to the country. In that regard, the Division anticipates working closely with the Ministry of Culture, in shaping the way forward.

The Central Planning Division ensures that together the various parts of government adopt clear perspectives on planning in their respective portfolios and, in this area, the collaboration between the Ministry responsible for Culture and the Trade Division is likely to bear fruit in respect of the securing of market entry for cultural products and services of SVG. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Commerce has a standing meeting with the Chamber of Commerce every quarter, and the Trade Division works closely with the officials of the Chamber, with meetings taking place almost monthly. There are also seminars for the dissemination of information and again, this is an area where there is cooperation between public and private sectors.

3.4 Ministry of Telecommunications, Science, Technology and Industry

Diversification of the economy has been a long-cherished goal of policy-makers, since the period of self-government. This has meant diversification within agriculture and as well, diversification into other sectors, including manufacturing and services. The Ministry responsible for Industry has oversight of some elements of the diversification strategy.

In respect of industrial development, there is much that needs to be done, in creating a viable industrial sector in SVG. It was thought that the country would anchor its industrial transformation on forward linkages from a vibrant agricultural sector. The initiatives in agro-processing have not been as successful as was anticipated. There were operational and other problems with arrowroot and cassava, and in going into down-stream production. Nor has the primary product been fetching a price on the world market that is viable. There is need to revisit the experience of countries like South Korea in respect of the choices made with technology: small farmers with small tools and implements were able to survive and prosper.

There is evidence that the processing of plantains into plantain chips is emerging as an industry albeit, still at the cottage level. Erica's Country Style produces excellent

pepper sauce but is also still a cottage type of operation, except through, that the facility at Prospect has been structured as an agro-tourism processing facility. This might be a point of product differentiation that is interesting in itself. There are also features of the pepper sauce project that may be useful as a model for international marketing and penetration.

There is also the matter of the more general backward and forward linkage that needed to be established between Tourism and Agriculture. There are hotels that have been run very successfully in the Grenadines. Producers of agricultural supplies with quality product on farms in the main island could be linked to these establishments, providing supplies on a regular basis. With such a link established, expansion in tourism will help other sectors. Moreover, there will be the general upgrade of standards that would help in attracting on the part of the supermarkets. The failure to date in this regard has meant that the markets for fresh produce in places like Georgetown and even Kingstown look dismal even on a Friday or Saturday.

The Ministry is seeking to address this broad range of issues, with special regard to the transformation of the business sector. There is need for a private sector development programme to take the current firms forward and to change the face of the private sector. The incubator programme that is to be installed presently is the first step in this new thrust to get the private sector off the ground.

3.5 Labour Relations Department

The Labour Commissioner is responsible for safety at the workplace, matters related to labour standards (CSME, CRNM) and employment relations, and has oversight on the implementation of minimum wages. The Employment Unit assists with job placement for ex-farmers. This is an area in which there has not been much success, because jobs are not available. Any jobs available are in the area of domestic services or in the construction industry (private sector driven jobs anyway).

In more recent times, in the face of unemployment in St. Vincent, many Vincentians have sought employment in the Grenadines to work in construction projects: building cabanas for tourism in Mustique, and Canouan. The construction activity in the country is being financed with funds coming from foreign investors, the Government and overseas nationals returning home. In general, according to Officials in the Department, businesses were cutting back on employment during 2008.

The informal sector has been growing. There is visible unemployment and under-employment. The Department is in the process of trying to put in place a Labour Market Information System (LMIS), with the help of NIS, National Investment Promotion Inc (NIPI) - a government agency. This should help in the quantification of the labour flows and might lead to some better placement of workers relative to the needs of the economy.

In terms of industrial development, the following might be noted:

- Block-making is on the increase;
- Food processing is also emerging; this evidenced in the processing of salted nuts, peppers, and other products as minor exports;
- Construction and services are expanding (tourism in the Grenadines).

The new thrust in the encouragement of foreign direct investment (FDI) started a few years ago with the Buccament Bay Project, and with the expansion of FDI, there has been employment creation.

There are officially sponsored programmes of employment abroad. The Canadian Farm Programme provides employment for between 180 and 200 persons per year. This is arranged through the Liaison Office in Canada. There have been requests in recent times for heavy equipment drivers to work during the winter - driving snow ploughs, and the Department is responding. There might be 50 - 60 persons required.

The labour market is still highly segmented. Thus, women and men are concentrated in certain activities in the labour market. Women are absorbed in the service industry largely especially in tourism, and very few are taken for the construction jobs. Some work in the transportation industry - driving passenger vehicles, in the public service, or in the medical field as doctors and nurses.

There is intra-regional movement of labour, although the Department cannot present information on its size. There has always been some migration to other parts of the region from SVG. The bringing into being of the CSME will encourage such movement, but it need not be one-way.

The Underground Economy is growing but it is hard to monitor. It is not unusual for young men to admit "I been ah hills", to explain their absence over long periods of time. It cannot be denied that there is some section of the work-force engaged in this sector, in addition to the visible informal sector.

3.5.1 Industrial Relations Climate

There is provision for a Tribunal to be established in the event of disputes in the industrial relations system of the country. A recent example was the case of the Power Company which faced threats of trade union action but this was successfully averted.

In terms of Labour Conventions, SVG has ratified 21 of the conventions. There are also seven on the books, and seven more at the Attorney General's Office, which should be ratified in the coming year. Tripartite arrangements among Government, labour unions, and the private sector, are well institutionalised and have been the locus for discussion of the new Occupational Health and Safety legislation that is in the pipeline.

There is no formal legislation against gender discrimination in the workplace. However, minimum wages are the same for women and men but wages differ by sector. There are set minima and terms and conditions for some workers including agricultural workers, domestic workers, hotel workers, and industrial workers. Work was being done on new minimum wages structure by the Wages Council.

The Department is responsible also for inspection, wages and occupational surveys and conciliation. The Ministry of Trade and National Security deals directly with CSME Impact: it is mostly Guyanese, Jamaicans, and Barbadians (to a lesser extent) have tried to come in under the terms of the CSME. Most are professionals - teachers mainly. The Barbadians have been entrepreneurs, mainly.

Table 3.1 assigns scores to the organisations documented in this section. The Ministry of Finance and the Central Planning Divisions might have performed well in managing the

country through a veritable debt crisis, and in introducing measures to ensure relatively effective macro-economic management. However, there might have been some limitations among those charged with creating the environment for rapid transformation of the economy. It is not that they were unaware of the requirements of the time, but they did not seem to be endowed with the wherewithal to adopt an aggressive approach to the challenge of improving the competitiveness of SVG in the face of major changes in the global economy.

TABLE 3.1: FACILITATION AND REGULATORY AGENCY SCORES

Organisation	Score
Ministry of Finance	4
Central Planning Division	4
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	3
Ministry of Science, Technology, and Industry	3
Labour Relations Department	3

4.0 INSTITUTIONS IN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE SOCIAL SERVICES

Institutions engaged in social development contribute to the building of some capacity among people as individuals and as communities. The human capital revolution in Economic Thought in the 1950s and 1960s helped to focus attention on this component of economic development. Effective educational systems and primary health care systems create the conditions under which the individual can realise his/her full potentiality and can contribute to the economic and social development of the country. The institutions identified in this section are some of the more critical in the institutional structure of SVG, which are involved in Social Development.

4.1 Education

Policy in Education is set by the Ministry of Education, which is also involved as the sole or dominant provider of education at all levels of the educational system. SVG has been engaged in a catch-up process relative to many of its neighbours in respect of the level of participation of the population in education and training. The initiatives of the government in the present decade have been directed at the rapid closing of the gap, and in creating a platform in human resource development for building a society that can participate in the knowledge-driven economy of the 21st century. The Government has defined its goals in terms of an Education Revolution, with quantitative expansion at every level,

at the same time, as attention is directed at quality improvement.

4.1.1 Ministry of Education

The thrust to universalisation has been pursued through different stages. In the pre-independence period, the universalising of primary education was a major goal and was achieved in the first phases of self-government, by and large. The universalising of secondary access was subject to a more gradual process at first, and has been achieved in recent years. Thus, the country can boast of having compulsory primary education and universal access to secondary.

Quality improvements are being introduced with counselling services being an important element. Each secondary school has a counsellor, while at primary level, a counsellor is assigned to a cluster of schools. Some of the problems that have to be dealt with include violence at school, poverty among some sections of the school population, absenteeism, and lack of emphasis on educational achievement.

The Ministry has undertaken several interventions to address the problems. Remedial Education strategies are being developed, and children with special needs are being catered to, for example with the academic mentorship programme for challenged persons, and with provision for teenage mothers to return to school to complete their education.

Geographic challenges are also being addressed. With assistance from the Caribbean Development Bank, the Ministry has put in place a Basic Education Project which provides for the building of schools in rural areas. There are now schools in rural areas that provide for primary and secondary cohorts. In the Grenadines, construction is taking place to provide a new primary school in Bequia, and a secondary school on Union Island, thereby relieving some students of the need to relocate to St. Vincent for secondary education. Learning Resource Centres are also to be located on Canouan and on Union Island.

The newest thrust in universalising education has been in respect of Early Childhood Education. The Ministry has the mandate to establish Early Childhood Care and Education Centres across the country. Funding has been provided to upgrade pre-schools as well as to train teachers up to an appropriate standard. In effect, irrespective of social and economic standing, the individual will have access from pre-school to secondary level.

The Ministry provides several social support services such as a School Feeding Programme, the provision of transportation, and the supply of uniforms for targeted needy students. There have also been partnerships with the private sector in terms of providing support to students.

The Ministry provides assistance to persons seeking tertiary level education. There is a Disadvantaged Loan Scheme where

assistance is given to students to cover the economic cost of attendance at the University of the West Indies. Scholarships are also offered under the Basic Education Project.

The Ministry does engage in human resource development training, and has provided online training to teachers as well as Ministry officials. Other programmes of the Ministry include the Adult and Continuing Education Programme, the Adult Literacy Crusade and the Adult Technical and Vocational Training Programme. The Ministry has established an Accreditation Board and is seeking to establish a National Training Agency to take on issues of a technical nature.

Some of the inadequacies as identified by the Ministry are the lack of a performance appraisal system for teachers, a lack of coherent planning at schools, as well as a Board of Management of schools.

4.1.2 National Institute of Technology

The National Institute of Technology (NIT) was established in 2002, to provide programmes in Information Technology. The main objective is to develop nationals with skills for the Information Sector. In effect, the Government seeks through the Institute not only to close the information divide but to pitch-fork the country into the information age by training large numbers in this field. A bursary programme is on offer to the public to encourage deepening of skills and knowledge.

It concentrates on out-of-school people: either in a job, unemployed or disadvantaged. This fills a gap since, the adult education unit in the MOE focuses on developmental skills, literacy and craft, etc. but not ICT. The objective is to produce a group of people trained for the information age. There is also a need for internationally accredited persons with such training. The Institute has begun to address the situation by offering courses from introductory level and up. Links with institutions in Jamaica will afford NIT ease in securing appropriate accreditation. There is need for seamlessness in this regard with the coming into being of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy.

The children of the banana farmers are a group specifically targeted by the programme of training. Their parents, the ex-farmers, are welcome, but they are not targeted. Although farmers who are still young should be targeted, there is a need to focus on where the greatest needs lie.

4.2 Health

Chronic non-communicable diseases dominate the country's health profile. A wellness revolution was launched in September 2008. This Revolution had several dimensions including mental, spiritual, environmental and occupational health. It brings to the fore the close inter-relationship among food, nutrition, health and exercise. A survey in 1996 found that 19 percent of school children and 41 percent of pre-schoolers had either marginal or frank iron deficiency. Data for SVG show that

there was a prevalence rate of 5.7 percent under-nutrition in children under five years of age (source CFNI, 2006). Average life expectancy is over 72 years and infant mortality has fallen markedly to 15 per 1,000 births.

4.2.1 Ministry of Health and the Environment- Chief Medical Officer

The situation in primary health care has been stable. However, in respect of human resources, there continues to be a high turnover of doctors. The services of Cuban doctors have helped in closing the gap in some districts of the country. There is still a shortage at the junior level. There are 11 health districts and there is at least one doctor per district. There are three (3) doctors who service the Grenadines and they are based in Bequia, Union Island and Canouan. The needs of the people of Myreau are served by the doctor in Union Island.

The birth rate is falling. One estimate is that teenage pregnancy remains at about 20 percent. There is no evidence of malnutrition and there is no increase in low birth weight among babies. The closing of the Medical School on the island did impact on the Ministry and does exacerbate the challenges that it faces. Chronic disease continues to be a problem with increasing incidences of diabetes, hypertension and cancer. Various units within the health system are promoting programmes to arrest these problems.

There is the Public Health and Community Health Nurses, The Family Planning

Programme, the Health Promotion Programme. There is no real campaigning in the sense of a marketing programme to treat with chronic disease. There have been the food-based dietary guidelines that have been launched in the previous year and which were widely distributed across the country.

The Ministry has been directly involved in the School Feeding Programme along with the Ministry of Education. There is a main hospital in St. Vincent and district hospitals. Persons on Union Island with emergencies are brought by plane or by boat to St. Vincent. There are no plans as yet to have an emergency facility in the Grenadines. Sometimes, the Coast Guard would bring someone from the Grenadines. The Main Hospital in Kingstown offers a range of secondary services- Paediatrics, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Psychiatry in addition to general medicine. Areas where there is a gap in facilities include cardiology, oncology, and endocrinology. People presenting with such problems may be referred to Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago and Cuba. They may get some assistance from the Government but the costs of securing services abroad are usually a private matter. Government gives free medication in respect of diabetes and hypertension to persons 60 years and older. All other charges from the Government dispensary are charged five dollars. Children under 16 years of age are exempt also.

There is discussion taking place about health insurance but this has been going on

from some 10 years now. Recommendations have been made by the UWI group and there has been some progress by the establishment of a framework for health insurance. It would appear that the political directorate of whatever party is daunted by the challenge, since national health insurance will be seen as imposing an additional cost on the population.

There is Health Information Unit but they have not been able to produce reports over the last few years.

There are more than enough nurses to be absorbed in the local system. There are 40 nurses being trained per annum. The problem though is that the nurses with experience are being lost. Fortunately, not everybody seeks to migrate.

The critical challenges faced are firstly, the availability of the appropriate human resources that constitute the health team and these are inclusive of the physicians and the pharmacists. The second is cost of medical supplies but this has been mitigated by the OECS Procurement System which has allowed for some bulk purchasing of medical supplies.

A third challenge in the treatment modalities and in respect of some chronic disease for example cancer, a management regime for which can be very expensive. HIV/AIDS has been brought under control.

Another problem is the drug abuse for which there may be need to establish a unit outside of the Ministry of Health. There

may be need for a different management style and maybe a more business like approach in dealing with the health sector and that includes the introduction of health insurance.

4.3 Ministry of National Mobilisation, Social Development, NGO Relations, Family, Gender Affairs & Persons with Disabilities

The thrust of the Ministry is to mobilise communities, and to induce a genuine transformation, moving them from a dependence on social welfare and creating the base for social capital and community development. There is ongoing discussion of a programme for Local Government, in which the structure is transformed from a nominated system to one reflecting the representational principle.

One of the challenges that is faced is the attitude of the youth. The preoccupation is with the acquisition of 'bling', cellphones and the like. There is also the emergence of biker clubs, with girls wearing skimpy clothing. Another challenge is getting the youth to continue their education and to become involved in meaningful activity on the block. There are a few positive things happening however. Football is popular on the blocks and so also is netball. On the other hand, there has been the emergence of gangs and there is now block rivalry that is supported with violence. There are also young men who hang out in the hills and may come down from time to time.

There is also allegedly, a kind of 'CSME in the hills', with nationals of other islands

joining with others in SVG to organise production and distribution of marijuana. The activities in the hills have been responsible for resources for building some of the biggest houses in SVG, and some of the operators even contribute to communities. It is difficult to dissuade a young man whose earning capacity in the formal economy is that of labourer with an income of \$35 to \$40 per day, as against earnings that allow for the acquisition of a Lexus and a home of over \$500,000. Some of these young people own speed boats, restaurants and have other large investments.

4.3.1 Community Development Division

The Division has had difficulty in the conduct of its work, because of the resource constraints that it has faced. It sees its role in terms of providing assistance to NGOs and CBOs and other agencies involved in communities. There are agencies established to assist with the programmes supported by the SIF. It is organised at the district level with field officers serving the respective communities.

The field officers all get training starting with short courses. More structured training is secured in programmes offered in Jamaica. The officers are located across SVG, and the service extends to almost all of the Grenadines.. The Officer in Union Island used to service Canouan, but this no longer applies. Mayreau is serviced by the officer from Union Island.

In respect of the Carib Community, there are lots of agencies that have been working

together. The Carib Community has been the most studied in SVG. However, while studies have been done, there has not been very much by way of intervention. SIF has just started a project in the area. It works mainly with CBOs. There are highly effective NGOs operating in certain parts of the country – GEMS, WINFA, and Projects Promotion are among them.

One important initiative has been the Orange Hill Development. UNDP has been the major contributor to a poverty reduction project in the area. There are two income generating projects that have taken off with support from UNDP – a plantain chip project and a pig rearing project. In the first, there are 6 women involved, and they work closely with a group of farmers.

There have been programmes of capacity building in some of the banana growing areas. The Community Development Division did not become directly involved in this area, but it has facilitated access to agencies offering training. There has also been a small business initiative: developing sustainable activity remains a challenge.

The Community Development Division and the Youth Department have sought to work together and to network between themselves. All the development practitioners get together from time to time, to review their initiatives. In the area from south Windward to Fancy, things have gone well. There is a focus on gender and on youth that have remained at the core of service provision. Family Services are part of the network. Community Development is

better placed to contribute and to mobilise the other government agencies.

More resources are required to assist poor communities. There is also need for institutional strengthening, and the Division would do well with a review of its operations as part of a change management thrust. Rose Place is the poorest urban community.

4.3.2 Youth Affairs Division

The Department of Youth Affairs is a Government institution but it does depend on support from external agencies including UNICEF which has provided resources for celebrations related to Universal Children’s Day and there is also support to CARICOM Ambassadors. There is also external support for a programme on HIV/AIDS. The Government of Taiwan has also been a source of support especially for the Youth Empowerment (YES) Programme which provides on the job experience for young people.

There is also the Commonwealth Youth Programme which offers training up to the Diploma level in youth development work. There is also a weekly radio programme directed at youth which is known as Youth Now which addresses topics of interest to young people and which seeks to reach youth ‘on the block’ and to develop a rapport with them and it seeks to reach drop-outs from the secondary school system.

The Department is fully sensitive to the male youth problem and the gang violence. Gang warfare is rearing its ugly head in St. Vincent and there have been some killings. There is clearly evidence of production and sale or distribution of marijuana. The Police work through Police Youth Clubs in some communities. Teenage pregnancy is also another problem and Planned Parenthood Association does have an adolescent group. There has not been a problem of condom distribution and this may be because the Roman Catholic presence is not dominant.

In the conduct of its youth programmes the Department faces the 'get rich quick' syndrome among the youth who are not interested in taking measured steps towards their own development. Its youth group programme is subscribed mainly by young women rather than young men. There have been problems in getting postings for on the job training in the YES Programme. The resources are inadequate to cover the Grenadines although there are youth problems there as well. There are 4H groups which receive the support of the Division and the Division is also involved in the organisation of the Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

4.4 Ministry of Rural Transformation, Information, Postal Service and Ecclesiastical Affairs

The Ministry has been in operations since 2005. One of its primary goals is Public Sector Reform, and in that regard, is seeking to deal with mind-set problems in the Public Service.

In respect of its role in the rural community, it seeks to perform a coordinating role, identifying gaps in the existing delivery system and cuts across the silos that exist among Ministries and Departments in their interventions in rural communities. As a first step, it has established an inventory of interventions, including those being undertaken by NGOs and private sector organisations operating in the rural sector.

Then, there is the issue of rural communities themselves. One major challenge that the Ministry has had to deal with is in respect of the beneficiaries of the land redistribution programmes at the Orange Estate. Some beneficiaries were not well oriented to being independent farmers, having been employees before.

In gaining the commitment of NGOs and the private sector, consultations have been held with the range of stakeholders in the NGO and private sector, to come up with a vision and mission that could be common to all in the matter of the Millennium Development Goals.

The Basic Needs Trust Fund falls under this Ministry which has a reasonable complement of technical/professional staff, and some with considerable experience.

The Ministry is just getting up to speed in terms of its operation. Initially supplied with provisional staff, it is still seeking to establish what is the most efficient method of rural transformation. At another level, it is seeking to encourage behaviour changes among the population, including getting

people to get into backyard gardening. There is need for a thrust to rural development and coordination is the key to the achievement of that objective.

The Ministry takes account of cultural factors and differences among communities, as it embarks on reshaping the socio-psychological infrastructure. There is need to employ e-government and to make it available at the community level. Young people in Georgetown and Fancy, for example, can benefit from this initiative.

4.5 Basic Need Trust Fund

BNTF focuses on infrastructure, skills training, social infrastructure, day care centres, health centres and schools, including pre-schools. The Basic Needs Trust Fund is limited to seven areas. It targets communities solely. The Social Investment Fund, on the other hand, is wider in the range of needs that it addresses. It targets access roads and community markets. It has been financed by the CDB in the main, but there has been support from CIDA, and the GoSVG. The Ministry of Rural Transformation has oversight over this programme. The Committee responsible for running the programme is comprised of four Government members and four non-Government. There are 7 persons employed in the BNTF.

Currently, they are engaged in the BNTF 5 Programme. There have been delays in the implementation of the programme. The access road aspect of the programme is

more evident. One such project is about to start in Owia.

One of the challenges in implementation of the BNTF programmes relates to the procedures. There is need for considerable community involvement in any project. But self-help has not been all that successful in SVG, according to the respondent. If any part of the project is contracted out, then the community is not going to work for free in any area of it. The CDB requires also that any contracting of services be done by public tender.

Every effort is made to structure projects to assist rural communities. There have been projects that involve skills training. There are cottage industries, like tie-dyeing and cassava production where skills need to be imparted. Over the period of its operations, BNTF has provided assistance to almost all the communities of country – from Fancy to Union Island.

4.6 Social Investment Fund

The SIF has been in operation since 2004. Its modalities are different from the BNTF. While the latter is project led, the SIF is autonomous, and is established in law. It has a wider focus that embraces national development and it is under the NSDEC. It may receive funding from different sources. Its initial support came from STABEX funding provided by the European Union. There is also the Special Framework of Assistance of the EU. Both programmes have very extensive manuals that are

daunting in respect of how funds might be accessed and disbursed.

There are two broad programme areas under the SIF. There is the initiative that allows for interventions in the poorest communities, providing assistance to community groups. There must be in place organised community groups, and there is need for a process to be observed in which the community identifies its priorities and has to demonstrate its internal capacity to manage any support that may be provided.

There are some \$4.25M Euro available to this programme, and the primary objectives are that the support should contribute to improved competitiveness, to diversification and to poverty reduction and stabilisation. Some 60 percent of the funds can be allocated to educational and social programmes.

There is also the programme for the vulnerable that focuses on groups at risk: these may include street children. About 16 percent of the funding can be allocated to programmes for the vulnerable. The Liberty Lodge can qualify for assistance from this programme. There are also persons with disabilities, like the blind who might receive assistance under this programme. The administrative costs of running the entire SIF should not exceed 7 percent of the allocation.

The SIF is also involved in community mobilisation. However, the society has experienced a decline in voluntarism and there is a lack of community leadership.

Teachers used to be involved in community work, but this has waned. Moreover, they are very likely to be engaged in distance education programmes and to be interested in their own social and economic mobility, and thus have little time for community work as before. Thus, there has been a decline in community organisation, and it is difficult to get residents in communities to address community issues. The SIF has sought to establish communication with young people in communities.

Some of the communities that have benefited from the SIF include Lauders Estate, Denniston, where a pavilion has been provided and Mayreau, where a recreation court has been constructed for residents. There are a few community initiatives that have attracted the attention of the SIF.

There are community groups that have sought to develop basic training in computers. There is also an education project that is built around the development of library/information system with appropriate computer hardware in place. There has also been the upgrading of school facilities as in the case of Diamond, where a lunch room was provided and a toilet block was refurbished.

There have been pilot projects at the community level in disaster management, and there have been capacity building projects for youth in central Windward.

There are community development projects that have received funding as evidenced in

community steelband projects, that have a tourism orientation. There are projects in Canouan, Union Island and in Boucaiment, in the Grenadines and on the largest island- Stubb's, Greiggs and Lauders- that have benefited.

Funds have been allocated to playing fields in North Leeward, Ottley Hall, Park Hill and Richmond Park. The development of these open spaces has allowed communities to provide exercise areas for the elderly.

Funds from the SFA have been used to support selected vulnerable groups: a poultry project has been developed with the Society for the Blind. The Liberty Lodge has received an allocation, and there is a provision to assist street children, and a home for the elderly. Other funding for the SIF has come from the Alba-Caribe Fund, which is supported with tranches from the Government of Venezuela.

4.7 National Insurance Services

The National Insurance Service became operational in 1987, with a mission to provide social security and to promote social and economic development in St. Vincent and the Grenadines through prudent financial and people-centred management of social services. It is structured along the same pattern as other national insurance schemes in the Commonwealth Caribbean, that were established with the assistance of the ILO following the achievement of independence in these countries.

The NIS is designed to provide social protection against certain risks, and ensures a range of benefits to contributors in times of low or no income, or in the event of illness. The Scheme has made adjustments to the size of the contributions as recently as 2005. NIS plays a key role as a safety net that is based on the careful investment of the savings mobilised from workers and their employers. It is relied on by most workers in the country, and indeed, most of the adult population. The self employed were brought into the Scheme in 1997.

NIS has had to support a non-contributory pension scheme, on its coming into being: a significant number would not have contributed for long enough to qualify for the pension. Banana farmers are being regarded as a "special case".

The fund contributes to economic expansion through important investments in the country. There is the allocation of EC\$7.5M on student loans in a revolving fund. The interest cost to the student is eight percent. There is a very low delinquency rate: students generally repay their loans. NIS acts as a guarantor, and the commercial banks administer the loans. NIS retains only four percent of the interest charged to the student.

Initially the retirement age was 70, but now people are asking for their benefits from as early as 65 years of age and under. Persons must have made contributions over a period of eight years to qualify for the minimum pension. The problem is that given the nature of labour market, there are workers who are not in regular jobs that allow them to contribute regularly. There is need for a National Pension Policy to treat

with the problem of flexibility and volatility in the labour market.

According to the Management, the following are some of the issues to be addressed in the administration of the service:

- a. Many persons are dying from HIV/AIDS: there are more than 900 cases on file, since the recording of cases of the disease in the country.
- b. There is a reciprocal agreement with CARICOM, so people work overseas and contribute. They have a right to be treated as if all contributions had been made in one nation state/member state; but there are technical difficulties in implementation of this and in dealing with those that leave and come back.
- c. The narrow base of investment: there is need to push investments in order to maximise returns, especially in the face of ageing populations. But there is also the vulnerability of the country, located in the hurricane belt of the Caribbean which imperils a fund in which all of the investments are made in the countries within the area.
- d. Harmonisation through the ECCB will help in reducing risk with the administration of the fund. One objective is a one-stop shop, at which workers could be informed on their overall pension benefits from the various countries. This would also include legislation change regarding the retirement age. There is a need to increase the retirement age across the board to 65 years of age, because of the increase in life expectancy and ageing of the population. Barbados

has made a decision to go to 70, but whatever the decision it must be done on a phased basis.

- e. The readiness of the country for a National Health Insurance (NHI). According to the respondent, a study found that Health Services Department had lost its more experienced personnel, with many of the higher officials having left because they had come of age. This would pose a problem in the implementation of NHI.

In general, public perception of NIS is good and population generally regards the office as being well-run. In addition, it has contributed in some key areas in pushing outward the production possibility curve of the country.

There are a few agencies that have contributed considerably to social development in terms of their building capacity and preparing the population for the future. Scores are presented in Table 4.1.

TABLE 4.1: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES SCORES

Organisation	Score
Ministry of Education	4
NIT	4
Ministry of Health	3
Ministry of National Mobilisation	3
Ministry of Rural Transformation	3
Community Development Division	3
Youth Affairs Division	4
BNTF	3
SIF	4
NIS	5

5.0 INSTITUTIONS IN THE DELIVERY OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Following the recommendations of the Moyne Commission, the countries of the region instituted a number of measures designed to provide a range of transfers to sections of the population that are deemed to be most vulnerable. In the decades that have followed political independence, the Governments have expanded on these provisions, in some cases in keeping with commitments made as part of international society, in others in response to social demand in the society itself. There has also been a network of NGOs and CBOs that mobilise resources from within the society or as affiliates of international NGOs, in bringing assistance to the population. SVG has in place a number of transfer mechanisms, under the control of the State and among the NGOs.

5.1 Ministry of National Mobilisation, Social Development and Local Government

The Ministry of National Mobilisation has responsibility for Family Affairs. It is the focal point for many of the social transfers provided by the Government to most vulnerable in the society. At the same time, the Ministry is seeking to improve its social safety net which is based on Public Assistance, provision for destitute persons, logistical support to persons needing this in the areas of education and health. The Ministry also contributes to the refurbishing and rebuilding of homes of elderly people, where they cannot afford it. The Ministry has in place a programme to assist the

elderly: there are some 70 persons who have been trained to provide home-help to the elderly.

There is also provision for a rebate to elderly, in respect of the payment of their electricity bills. The Ministry has oversight of the Lewis Punnett Home, and there are two activity centres that allow for the provision of day-care for the elderly. There are three private homes for the elderly, but the charges are quite high by local standards and only the well-to-do can take advantage of these facilities. In recent times, Public Assistance has been doubled, and there has been an increase in the provision for persons with disabilities. There has also been an increase in the provision for burial assistance.

The Ministry makes special arrangements for children in schools, and more so for children with challenges. However, there are no homework centres. There is also an outreach programme for children – Children against Poverty. There is no safe home for children that fall victim to child abuse. However, the Ministry is working on the development of a crisis centre to protect women and children in abusive situations. The Ministry has put arrangements in place that allow for teen mothers to return to school, and a parenting programme has been developed also. The Ministry has within its portfolio, the Liberty Lodge Boys Training Centre.

5.2 National Family Planning Programme

Family Planning started as a project, which then became the National Family Planning Programme of the Government in 1975. It falls under the Ministry of Health and the Environment. Service delivery is done at two centres, one in Kingstown and one in Georgetown, and the services are free. The Programme is now an integrated programme, part of Maternal Child Health and Family Services of the Ministry of Health, offering a comprehensive range of services.

Contraceptives are distributed through the network of health centres (39) throughout SVG, free of charge. Their efforts are concentrated on adolescents who account for 21 percent of all births. However, teenage pregnancies are slowly on the decline (see table below). The Programme would not take the kudos for the success in reducing the births by teenage mothers.

There are the health education services for the prevention of pregnancies in particular. There are Adolescent groups (25) attached to the Health Centres from 9 - 19 years old,

in mixed groups girls and boys. They are guided to make informed choices about their sexual behaviour. Efforts are made to promote abstinence at this level.

Family Planning Awareness Week is observed annually. In 2007, the theme was "Healthy men, Healthy families". The idea was that they would promote the responsibility of males; distribute information from Health Information Unit; and distribute condoms (male and female condoms).

One area of male health that has raised concern is Male Prostate Cancer. It is a major chronic disease: the data show an alarmingly high incidence.

The Unit has hosted an Adolescent Camp every year for the last nine years. Sixty-seven children participated last year (usually an average of 70). The participants were taken to the Mental Health Unit, where they got to meet with Drug Abusers and persons living with HIV/AIDS. These types of activities help them to make better decisions.

TABLE 5.1: TEEN BIRTHS AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL BIRTHS

Year	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001
All Births	1,754	1,675	1,654	1,923	1,985	2,109
Teenage Births	323	341	337	398	425	425
of which:						
Age 10 - 14	13	17	10	10	13	15
Age 15-19	310	324	327	388	412	412
Teen births as percentage of all births	18.4	20.4	20.4	20.7	21.4	20.2

The Unit collaborates with agencies and organisations that promote reproductive health, family planning and population control.

5.3 Nutrition Support Programme

The United Nations (UN) Poverty Alleviation Strategy started the School Feeding Programme back in 1984 to provide the poor and indigent at schools in rural areas with a meal of milk and biscuits, which was later replaced with milk and a sandwich, for breakfast. The overall aim was to reduce under-nutrition and also to encourage school attendance.

The programme was stopped in 1996 or thereabouts when funding from the original source ended, but the government decided to restart it in 1997. It is now a joint collaboration between the Ministries of Health and Education, and has been expanded to provide lunches at most primary schools (98 percent) - with breakfast and lunch.

The primary aim of the Nutrition Support Programme (NSP) is to provide supplementary food for women, infant and children. There are two components of the programme - the (traditional) School Feeding Programme and a Supplemental Feeding Programme which provides food baskets to beneficiaries at maternal and child care clinics. The programme also aims to reduce malnutrition in children and lactating mothers. Usually either the Principal at the school or the nurses at the clinics would recommend the beneficiary to

the programme or sign them up: there are some basic criteria to be observed.

In the year 2002, the programme reached some 1,885 beneficiaries at 37 Health clinics 6,554 children in 61 primary schools and 2,479 infants in 65 pre-schools. Although the data for more recent years are not available, the figures are anticipated to be even higher since the Programme has increased its coverage from 34 percent of primary schools and 81 percent of pre-schools in 2002, to more than 98 percent of all schools. By 2006 the Programme was reaching some 10,918 recipients (per year) - 9,062 of whom were school children (primary and preschool).

Pre-schools and Primary schools are supplied with the raw materials based on numbers at school in programme meals are prepared at the school. The Nutrition Unit also determines the menus. On this basis, the NSP determines various items and the quantities that are needed. They do not however provide vegetables or other perishables.

In 2006, the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute (CFNI) did a study to evaluate the impact of the programme. The preliminary findings suggest that the meals need to be standardised across the schools: in some schools not enough greens are being served. It is recognised that the Unit needs to do more monitoring of the programme as originally intended.

At Health Centres, milk, rice, flour, peas, margarine are provided once per month

and these are served through all Health Centres in St Vincent and in the Grenadines. The Nurses are able to monitor the impact of the programme, e.g. an under-nourished child is monitored over time, b/o weight and growth of the children. There has been an increase in the number of children as a result of the programme CFNI Report. On an ad hoc basis, some supplies may be sent to SSNC and SFOR Building (once per quarter). There was some discussion about providing the elderly with food supplies, but this is not currently being done under this programme.

The menus being served have a high import content. They purchase the items that can be purchased locally but most are imported from the region. Some canned goods are purchased from Trinidad and Tobago, the flour is being manufactured locally now, the brown sugar is from Guyana. They encourage schools to purchase green vegetables and fish from communities; some schools make an effort to do this. Schools are supplied with the following on a monthly basis: milk, sugar, peas, chicken, corned beef, chicken franks, cheese, white flour, juice (powered concentrate) and macaroni. The children are asked to make a small contribution of fifty cents. They will receive free if they cannot pay. The contribution is used to offset some of the operational costs of the programme.

There is also a skills training component related to the Programme which aims to help parents to become self-sufficient, by providing training in cosmetology, hair dressing, so they could eventually be

weaned off of the Programme and start earning an income.

In terms of staff at the NSP – there are two technical staff, two truck drivers, three scale attendants, four loaders, and two caretakers. The nurses who work to distribute the baskets at the clinics do not count as staff but are essential to the process, as are the cooks and principals at the school. They work closely with the Nutrition Unit and the Co-ordinator of School Nutrition Programme in Ministry of Education – Primary and Pre School. Sometimes it is also necessary to team up with the Public Health department on Health and Safety measures.

The Study also made the assessment that the Programme has a lot of potential: people depend heavily on the programme. It has been suggested that schools can start a backyard gardening related to the nutrition programme, but more schools need to come back on board with this.

5.4 Nutrition Unit

The Nutrition Unit was established as a Government Department in 1989 after being a project funded by the Nutrition Support Programme. At that time the primary function of the unit was to reduce the number of undernourished babies. The services of the unit have since widened to include public health nutrition as well as the provision of dietary services at hospitals and other government institutions. The unit undertakes a lot of coordination of nutrition services in health and other sectors. The

unit also engages in public awareness activities as they prepare media programmes and post articles on the internet. The unit provides technical guidelines to the School Feeding Nutrition Support Programme. They have also developed the National Nutritional Policy.

Additional proposed programmes include the introduction of a new Child Health Record as well as a project where nutritional advice and care would be provided to persons with HIV/AIDS.

The Unit currently has seven persons on staff – two at the management level and five at the technical level. This staff complement is currently inadequate as is the level of training of staff. The lack of adequate resources constrains the unit as it cannot meet certain community needs particularly in remote areas such as ‘over the river’ and in the interior of the island. Despite the challenges the unit feels that it is doing very well in the delivery of its service.

In the conduct and provision of its service the Unit collaborates with the Community Nursing Service, the National AIDS Secretariat, the Maternal and Child Health Committee, the Department of Sports, the Youth Department, the Community Development Department as well as the Hospital. IT also collaborates with agencies such as CFNI, CARDI, FAO and UNICEF.

In Sion Hill, as of March 2008, 2.4 percent of children underweight while 12 percent were overweight. In Overland three out of ten children were underweight, five out of ten

normal weight and two out of ten were over weight. In Owia, 18.0 percent of children were underweight, 66 percent had adequate weight and 14 percent were overweight.

5.5 National Society of Persons with Disabilities

The National Society of Persons with Disabilities (NSPD) is a non-profit organisation serving Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) and advocating for their welfare, education, rehabilitation and employment. The NSPD also works to prevent needless disability and to facilitate the integration/reintegration of PWDs into society.

The society provides a forum for discussion among PWDs and aim to encourage entrepreneurship among adult PWDs and integration of the children into mainstream schools. The problems related to this may be simple (such as schools are not wheelchair accessible) or may be more complex. The organisation does a significant amount of work trying to educate society on dealing with PWDs.

In 2007, the NSPD celebrated its 20th anniversary. It currently provides computer classes, sewing classes a holiday programme for children and various workshops. The computer classes are possible because of grant funding received from the Caribbean umbrella organisation (the Caribbean Organisation of Disabled Persons) in 2003, which enabled them to purchase four computers. The programme was very highly subscribed but is currently

in jeopardy since three of the computers now need to be repaired and they also need a volunteer trainer to facilitate the programme.

The sewing classes came on stream in 2006 with funding from the state SVGSIF. Twelve young persons received training in the first round and 9 persons are being trained in the second round, currently under way. For each of the last six years, the NSPD has hosted a Holiday Programme for Children with disabilities ages 6 – 13 years old. It is funded by local sponsors from the private sector. The usual uptake is 25 children usually, but in 2007 they were able to take 31 children. The children are usually drawn from the Sunny Vale Primary School, a school for children with disabilities including learning disabilities, with which the NSPD has a close relationship.

There are also a range of services which are provided on a smaller scale. There is an annual walkathon which raises funds for the Society and which also funds an education scholarship for one or two students each year. Workshops on various topics are also held each year – in 2007 the focus of the Workshop was on HIV/AIDS. The society also offers assistance to persons in acquiring wheelchairs, crutches, walkers, or those belonging to their community who need to have corrective surgery overseas, medication or glasses. For example, one child about eight or nine years of age had surgery on his legs and now he has had a prosthesis for five years. There is a Wheelchair Foundation/Programme, which is funded by NAPWBL in Trinidad; there

are some criteria for determining those who would not otherwise be able to afford it. And home visits are provided to those not able to come out, e.g. elderly with disability in special need for transportation.

Basically they offer Cradle to Grave Programmes to all PWDs and are heavily dependent on volunteers. The public awareness programmes are also conducted in primary schools to try to help children at primary level grow into adults who will understand PWDs. The beneficiaries are a mix of all types of disabilities. Most are blind, several are hearing impaired or physically challenged. A few are autistic, dyslexic (and other learning disabilities). A survey in 2002 found that large numbers of children were being born with glaucoma. The main issue with the school for the children with disabilities is that there are a large number of them compared to caregivers. The result is that teachers do not take children if they need help to go to the bathroom. There is need to have caregivers at the school – to help children beyond what teachers are willing or trained to do.

There is a board of directors, Trustees and Executives, President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Public Relations Officer. The day-to-day operations are managed by the President, the office Administrator/co-ordinator, and the three food nutritionists. The agency is in receipt of a \$30,000 subvention from government which is supplemented with a number of fund raising events and with donations from various local and international bodies.

In the view of the president, the computer training is key because they will then be able to place people in office jobs. They have already placed some persons in regular jobs; some of the men do woodwork and upholstery and some of the ladies do hairdressing or work in hotels. Some Community Learning Resource Centres have been put in place and PWDs were encouraged to be part of this. They work with other agencies such as Centre for the Blind, National Disabilities Awareness Movement, Helping Hand Centre.

International Day of the Disabled is celebrated on December 3rd and the whole society comes together to celebrate with a week of events. The Governor General might even host a party for all PWDs.

They are under the Ministry of National Mobilisation (previously under Ministry of Education). They are currently lobbying the Ministry for a Desk to treat with PWDs. All PWDs are entitled to public assistance of \$110 per month plus free local medical care (in theory), duty free wheel chairs, etc.

They are also in need of a building, but the Government has promised land to them for a new building and SIF will fund and build for them.

5.6 VINSAVE – SVG Save the Children Fund

VINSAVE is a non-profit, voluntary organisation whose mission is to secure the best interest of children as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and to enable and to empower communities to

participate in their own development; and to influence national policies and programmes which bring direct benefits to children.

The Fund was introduced just about 40 years ago in the Windward Islands by the British Save the Children Fund (in 1963). At that time, there was a high infant death, malnutrition, etc. so they came to deal with these types of problems. They focused on nutrition of children and mothers. Preschool and daycare programmes. In 1969 the Canadian Save the Children Fund (CANSAVE) took over and supported the programme until 1995.

The organisation currently provides early childhood education to children aged six months to five years. They also offer accredited training programmes in child development and child care. Students gain their practical experience at VINSAVE.

The children who are part of their early childhood programme, receive a nutritious meal. They get milk and cornmeal from government school feeding programme, but there is a menu committee to plan menus.

In addition to their staff there are also a number of volunteers. There are some Japanese volunteers, whose involvement was arranged by the embassy and there are usually one or two Peace Corps Volunteers in the locations outside of Kingstown.

The organisation raises most of its funds on its own, but is in receipt of a Government subvention of \$25,000 per year. Funding

from the government comes from Ministry of Health (Ministry also trains teachers in nutrition, etc.). Funds are raised primarily through the fees for the training programmes and for childcare, but there are also some income generating projects integrated with VINSAVE as a community development project, e.g. sewing, baking, poultry, community cook shop.

Initially, their services used to be free, as the purpose was to meet the needs of under-privileged children whose parents needed to work. Subsequently, a charge was introduced. Social welfare sponsors some of the children, churches or the Gender Affairs Department, so that adolescent mothers can go back to school.

Currently, there are 120 children in Kingstown. In Myreau, the enrolment has dropped to 40 from 75, as the birthrate is falling and in Layou there are 40 children involved.

There are three persons in administration; one training co-ordinator and two field officers. Taking care of the children there are supervisors, assistants, teachers and a social Worker. All the teachers would have completed at least six months of their training (most have done one year).

VINSAVE is seeking accreditation as the main training institution for early childhood education, but there is a threat to their sustainability – they need a sustainable source of funding if they are to continue to provide quality care.

Cost:

Babies – \$220

Toddlers – \$175

Pre school (1 and 2) – \$450 per term

These are the costs in Kingstown, which take care of all charges, including food and supplies, but rural communities have lower costs.

The main issue that they are facing is that they need parents to partner with them in providing for the emotional and other forms of development for the child. But parents need support, they need information about how to take care of their children; to understand the stages in their development.

5.7 Bread of Life

The Bread of Life Corpus Christi Carmelite Sisters in SVG cater to children who have been orphaned or abandoned. It is run by a Carmelite nun and was started in the Kingstown Diocese.

World Bank donated a van three years ago; the neighbour assists in taking the children to school and back because the organisation does not have a driver in its employ. There is additional funding from I AM Company in Cayman for a handyman and a driver. There are a few volunteers.

It started as a prayer group, but members saw the need for outreach and decided on this Ministry. The organisation opened its doors in 1995 to 10 young people (teenagers at the time). At the start, it was only for girls

with nowhere to go, then a few years later they got a call from the Hospital and started taking in orphan children. The first was a six year old; she is now 14 years old (in 2007) and going to Convent. Now they have four boys and five girls.

The boys are aged six to eight years of age and the girls are aged three to sixteen. Two of the children were picked up on the street, with a brother who was eight at the time. The 16 year old is finishing school and is being adopted by someone who was previously a volunteer at the home. She will go to the USA if all goes well.

The church did the initial refurbishment through funding from Rome in 1995.

Their mission now is to care for orphaned or abandoned children and children, placed with them through the hospital or the department of Social Services. They provide a home for the children but also reach out to their relatives, providing them with counselling and a support group.

The staff is three plus the director. One of the persons currently employed as a live in helper to care for the children and the home in general used to live there as a teenager. The Carmelite nun who runs the place is a volunteer (not paid).

The financing for the organisation is mainly through the church, friends and donations. Catholic Organisations abroad send funds – Rome, USA, Canada. The Government gives a flat subvention of \$2,500 quarterly. Plus they receive \$150 per month for two of

the children who were placed through Social Services. All the children get uniforms and books. Medication costs can be a burden if not available from the hospital.

There are other sources of funding. The organisation is opening a fowl farm which has been funded by KIWANIS Club and Change for Children and Knights of Columbus. It was completed in 2007 but not yet opened.

They also received funding from the World Bank of EC\$1M to expand the building on the four acres of land in the vicinity. The organisation also received funding from the Government of SVG. Right now the capacity is for nine children, but after the expansion, it should be possible to accommodate 24 children and to provide a recreation area and better facilities.

There is a Road Project and playground which is to be funded by I AM Company in Cayman – they have sent the money already in the sum of \$300,000.

There is a doctor associated with the paediatric care unit at the Hospital, who visits the home and checks on the children.

5.7.1 Concerns

The HIV situation in the country is bad and is getting worse, according to one interviewee. Many young people are falling prey. Stigmatisation is still high. Mothers who do not want their HIV positive status to be exposed, do not go for treatment and

worse, they do not take their children for treatment.

There are some success stories. Three of the children so far have been adopted by persons living in the USA. One of the boys was adopted by a woman in Italy, whose sister was a volunteer at the home. Another girl who was adopted by a family in the USA was the lone survivor of a family with HIV/AIDS. Another little boy who was abandoned and came to the home at 3 years of age was adopted at the age of 4. Generally they are adopted into Catholic Families that are in the church.

They try to ensure that the children have a normal life, at the schools that they attend during the day. The older ones that show an interest in art, cooking, singing are also encouraged and supported to follow these programmes that interest them.

According to the Manager, the parents that are abandoning their children are generally NOT teenagers.

School feeding programme is available at primary schools: it costs \$2.50 per child per week.

- a. The Manager commented on service delivery to some of the vulnerable: Representatives of the social services agencies have been around but have not built anything to deal with the problem of children being abandoned or street children. The foster care is the only approach that has been taken, but people are not willing. In fact it does not really make sense for them

financially; since they would get \$150 for the child, which is not enough.

- b. Liberty Lodge takes only boys, mainly those on the street that are sent by Social Services
- c. A new Home in Mesopotamia run by the Cluny Sisters will take street children, abandoned, and pregnant teenage girls.
- d. Girls are not prevented from returning to school if they become pregnant. The principal at Convent (a prestigious Catholic Secondary School for girls) used to let girls come back without the uniform and sit the exam.
- e. But nothing in place for abandoned women.
- f. House of Hope - looks after HIV positive adults and tries to do something for the HIV positive vagrants who are on the street.

5.8 St. Vincent and the Grenadines Christian Council

The Council consists of the Salvation Army, and the Catholic, Methodist and Anglican churches. The Council has been unable to get the smaller churches to become members but has worked with them effectively. Instances of this collaboration include the AIDS Workshop for Clergy, and the observance of an Ecumenical Mass on Independence Day. The council has also worked with the Spiritual Baptist.

The Council is funded mainly by member churches and the organisers seek funding

for individual projects. The Council relies on volunteers.

Projects of the Council include Glebe Hill in Barouraille. This involved 15 acres of land owned by the Anglican Church where people began to squat on. The Anglican Church gave the land to the Council which has been working with the community since the 1980s.

Most of the activities/projects of the Council are one-off events. In recent times, there has been a focus on HIV/AIDS. The Council held an HIV/AIDS sensitisation workshop with hopes of conducting another workshop which is expected to go much deeper.

The Council is responsible for the organisation of a Service at the beginning of the Law Term, at Independence and Thanksgiving as well as at Palm Sunday. Each of the component church bodies has social programmes. For instance, the Catholic Church has an Adult Feeding Programme which is conducted on a daily basis. The Methodist Church also has a daily *Meals on Wheels* Programme and there is a Soup Kitchen run by the Anglican Church on a daily basis.

Counselling services are also provided by the Council for members of the Council as well as members of the public. The Council also engages in education and outreach at the primary school level.

In the last two General Elections, the Council was engaged in monitoring of the

campaign and the elections themselves. There was code of conduct developed and parties agreed to adhere to this code. The Council is seen in some quarters as a moral authority and mediator for issues of national concern.

The Council has representation on various committees in St. Vincent. Some of these include the Disaster Preparedness Committee, the Education Board for Community College, and a committee dealing with Crime and Violence as well as the Independence Committee.

5.9 Marion House

The Marion House is a social service organisation catering to children and their families – they provide a variety of social, health and education services to residents of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, including women and children who are victims of family violence. It has been in operation since October 2nd, 1989. They offer programmes tailored to the needs of children and youth. Counselling is ecumenical and free of charge; persons can walk in. Counselling is offered to families, groups or individuals, on all aspects of life – behavioural, marital, suicide. They state their goal as wanting “to offer a comprehensive programme to young unemployed persons aimed at increasing their employability and independence.

Their Youth Assistance Programme caters to youths 15 years and over (mainly 15 to 19). It was designed out of need expressed by clients to help parents and adolescents

deal with the transition - three months programme. One of the major findings from this programme is that children felt they were failures because they did not pass the Common Entrance exam.

In the first year the programme directors saw behaviour that was common to the group, e.g. the beneficiaries were not cordial, and they seldom made eye contact, seldom made apologies and had no sense of common courtesy. This programme focuses on personal development and lasted three months, but at the end of three months they had not scratched the surface.

The new structure of the programme is:

- Six months - Personal development
- Two months - Apprentice world of work
- Month four to month six - Skills training in craft, auto mechanics, hairdressing, information technology and child care.

The presence of Marion House is testimony to the voluntary effort of citizens in SVG. The Marion House is NOT under the Catholic Church, the name is just because Father Mike (the founding father).

In terms of their recruitment process, in the first year they advertised but now members do the advertisement on their behalf. There is usually a waiting list.

Their Young Parents' Programme aims to treat with societal problems such as child abuse, incest (some research that was done which found children with young women as parents), domestic abuse. They

discovered that in many cases where child abuse was prevalent, it really was a case of ignorance; parents just did not know! They discovered that people talk in Mode II - that is they talk to/at and did not listen to children. One of the social problems that they uncovered was that there were also many young girls with lots of children.

Thus, Marion House personnel designed the programme to bring skills to parents and also to get young persons to delay the second pregnancy (to break the cycle). The programme caters to single parents, and unemployed parents aged 17 years and above. The programme has been in existence from 1990 to present. It started as a 3-month programme and then became a 6-month programme. Now it is a one year programme. Parents come in one day per week and learn a skill, engage in dialogue and get attached to a clinic where they can learn information on nutrition, etc. They are then able to pass on this information themselves.

Marion House is proud of the Graduates of its programme. One of its graduates is working at a radio station. Others have become entrepreneurs - one raises rabbits, another sells her limes to a large supermarket. Yet another has developed a business selling black cake at first and has now opened a deli. Some have gone to British Navy and Army or have become nurses. They have turned out over 1,000 parents and youths thus far. These results were possible because through the programme the participants were able to experience increased confidence levels.

There are two locations - in Kingstown and in Georgetown. The latter serves the youth from Sandy Bay and one in Kingstown serves the youth from Chateaubelair.

There was a fire 1998, which a lot of the Research was lost. They re-built the building and moved there in 2002. They also used to do a Radio Programme (but this stopped after the fire).

The Chemical Dependency Programme helps individuals deal with all substance abuse (including cigarettes). Sessions are either one on one or in groups with family. If needed person may also be referred to or sent to Alcoholics Anonymous.

They have a staff of nine - the director and assistant director, a co-ordinator, and an assistant who focuses on the youth programmes. There also two Peace Corps volunteers.

On the basis of some experience in Barbados with NCH Action for Children, some research was undertaken which led to the identification of a number of social problems in SVG and this led to the start of the programmes. During 1993-2003, the EU funded the youth programme as well as the Young Parenting Programme from 2000-2003.

UNICEF/UNESCO and the US Embassy contributed also, and the British High Commission funded the nutrition component of the Adult Parenting Programme completely. They offered

starter kits, transportation, equipment for the class. There has been no funding from Government although requests have been made through the Ministry responsible for Community Development.

The beneficiaries include youths generally. In terms of the intake they may interview 200 persons but only take 30 persons because of funding and lack of persons to facilitate. But the beneficiaries do not display a specific pattern - they represent persons who have suffered a range of abuse - problems don't have a face

Their selection criteria are based on persons who are really in need of a second chance, persons who are at risk and would otherwise not make it, persons in need of self confidence.

Some of the issues facing youths include:

- The get rich quickly attitude;
- Lack of willingness to start from the bottom,
- The proclivity to cheat, steal or get involved in gangs or carrying guns.
- Lack of work ethics;
- Lack of a sense of responsibility
- People genuinely looking for work and cannot find what they want prefer to stay at home or they have the attitude that they will be taken care of, e.g. big brother abroad will send barrels.

The Marion House is in need of funding to keep the programmes running and hire and pay staff with the same vision.

5.10 Thompson Home

Thompson Home has been providing accommodation for senior citizens since 1899, when it was first opened to house aged women, made destitute and homeless by the hurricane of 1889. On December 1999, they celebrated their 100th anniversary. Initially the home accommodated eight persons but requests increased annually and the facility was eventually extended – six rooms were added. The current capacity is 25 males, and 15 females. Some women come because of their having no-one to take care of them; they would therefore commit all their resources for their protection until death.

It is a non-profit organisation, funded mainly by a trust set up by Lady E.F.B Thompson. The Trust has been exhausted so they rely on a small donation from the Lewis Punett Home and a Government subvention of \$3,000. In the 1980s there was a need for a lot of fund raising and the need for funds led to a threat to close. Later, people started asking if they can pay, so now relatives pay monthly fee and pay for particular medicines.

Sometimes relatives place their elderly loved ones at the home when they go away on vacation; there are cases of persons volunteering themselves in.

All the necessary services are provided. There is an administrator – Nutrition, two doctors on call who provide monthly check ups. There is always a senior nurse in charge – one for day and one for night.

There are nursing Assistants/nursing aides. But there is a need for an occupational therapist. However, there are many social activities and regular religious activities in which residents can participate.. In addition to the nurses, there were cooks and caregivers. There is a staff of 12 in total.

In general their residents have suffered semi strokes, or are diabetics, amputees, or require a wheelchair for mobility. Or they may be able-bodied but senile. Three of the current 20 residents are diabetics.

School Children frequently visit the residents, just to spend time with them, reading, singing and reciting, or hugging them. Usually they bring fruits and flowers, etc. Government has removed the Home Economics programme at the school nearby, choosing instead to centralise it, but before they used to bring cakes, etc. on a regular basis.

5.11 Lewis Punett Home

The Lewis Punett Home started as a home for the indigent and the aged who had no one to care for them. The building was donated to the government by Mr. Punett. Today, the home is no longer for the aged, no longer for the indigent; it is simply, the Lewis Punett Home. There are persons in need of various types of care at the home – the mentally challenged, physically challenged and some paraplegics.

Their mission is to “Provide highest quality care and service to residents as well as assist in maintaining a sense of self worth and

offering assistance and educational opportunities to persons – the community.” The vision is to “to aspire to improve the living standards for its residents thus making it the most effective entity in offering geriatric care service to the community with assistance from the general public”.

The current occupancy is 103 – of whom 50 are males. All persons are 16 years and older. The current age profile of residents ranges from 16 to 89; and in the female ward, ages range from 25 to 95 years of age. Some persons are from Union Island. The home is very highly subscribed since all other homes are private. The bed capacity is 107.

Persons are admitted to the home through social services. The home falls under the Milton Cato Memorial (MCM) Hospital so their social worker services the home. There is a waiting list and social workers determine the degree of need etc. AT the time of the interview there was a waiting list for males. Persons being referred through the hospital must be referred by letter or Hospital discharge of District Medical Officer. For residents at the home who wish to be reintegrated into the community, there is also a need to go through the Social Services Department.

The services provided at the home encompass all nursing and geriatric care. Diabetics receive blood sugar screening and can have their wounds “dressed” (especially their feet). There is one doctor, once per week and psychiatric patients are

referred to Milton Cato Hospital. There is a one dentist every fortnight or as needed.

The home is funded through a Trust, Government and grants and donations (from private sector businesses, and private individuals living locally or abroad). Some of the costs are contained because of the large amount of volunteer assistance that is received. There are also some fund raising activities. Staff salaries are largely funded by government. The staff of 47 comprises 35 Nurses and Nurses Aides; 12 Ancillary staff; and a groundsman. The hospital supplies the nursing staff. Relief staff is brought on board to fill in for the Nursing Aides and ancillary staff when they go on vacation. Of all staff members 6 are male and the rest female. Meals are provided by government and catered externally.

Usually residents tend to stay at the home until they pass away, because they usually have no family members to care for them. When someone dies, the nurse would call a Pastor and grave digger and they bury them – this is the case mostly for the men. Persons do not look after their children so in turn the children do not look after them when they get old.

Government is in the process of developing a five year strategic plan for the elderly.

Their needs at this time are mainly for transportation to take patients to the out-patients clinic at the hospital. They currently depend on transportation from the Mental Health Unit. They are also in need of a new building, but this seems to be

in the pipeline. The new building should be able to house 100 indigent persons plus 100 elderly and should provide single or double room accommodation. Additionally, bathroom facilities need to be closer to the rooms and there needs to be improved accommodation for hand washing etc. There is also a need for computer and internet access, initially for the staff. And the security systems need to be improved.

The public calls them for ambulance service, and they should be doing more. There is need for more resources to promote services etc. but nothing is being done currently because the “new building is coming”!

A counsellor is also needed because clients are generally in need of some sort of counselling; clients feel alienated by family and relatives. Also, residents do not get the \$150 per month from the government when they are at the home.

In terms of the health of residents, lifestyle diseases are on the rise: many patients have diabetes and/or hypertension. There is also evidence of an increase in the numbers with HIV/AIDS.

The agencies involved in the provision of social services and providing transfers are doing as good a job as they can under trying circumstances. They do well what they can do. It is obvious, however, on their own admission, that their resources are dwarfed by the scale of the problems that currently face the society. In such a situation, there are many who are not being catered to because the existing institutions cannot cope with the numbers who have succumbed to particular problems that afflict individuals in SVG at this time. Table 5.2 provides some scores on the agencies that were visited.

TABLE 5.2: INSTITUTIONS IN DELIVERY OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Organisation	Score
Ministry of National Mobilisation	3
Family Planning	4
Nutrition Support Programme	4
Nutrition Unit	4
National Society of Persons with Disabilities	4
VINSAVE	4
Bread of Life	5
Christian Council	3
Marion House	4
Thompson Home	3
Lewis Punnett Home	3

6.0 INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC UTILITIES

The utilities and the physical infrastructure condition the physical space in which the citizenry live their lives: Some of this physical infrastructure is comprised of public goods, available to the mass of people, and not subject to the exclusion principle. Others, however, are available at a charge, albeit with an element of subsidy. Not all are able to pay for the services provided, in spite of a fee structure that may be directed at cost recovery rather than at the generation of a profit. This section documents some of these services.

6.1 Central Water and Sewerage Authority

The Authority was established in 1969. There is a revised Act under which it operates – Act 17 of 1991. Its role is to ensure a supply of potable water to the population. It is the final authority in the matter of water use in the country. The Authority falls under the Ministry of Health and the Environment.

There is a sewerage system in Georgetown. The Authority has had problems with financing. The system in place seeks to use gravity feed in the water winning and distribution process to reach the population of the country. There are planning restrictions regarding the height to which buildings can be constructed, and this helps to avoid any need for the pumping of water. There are a number of reservoirs across the country.

In the Grenadines, it is necessary to engage in water harvesting, and there are desalination plants in some of the islands. Hotels tend to rely on desalination plants. The Public Health Department monitors the individual harvesting operations. On the main island the Authority has responsibility for monitoring water quality.

There is a basic charge made to all consumers. However, poor and elderly people are exempt, but have to be assessed to be declared exempt. The rates charged have been adequate to cover costs. The charges for water have been set at a level such that other operational costs are subsidised by water rates. Revenues would have covered all costs were it not for solid waste. The matter of a rate increase is currently under consideration.

There are a few people in the population who are dependent on stand pipes, and use this rather than pay for water to be piped into their homes. In the estimation of the Authority, about 96 percent of the population (about 30,000 households) on the largest island have access to a safe supply of water. Approximately 100 households have access to the sewerage system and these are in Kingstown. About two-thirds of the population pay their water bills on time.

There is no water winning by way of wells in St. Vincent. There is no seepage of septic tanks systems into the water supply, since

water is extracted at such high upstream elevations.

In addition to the challenge the Authority faces with its finances, there is a human resource constraint. It is well served in the areas of Accounting and Management. However, in the technical fields, there is a lack of staff; there is a shortage of water engineers, and this is in part due to the lack of flexibility in the career path for those who embark on this area of engineering.

In sum, then, the main island is well served with water and rates have been set at levels to ensure cost recovery. Water winning in the Grenadines does pose a problem.

6.2 Solid Waste Management Unit

The Solid Waste Management Unit (SWMU) was established in 1999. Before that time, the waste management system was not properly implemented. The Department was established subsequent to OECS project which revolutionised the waste collection system. Since then two sanitary landfill sites have been established. The two sites in St. Vincent are in Diamond (opened in 2001) and Bellisle (opened in 2004). These two landfill sites serve mainland St. Vincent. The Unit has also upgraded dumpsites in the Grenadine islands including Bequia, Canouan and Union Island.

In the past, there were open communal dumpsites throughout the country. There were also open lands where the community would dump garbage. The country now has

100 percent coverage in terms of garbage collection where every community has access weekly garbage collection.

The unit sees littering as a problem, since clean-ups may be conducted for particular events, but are not generally implemented. Public awareness programmes need to be expanded; however, the current budget of the unit does not permit for such. The Unit would like to see public education working hand in hand with introduction and observance of relevant Legislation. Under the Litter Act No. 15 of 1991, littering carries a maximum fine of \$5,000; however, the SWMU does not have the power to enforce the Act. There is also the problem of water taxi drivers throwing oil bottles into the sea.

The Unit currently charges households \$10 per month for solid waste management to in St. Vincent. In the Grenadines the charge is \$5 per month. However, it is reported that only 10 percent of households pay the fee. In St. Vincent there is no such problem of non-payment of these fees as it is linked to water payments.

The Unit rates itself at three on a scale of one to five since there is the belief that there still needs to move to a more effective collection system. The Unit would also prefer to increase the frequency of garbage collection of to twice a week.

The SWMU has also voiced the need for more support in terms of enforcement from the Environmental Health Department and the Police, as they have the power to charge persons.

6.3 Ministry of Technology

The above Ministry has oversight of the telecommunications field, and thus, generally for policy in the area. However, there is a regulatory body for telecommunications, the (National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (NTRC), which regulates the market for telecommunications services including the following service providers:

- Cable & Wireless (land lines)
- Cable & Wireless and Digicel (Cellular service providers)
- KARI-Cable – which offers broadband telecom and cable television
- KELCOM which has brought fibre optic cable capability
- Broadband via VSAT – the sole cable provider

Services are now widely available right across the country, but there may still be issues of quality and consistency. Internet access is not available throughout St. Vincent. However, land lines are available up to Sandy Bay.

Learning Resource Centres (community centres with space for facilities such as a stage, and computer laboratory), are available in many communities in St Vincent, but do not exist in all of the islands. Schools are generally outfitted with computer and internet facilities – though not all schools have a computer laboratory. There are 12 Learning Resource Centres and three more under construction. A few

community centres have been refurbished to act as Learning Resource Centres.

Cable and Wireless are installing telephone lines in all the Learning Resource Centres with free service – fast internet access for one year. Also, several persons have been trained to teach computer and internet use. The Adult Education Unit uses these Learning Resource Centres to conduct some of their classes. Thus, for example, farmers can be trained to use the internet to find information of relevance to their operations.

It is not yet apparent that the private sector is availing itself of the possibilities offered but it may well be that with the installation being done by KELCOM, their participation will increase.

It is expected that there will be an increase in the usage of smart phones, computer notebooks and similar equipment because of the increase in supply and competition. New legislation has been put in place for e-transactions and registrations.

Table 6.1 provides data on the infrastructure and public utilities. Clearly, there is an attempt being made to get the physical infrastructure up to the requirements of the 21st century.

TABLE 6.1: ORGANISATIONS IN THE UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Organisation	Score
Central Water and Sewerage	4
Solid Waste Management	4
Ministry of Technology	4

7.0 ENVIRONMENTAL AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Natural disasters tend to push those who are already struggling deeper into poverty, since the houses of the poor are the worst built and most inappropriately situated. In 2004, the loss due to hurricane Ivan was 10 percent of GDP. St. Vincent and the Grenadines, like other Small Island Developing States (SIDS) is highly vulnerable to shocks, environmental and trade and economic. While it has not experienced devastation comparable to that in Grenada after Hurricane Ivan, there have been a number of episodes leading to loss of life and major costs.

Given the increased frequency of weather episodes as a result of global climate change, the country faces major challenges, more so the more vulnerable in the society.

7.1 National Emergency Management Office (NEMO)

Since 2002, NEMO has been housed under the Office of the Prime Minister. Before that, it used to be under the Ministry of Local Government. The World Bank-funded Rescue and Emergency Disaster Management Project sponsored the construction of the building that houses the offices of NEMO since 2005.

NEMO has a staff of thirteen at the secretariat; of these, only three are in technical positions. There is simply too much to do and there are not enough hands. The agency works in collaboration with

other NGOs, CBOs, and Government Departments, as and when needed.

One of the main programmes is a Community Disaster Planning Project, in collaboration with Community Development, which is geared towards preparing communities for natural disasters. The community approach is fairly difficult to manage since many of them still see disaster as the responsibility of the Government or as NEMO.

NEMO taps all resources and personnel that are available. It is currently doing some training with the Red Cross, funded by the UNDP. In fact, training has been one of their major functions in the last year, in addition to the conduct of meetings.

The response to disasters is based on an inter-departmental approach. For example, in the case of hurricanes the Department of Agriculture, the Engineers at the Department of Works, and Ministry of Housing assess the situation, and the information is fed back to NEMO.

NEMO in turn offers assistance in the form of housing materials, which is important in a context where poor persons and informal settlements generally have substandard housing. They assist persons living in formal settlements; however, they cannot legally assist those who do not have legal tenure. They can donate up to a maximum of EC\$10,000 in materials. NEMO would

provide labour only in extreme cases to the indigent or the elderly.

This particular programme is funded by the Government, supported by a fund established for emergencies; there is no annual funding available to NEMO. In the case of Hurricane Ivan in 2004, the extent of damage was so great that some additional funding from the CDB and from the Government of Trinidad and Tobago was necessary to meet the cost.

In respect of the Housing and Materials Programme, the Government made allocations as follows in the respective years:

2005 - EC\$280,000 - to deal with outcome of Hurricane Ivan of October 2004.

2006 - EC\$300,000

2007 - EC\$171,000

There is a Low Income Housing Project in which some one-bedroom homes are set aside for persons facing emergency conditions. The cost is EC\$25,000 per house. Some people get the houses free and others have to pay some percentage of the price, based on various criteria; however, this is a highly contentious matter.

NEMO is still paying rent for some persons needing shelter as a result of Ivan in 2004. This is beyond the remit of NEMO, which requires it to take care of affected persons for two to three months but the long-term care for persons should not be their function.

In addition to windstorms, the most frequent natural disasters have been landslides and a number of flooding episodes as a result of heavy rains.

Windstorm Damage: in 2004, there were 15 deaths from disasters; in 2005 with Lily, the losses were estimated at EC\$43.45M; in 2004, the losses due to Ivan ran to several millions.

In general, in the estimation of NEMO officials, there has been an improvement in the housing stock compared to the situation ten years ago. However, as much as 40 percent might still be below acceptable standard. Currently NEMO does not have a person dedicated to research and record keeping.

NEMO sets up teams with the collaborating agencies (the Police, and Community Development and Social Welfare) and visits every affected case at each disaster. NEMO takes into consideration the standard of living, number of children and the ages of the affected persons and then prioritises in terms of level of response.

Sometimes poor persons are not helped as much as they might be, if they live in unplanned developments. NEMO is limited in providing assistance to people who may be breaking the law in the building of homes that have not had planning approval. However, there are cases where NEMO has helped persons who were squatting to relocate.

There is a problem with flooding in Kingstown. There was a flood risk study done by the World Bank, which determined that the problem was attributable to insufficient drainage, increased run-off water and indiscriminate dumping of garbage. The report recommended the implementation of a Drainage Improvement Project, which was co-ordinated by Central Planning Division.

The limitations faced by NEMO in the conduct of its work include:

- **Funding and staff:** the technical capacity of organisation needs to be improved. But there is a sense that they have been able to do a lot with what they have. They have solicited funding from USAID, and other agencies, and have partnered with UN bodies. If NEMO had been limited to government funding alone, it would not have been possible to accomplish many things that have been done.
- There is a need to build in monitoring and evaluation capability of the organisation, which is not currently part of NEMO's work programme.

A Japanese study (CIDERA, 2001/02) produced flood hazard maps and rain monitoring at community level, but the project did not include capacity building. Thus, the communities did not fully benefit from the study.

7.2 Environmental Services Unit

The Environmental Management unit was established in 1995 in response to the UN Convention on the Environment. Its programme objectives link it with other agencies in the discharge of its responsibilities as defined in such Conventions as the Montreal Protocol, the Convention on Hazardous Waste and the UNCCD. It also works very closely with the Environmental Sustainability Unit of the OECS.

It was once a one-person unit – now there are four professionals working as part of its complement of staff. There is also a Japanese volunteer who assists in public education and outreach with regard to climate change. It is expected that there would be some capacity soon with regard to the monitoring of land degradation.

Most of the projects being run by the Unit are funded with outside assistance. There is an Ozone Project which has been set up with multilateral funding to assist in observing the Convention. Funds have also been provided through the World Bank, UNEP and UNDP. Among the projects in place is one relating to Climate Change; this special project is being implemented at three sites, namely, Bequia, Union Island and Spring Village.

There is a National Communication Project which targets a number of communities, that have been directly affected by climate change as evinced by drought in the Grenadines with a concomitant impact on agricultural production. Another project has involve researching at genetically modified organisms and in this regard the groups targeted here are supermarkets, farmers and pharmacists.

There is another project for the mainstreaming of adaptation to climate change. This project targets a number of departments including the Surveys Department, Fisheries Department and the Meteorological Office. The **Ozone Project** targets the Customs and Excise Department, the importers of refrigerants gas and CFCS and Technicians involved in refrigeration and air-conditioning. The **Land Degradation Project** targets farmers, the GIS Unit, the Physical Planning Department and the Land and Surveys Department. There is also a project on **Integrated Watershed and Coastal Management** which involves the Public Health Department.

The Unit is limited in human as well as financial resources. There is a need for physical space, appropriate legislation and the establishment of institutional arrangements to coordinate with a range of agencies. Unfortunately there are no immediate plans for legislative reform in the environmental sector. Thus, at best, it can only provide reports in keeping with the relevant Conventions. The institutional arrangements are fragmented in that there

are a number of agencies whose work touches on the environment, namely, Forestry and Fisheries, Agriculture, Science and Technology, the Meteorological Office, Community Development, Public Works, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Tourism.

Up to this time, the collaborations have been informal. An OECS study identified the need for institutional strengthening for the management of the Environmental Unit and pointed to the fragmented institutional structure, fragmented legislation and the limited human resources.

Other key environmental challenges that relate specifically to poverty would include land degradation as a result of poor agricultural practices, deforestation and its impact on the watershed, marine pollution due to marine activities, natural disasters which have been exacerbated by climate change, solid waste management in St. Vincent and, in particular the Grenadines, where the marine environment is particularly affected in respect of the disposal of liquid waste. There is also the problem of the conservation of the biodiversity; there are such unfortunate practices as the hunting of turtles for wild meat. Deforestation is affecting the parrot population and other wildlife.

Environmental challenges experienced by poor communities are seen in the area of public health as there have been deficiencies in basic services such as water and sanitation. There is also vulnerability to storms and landslides, given that in some

communities, people farm on marginal lands with very steep slopes with elevations above 1,000 feet. They may operate close to river banks in an attempt to survive, but degrade and pollute water courses.

7.3 Environmental Health Division

The vision of the Environmental Health Division is to provide a safe, sanitary and pollution-free environment where all Vincentians can realise their full potential. The broad objective of the Division is to monitor, regulate, improve, maintain and safeguard the environmental health of the state.

Currently the Division has provisions for 15 Environmental Health Officers, one Chief Environmental Health Officer and three Senior Environmental Health Officers. Currently there are on staff eight Environmental Health Officers, three Environmental Health Officers and one Chief Environmental Health Officer. Some of these officers have been on study-leave as well as on training sessions. The Division has been understaffed for a few years and they have recalled the service of a retired officer who works on a month-to-month arrangement. In 2003, a study looking at the restructuring of the Division was conducted with the assistance of PAHO. The recommendations of this study, however, were not fully implemented.

There are twelve districts in St. Vincent and two in the Grenadines. One section of the Division is the Vector Control Unit which is headed by one senior environmental health

officer. The Vector Control Unit operates semi-autonomously with a separate budget. The Division is also in charge of Occupational Health and Safety.

Existing programmes of the Division include Food Safety where meats and other foods are inspected at ports of entry. Inspections are also carried out at shops and restaurants. A lot of work is also done with farmers in the handling of fruits and vegetables. Another programme is Water Quality Testing and Monitoring, where on a weekly basis a chlorine residual test in all health districts is conducted. For the Grenadines, however, there is no residual chlorine testing conducted, except for hotels, though not on a regular basis.

Although the Division does not have laboratory facilities, it carries out tests for coliform bacteria when there is a suspicion of contamination. In cases where testing is to be conducted, the Division collects the sample and the Bureau of Standards conducts the actual testing and analysis. Swimming pools and beaches are also monitored by the Division.

The Chief Environmental Health Officer notes that there are a number of Public Health Laws in place. However, there is a lack of regulations that would give them the power to take action as required.

Littering is a problem faced by the Division. In high-income communities there is a tendency to purchase outdoor bins. In the poorer communities however, garbage is usually placed in a bucket or other

container or it may be even thrown in residents’ backyards or in those of the neighbours. Problems arise out squatter communities where there is poor infrastructure.

In some instances where there is infrastructure in place, problems may still persist due to the haphazard location of houses. Complains come in to the Division about the odours emanating from animal pens, particularly in the poorer areas. There is also a considerable amount of slaughtering done in backyards with substandard facilities.

There is a public abattoir in the Diamond Estate but this facility needs to be updated. Two private slaughtering facilities are also located in a suburban area.

Drainage is a problem in both the more affluent communities and the poorer communities. In the more affluent

communities, for example, drains may be constructed to feed into a public drain with no consideration of the volume of water the public drain can accommodate.

In the poorer communities, the problem of drainage relates to the fact that there is often inadequate drainage or even none at all.

Table 7.1 provides scores for organisations involved in the management of the environment.

TABLE 7.1: ORGANISATIONS IN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Organisation	Score
NEMO	4
Environmental Services Unit	3
Environmental Health Division	3

8.0 NATIONAL SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The notion of human rights in SVG has been evolving since colonial times, from the period of slavery and indentureship to the present. The Carib and Garifuna population fought and lost in battle with the British, and while in the period leading up to Emancipation, the Carib population might not have been in formal slavery, any concession to their rights would have been coloured by the fact of their having been defeated. This may explain one major difference between SVG and Dominica, where there was formal acceptance of the rights of the Caribs over a particular area of that island.

The nature of political development from Emancipation, and leading to self-government and then to political independence in SVG has been remarkably similar in many respects to that of other countries of the region. However, SVG is an archipelagic state par excellence and the issue of governance across a number of islands is not un-contentious. There are discussions ongoing in respect of a new constitution. All this has impact on the rights in the country. In the matter of security on the other hand, a major issue is the incorporation of some of the citizens in the international narco-trafficking industry.

8.1 St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Service

The Police Service has responsibility for Fire and the Coast Guard, all under the Ministry of National Security. There are just over 500

officers in the Police Service and another 230 in the other services. The ratio relative to the population is not adequate and that guarantees that there is much more work than they can manage. It has not been possible to embark on a programme of community policing, but there is a community neighbourhood watch.

The Police also contribute to a radio programme which focuses on issues relating mainly to traffic. There is also the programme in schools - DARE - which seeks to encourage reduction in violence drug use. Police Officers are required to visit schools and various groups to speak and educate the public.

The Service is hoping to bring into being a unit geared to deal with sexual offences and to enlighten children about sexual offences. Sexual offences have become prevalent although they would not be considered alarming by the Police. Victims are mainly children, and mostly minors and young adults are involved. The major problem is usually getting people to testify.

There is a problem getting victims to come to court, even where the matter is heard in the Family Court. A child under 15 years of age cannot lawfully consent. But there are children 13 years of age to 15 years of age who get involved. There is the problem of stepfathers who are the abusers but are also the bread-winners and mothers are prepared to protect them in order to protect the source of income.

Some officers have been trained to deal with sexual offences. Those with the required training can exercise the appropriate sensitivity. Indeed, only officers with the required training are allowed to take reports on sexual offences and to be investigating officers in such matters. The Social Welfare Department may remove a child to a safe home, but then the child may have to go back.

The Police Service has as one of its major challenges the control of the hills of St. Vincent. There is need for lots of resources to eradicate the scourge of marijuana cultivation. Things have got worse in spite of some major efforts at manual eradication. It is felt among Police circles that the decline in banana production does not explain the expansion in marijuana production. The profit in cannabis is just so much greater. Producers are mainly young men. Petit Bordel is still the main target area.

Most of the output goes to other islands. The local market could not be the basis for production. Barbados, St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago provide the market. There is evidence of Trinidadians coming to SVG, as part of an underground CSME. Strategic patrols are being organised.

There is also an upsurge in the use and transshipment of cocaine which was initially entering St. Vincent through Union Island. However, the entry point has now shifted to Carriacou. The isolated beaches of the country make the place difficult to patrol. There are fast patrol boats, but no helicopters available. There is a drive to get

young men and women involved in the cadets and other types of organisations to instil morals and values.

There is a culture of violence in the society, based on what is emerging, even though most crimes are still non-violent and relate to theft and burglary. On the other hand, there have been 31 people murdered in the last year and 22 to 23 persons have been arrested for those offences. The increase in killing is related to drugs and wars over turf. The Commissioner does not think that there are organised gangs and the level of crime being witnessed is not an indication of organised crime.

There are some difficult communities – Paul’s Avenue and Rose Place being two of these. On the Leeward side of the island, there is the Lomans Hill area and Barouallie and also Petit Bordel. On the Windward side, there is Diamond squatters area, and Greiggs. The area across the river is relatively crime-free. The Victoria area in Stubbs is also attracting interest.

It is very rare for the Police to be taken to court on a matter of Police brutality. There have been complaints of assault by members of the Police however. Usually, this stems from members of the public refusing to be searched, and the officer not having provided any identification. There are internal programmes of training and upgrading from time to time, and officers are taught about courtesy, etiquette and discipline.

Challenges being faced currently relate to the expansion required in the face of the CSME, to the conversion of the airport at Canouan to an international airport, and to the upgrading of people that will need to be undertaken. Likewise in the Fire Department, there is need for a higher quality of entrants with exposure to Physics and Chemistry.

Some officers have received training through the John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Officers are being encouraged to pursue education to secure O and A Level passes preparatory to their enrolling in degree programmes.

White collar crime is emerging as a problem. The Financial Industry Unit deals with money laundering and the Police Service works closely with it.

8.2 Ministry of Legal Affairs

The Office of the DPP's prosecutes all criminal offences, including serious offences being tried in the High Court. According to the current assizes, sexual offences are in the majority, followed by murders. The residual is a mix of robbery and wounding with intent.

8.2.1 Sexual Offences

A UN report noted that SVG has the third highest rate of sexual offences in terms of per capita. Based on the cases that have come before the court, the victims are often minors abused by males in the households, e.g. uncles. There are cases of girls as young

and six or seven years of age being abused. In general, mothers tend to disbelieve the children, so that there usually has to be a significant event which leads to the eventual reporting of the offence.

There have been cases where mothers have sold their daughters and it is the girls who eventually report the offence when something major happens. There is evidence to suggest that this is also happening with boys, but these tend to be under-reported.

8.2.2 The Drug Trade:

In December 2004 the penalty for possession of firearms was increased to a maximum of seven years: the previous maximum was one year. This was done because the drug trade and firearms go hand in hand. The networks are able to earn large amounts of income: marijuana generally fetches EC\$350 per kg, but in some cases it can fetch US\$800 per kg, for instance in St. Maarten. The people who are in this business are not just high school dropouts. People are no longer shying away from saying they are doing something illegal. Women are working as couriers in the drug trade, but they generally feature in less serious crimes except for some domestic issues.

A new development within the legal landscape of the country was the inauguration of the "Serious Offences Court" in March 2004, which was intended to cut down on the time taken to bring an offender to trial for crimes such as murder, and some domestic violence cases that

required urgent attention. While this was a new initiative, the representative believed that it was working well.

There are inconsistencies at the Magistrates Court; people are getting varying penalties for the same offence. There is also a serious backlog. The reasons arise from the archaic system of running three Assizes per year (February – Easter; June – September; and September – January). There is a need for continuous sittings.

There has been a significant increase in serious offences, but overall the crime rate is tapering off. Four or five years ago there would have been thirteen murders per year but in the year 2007 there were 31 murders for the period January to October.

A closer look at the details behind the cases coming to the court brings to light some interesting and disturbing issues; for example, cases of multiple family members involved in multiple criminal activities. A cause for concern is that contacts are made in prison which affect the crime situation; even prisoners on remand are making contacts with seasoned criminals.

The Office of the DPP is government-funded and funds are released quarterly. However, the budgeting system does not always take account of certain essential items, and Budget allocations have often been inadequate. There is also a shortage of staff; there is no Senior Crown Counsel since the previous incumbent has been seconded to the Foreign Affairs Department

since 2003. There is a difficulty retaining legal staff in the public service.

8.2.3 Human Rights and Social Justice Issues:

There is a unfulfilled needs in this area. People tend to go to the radio stations to voice their complaints. The issues that come to the Office of the DPP tend to be police and civilian cross-complaints. There is a Human Rights Association headed by the Head of the Bar Association – Nicole Sylvester. The Association provides some legal aid type service and has a Victims' Rights Unit. The Legal Aid provided by government is limited – only persons who are charged with murder and cannot afford an attorney are entitled to free legal representation.

The Grenadines: The Family Court and Magistrates Court go to the Grenadines occasionally.

8.3 Family Court

The Court was established in 1999. It has sole jurisdiction in respect of certain matters relating to the family. The Juvenile Court, a component of this Court tries juveniles. Boys who run afoul of the law are normally sent to the Liberty Lodge Boys Training Centre, or in some situations are required to attend counselling. Boys are usually arrested for theft, burglary and wounding and assault. Girls are seldom before the court for infractions of the law.

The Law prohibits the imprisonment of juveniles. And the Courts cannot remand juveniles to prison. However, they may be kept 'on the Bench' in a Police Station, if there is no one to whom they can be released.

The Counsellors attached to the Court put on programmes for young offenders, and provide them with a support group.

It is particularly disturbing that there is a major challenge in reintegrating young offender into the educational system. The educational authorities are not receptive to the idea of accommodating them in school system. This situation puts the boys at a serious disadvantage and heightens the risk of their descending further into crime and becoming incapable of pursuing a productive life.

These boys are often exploited by drug dealers. In most cases, their parents are poor, and unable to send them to school. The Court may try to secure assistance for them. The Rotarians have been responsive so far. An attempt is being made to put a mentorship programme in place. The Ministry of Social Development used to assist, but is no longer linked to the Court. There is a programme for rehabilitative and restorative justice in place.

The Gender Affairs Department promotes responsible parenthood. Many of the women who come to the Court to seek its protection are not working, and are very dependent on monies received from the fathers of their children. Some may seek

variation on the terms, as children pass from primary to secondary school.

8.4 St. Vincent and the Grenadines Human Rights Association

The Association has been in existence since 1985. Its officials operate on a voluntary basis. Its present executive is all female. The Association has noticed an increase in violence in schools; a nine year old has been found with a gun at school. Violence is being fought with violence and there have been incidents of chopping and killings. Moreover, most of the cases of violence are perpetrated on women.

Another aspect of rights is the impact of poverty on poorer people. Unemployment and underemployment threaten livelihoods. In such circumstances, access to marijuana presents a free flow of money.

Remittances may come on a regular basis but food may be in short supply. Years ago, it was possible to pay a flat fee for a barrel. It was accepted at Christmas time that this is how barrels would be treated. The situation now is that people cannot clear their barrels. They end up indebted. They have to sell things from the barrel to pay. This is done through the informal sector. People sell things on the pavement of streets that come from the barrels.

There has been some tightening up at the ports and it has become difficult to tranship marijuana through local ports. However, there is still a lively market operating in SVG and it is linked to the market abroad.

Paul's Avenue is clearly an area where there is trade in drugs. It is alleged that there are drop-off of drugs through aircraft, and there are unmanned ports in the smaller islands. On the Leeward side of the island, there is a veritable republic in existence. The marijuana producers have been aggressive in campaigning for 'protection' of their rights. They created an association to this end - SPITIT.

The marijuana producers have developed ingenious strategies to keep marijuana flowing to their markets. Radios and cell phones are used to monitor the Police. They know where the Police are at all material times.

Marijuana is the drug sold at schools. Cocaine is marketed to the tourists and through the hotels.

Marion House is involved in running a programme for students in secondary schools. The marketing of drugs in schools poses an enormous challenge to parents.

In some communities, almost everyone smokes marijuana. The relationship between the public and the Police is atrocious. The Police may use heavy-handed methods, including beating people up. One Calypsonian was beaten up and invited to 'Go and sing about that' in the presence of his family. This culture of violence extends to the prison system as well. The Association has had reports of prisoners who are outspoken being beaten

up in the yard. There is a healthy disrespect for rules and the observance of law. Medication may be withheld from prisoners. Doctors refuse to visit prisons to treat with a prisoner who might have been beaten up.

The 15 percent VAT has impacted negatively on all areas. This is the perception. Electricity, water, and of course food have gone up astronomically. There is indirect taxation of the community. A birth certificate was \$75 cents but has gone to \$10.00. New passports have gone up to \$60.00 from \$30.00.

There may be a problem in the training of the police. Some of the training used to be done in Barbados. But there seems to have been shortening of the training in terms of time. The resort to violence is evident in the police which is a characteristic of the society.

The authorities in SVG have had difficulty recognising the work of the organisation. There is a Freedom of Information Act, and Free Speech is enshrined in the Constitution. However, there have been threats to the organisation including death threats.

It is useful to note that the Human Rights Association produces reports that are monitored by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour in the United States, which publishes Country Reports on Human Rights and Practices. The Bureau is

an arm of the United States Department of State.⁴

The report refers to beatings by the police, poor prison conditions, including overcrowding and unsanitary conditions, the holding of young offenders with convicted prisoners, corruption among prison staff, with drugs, weapons and cell phones being taken into the prison. The report refers also to complaints of police brutality that were not investigated. In an environment of a spiralling narcotics trade, the Police will be faced with the challenge

of observing scrupulous respect for the rights of criminal elements and being robust in the response to threats to national security.

TABLE 8.1: ORGANISATIONS IN HUMAN RIGHTS AND SECURITY

Organisation	Score
Police Service	3
Ministry of Legal Affairs	4
Family Court	5
Human Rights Association	4

⁴ A recent report can be seen at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/7/8905.htm>

9.0 INSTITUTIONS IN THE GRENADINES

There are a number of State organisations that have a presence in the Grenadines. However, there are many public services that still require that residents travel to St. Vincent. This raises the cost of living in the Grenadines and creates irritation among residents on the smaller islands. There is also the fact that in the creation of public and private sector structures, and in the review of national issues, state agencies frequently neglect to include agencies in the Grenadines in their deliberations, let alone involve residents from the Grenadines in the establishment of national committees. Residents in the Grenadines frequently voice the view that they are treated only in the after-thoughts of officials on the main island.

There are a number of CBOs that have been established in part to for residents to provide services to themselves, and on also to engage in advocacy on their behalf. Their presence undoubtedly contributes to social integration within the Grenadines.

9.1 Bequia Mission

The Bequia Mission engages in the provision of social, educational and medical assistance. It was founded in 1970 and undertakes its work through volunteers and a Local Committee of residents of Bequia. Volunteers come from various sectors in society and include social workers, medical personnel, business persons and persons within public administration. The Bequia Mission Local Committee has been around

for five years. Support is also given to House of Hope, Bread of Life, Liberty Lodge Boys Training Centre and Bequia Hospital. The Mission is currently in need of a building to call home.

The Mission has a school-feeding programme in the primary and secondary schools. The Mission pays for GCE and CXC exams for those students who cannot afford. They also offer assistance for overseas medical assistance to Canada, Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados. The mission runs also a literacy programme.

Persons find it difficult to readily accept all programmes as people are suspicious of some government interventions. In addition to its interventions to assist persons in need, the Mission encourages persons to make wise choices with respect to how they spend their money.

Paget Farms is the most densely populated area and has most of the poor residing there. Fishing is depended upon to maintain one's family.

9.2 Revival of Important Principles and Practices to Lessen Evil in Society - RIPPLES

R.I.P.P.L.E.S. is a non-religious, non-political body whose existence is geared towards instituting change among the young and linking them to the older generation. This was seen as imperative in treating with the disintegration of family values. The organisation has approximately

45 persons and was started in 2005. It targets at-risk high school children and also does work with children from 6 to 17 years.

One of the programmes proposed by the United Nations Educational and Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) which partners with RIPPLES, is the training of children to play drums, guitar and cuatro. Another recently completed UNESCO-funded programme was one where children would go to older persons in the community to record their way of life. This exercise resulted in the production of a DVD called Folkways of Bequia which was distributed nationally. Yet another recently-completed community project was the construction of a ramp at the home of someone who recently lost their legs. There are about 20 children in the programme with whom the organisation meets once per week at their homes. Most of the children with whom the organisation interacts come from Paget Farm which is considered a “rough” area. The organisation has also been involved in beach clean-ups.

Challenges noted by the organisation are the influence of negative music and television shows as well as teenage pregnancy and alcoholism. Funding of the organisation comes from UNESCO as well as from private sources.

The Northern Grenadines Community Development Organisation, an umbrella organisation negotiates on behalf of ten other organisations. Meetings have been conducted with representatives of the Social Investment Fund to discuss funding for

various projects. Twelve projects were on the drawing board; however only three could be selected.

These are a) the Water Project for Paget Farms which is to be done in conjunction with SPAC (Special Project for the Adaptation of Climate Change); b) the Sewing Project where sewing machines and material are to be purchased for persons who come together to form a co-operative. Currently persons on the island have to purchase uniforms on mainland St. Vincent. It is therefore hoped that this project would provide some employment; c) the provision of lighting on Clive Tannis Playing Field and the playing field at Paget Farm.

9.3 Club Neuvo

Club Nuevo has been in existence for 10 years with 13 current members. Most of the activities of the organisation are centred on getting children involved in cultural activities. There is also a focus on sports, mainly basketball and football. The organisation is dedicated to uplifting the island of Canouan. Due to the work of the Club, they are seen as an intricate part of the cultural scene of the island.

Activities which the organisation is involved in include the organisation of calypso/soca competitions. A quiz is held each year for children in Grade Six; the winner receives \$500 to assist him/her at the start of secondary school education. Planned activities for the Club include the provision of assistance to children who are less fortunate with a donation of textbooks.

They also have plans for the donation of a sickbed to one of the primary schools.

One of the challenges of the club in the conduct of its work is that politics may get in the way at times. The group, which does not aim to make a profit on any of its activities, finds that obtaining sponsorship is one the biggest problems.

Some of the social challenges in Canouan include alcohol and drug abuse, teenage pregnancies as well as the activities of ex-prisoners coming down to Canouan and Union Island. There have also been instances of abuse of both girls and boys. The Club is of the view that there is need for a skills training centre on the island to get persons involved in more productive activities.

9.4 Canouan Parent Teachers Association- Canouan Government School

On the island of Canouan there is Kindergarten and preschool and the Canouan Government School. There is one private primary school on the island where the focus is on international curricula. There are approximately 135 children at schools from Kindergarten to Grade Six. Currently there is no high school in Canouan, so most children go to high school in St. Vincent.

One of the challenges relating to the absence of a high school in Canouan is the fact that children in most instances are not ready to leave home to attend school. The

adjustment that children have to make is often traumatic. Added to this is the fact that the cost to parents is phenomenal. Parents have to pay \$300 to 400 per month to upkeep their children, with the average take-home salary being \$1,100 per month.

Some of the issues with schoolchildren are the overall lack of discipline, failure to do their home-work, lack of assistance with school work from parents, and the negativity influences in the environment, such as certain types of music. The lack of discipline is present across every socio-economic status. Religion is strong here but does not appear to play a large role in influencing people's behaviour. For those who never went to high school, there is no programme for them to advance themselves. It is only within recent times that children are being sent to high school in St. Vincent.

There is a Basketball Court, but this is in need of development. A Basketball Association exists as well as a Basketball League. Netball is also played; however only 10 to 12 persons are involved. There is need for the expansion of the library to include computers. The school has a computer lab; however it is not open to members of the public.

Attendance at PTA meeting is good; about 40 persons would normally attend. The Association receives assistance from the community. The PTA has discussed the need for the provision of distance education.

9.5 Canouan Basketball Association

Basketball has been gaining popularity in SVG. There exist 7 Clubs on Canouan which established a League among themselves. There are several young boys with potential and the Association seeks to bring a community spirit to the game. The programmes of the Association target mainly children. It is the view of the Association that such programmes can help with the drug-use problem experienced on the island.

Funding comes from the local business community both on the island as well as from St. Vincent. They sponsor teams. The Association also engages in fundraising activities and receives a lot of assistance in generating community support.

The activities of the Association can help to engage persons in after-work activities other than partying, drugs and drinking. The island has an inadequate sporting facility, but they are currently 'working with what they have.

9.6 Canouan Sailing Club

The Canouan Sailing Club has been in operation for 11 years and started as a sporting club but has since evolved beyond that. The Club has leased the Fisheries Complex where fish is processed. This is the main source of finance for the Club as well as its regular Friday activities.

The Club hosts the annual Whit Sunday Regatta which is the largest event on the

island. They also have a Caribbean Queen Show for which they have been trying to extend participation to include persons from the Grenadines. Another activity of the club is the hosting of an annual dinner for the elderly on Hero's Day. The group also provides sponsorship of the Canouan Basketball Tournament, and to the National Competition and Grenadines Tournament. They have also adopted all of the sporting groups on the island as they are the most focused sporting group.

A challenge affecting the island is the fact that there has been a decline in traditional activities such as storytelling. People do not socialise as much as they used to. Also, not many young people have been able to get a good education as there is a high dropout rate. The number of children dropping out of secondary school has been increasing over the years. The club is concerned about this and the result that young persons are only able to take up low-skilled jobs.

The fisheries complex which is leased by the Sailing Club caters to fishers from different islands. Currently there are 30 fishers from Bequia who are camping at the facility. Previously, almost all the men on the island used to fish but now there are only four full-time fishers as men are now mostly in the service industry and construction industry. The club sells the fish catch to the hotel as well as the local population.

9.7 Roots Connection Cultural Club

This Club has been in existence since 1998. Its fifteen members consist mainly of

Unionites. The rationale for its establishment was to preserve the cultural traditions of Union Island. Like Carriacou, Union Island has a Maroon Festival which centres around the drum. For this Festival drums are made and they would do the 'big drum dance'. The entire island is involved in the Festival.

The Festival reflects a past that includes the Yoruba Culture as well as a French influence. The 'big drum festival' of Carriacou has more of the French influence than does Union Island. Because of the work of the Club there is now greater awareness among the population and more so the youth; the club members are invited to schools on Union Island to talk about the Festival from time to time.

Union Island is the mecca of cultural activities in the Grenadines and the club is committed to keeping culture alive. There was fear of its dying because young people have not been paying much attention to the customs of the past and the elderly people dying out. There was risk of this cultural tradition dying as well. The Club has both adult and junior members.

The Club does not receive any subvention from the Government. Financing comes from the community itself, but the Department of Culture has become involved. The Club has worked with other groups on Union Island in promoting the events and it has been quite successful in maintaining a high profile for the Festival. Groups have come from other parts of the region for the Festival and the club can

point to visits from Tobago and even from Nigeria.

The support from the mainland leaves a lot to be desired and indeed the club has had more support from Carriacou than from the national agency based in St. Vincent. There is no Fisheries Department Office in Union Island. It has been difficult to encourage young people to get into fishing and the fishers of Union Island feel that they are left very much to themselves by the Central Government. It is much easier for them to sell their fish in Petit Martinique and Grenada than in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Young people of today are more attracted to easier pursuits of life and prefer to get into tourism or into tour guiding and taking people to the Tobago Cays.

9.8 Sailing Club Committee of Union Island

The Sailing Club of Union Island is comprised of seven members and they own two boats, the Unity 1 and the Unity 2. Six of the members were based overseas at the time of incorporation. Members of the club noticed that at Easter time when there were regattas, there were no boats from Union Island participating. They recognised that there was need for Union Island people to participate. There were no sailors in Union Island and it was necessary to rekindle interest in sailing among younger people so the members became involved in training young people. (The members had all been sailors at some time in their lives).

Young women have also been targeted in the training of young people to sail. It was difficult initially to stimulate interest but this has since changed, as there is a lot more interest among young people in sailing. The training programme that they run consists of teaching persons to swim, teaching them safety at sea, movements of tides and the management of vessels in changing weather conditions. There is no formal certification as yet for the programme but this can be organised. It is hoped that in time some of them would qualify to work on commercial vessels.

Table 9.1 presents scores on the organisations documented above.

TABLE 9.1: INSTITUTIONS IN THE GRENADINES

Organisation	Score
Bequia Mission	3
RIPPLES	3
Club Nuevo	4
Canouan Parent Teachers Association	3
Canouan Basketball Association	4
Canouan Sailing Club	3
Roots Connection	4
Sailing Club Committee of Union Island	3

10. TOWARDS REDUCING INSTITUTIONAL GAPS

The preceding documentation has established the existence of a range of organisations and institutions in SVG. Stakeholders in many of those that have been interviewed are within the State Sector of the country. These organisations impact on individuals and communities at various levels of the society in greater or lesser degree. The institutional infrastructure is at its most efficient when it contributes either to individual or community empowerment and capacity building, allowing for fullest of actualisation within the bounds and parameters set by society, or it provides protection to the individual or community in a situation where, for whatever reason, the individual or the community are hard-done by the social processes.

There are at least three ways in which one might address the problem of gaps in the institutional structure. Firstly, there is the cohort approach. This is as old as society itself, and starts from the premise that as the individual goes through the life cycle, there are different needs and requirements for successful living. Another approach takes account of problems in the social order; poor socialisation may result in an individual not subscribing to some of the values of the society. Male street children may be sent to Liberty Lodge, in the hope that they can be resocialised in order for them to be reintegrated into patterns of behaviour that are acceptable to society. The absence of an institution like Liberty Lodge would constitute a gap.

Thirdly, there are gaps that relate to the lack of performance of the formal structures, or to the insufficiency of the resources available to them. Thus, there may be one or more institutions which are presumed to focus on a specific need or requirement, but which fail to deliver either because of lack of resources and/or perspective of their managements. There are a number of organisations treating with social fall-out which are providing sterling services to their clients but which lack the resources to provide to all who are potentially in need of their support. Bread of Life can accommodate only a fraction of those in need of its support.

Likewise, in the field of economic restructuring, it could be argued that in spite of the range of institutions to support agricultural development, SVG was unable to respond to the challenges of trade adjustment in its banana industry in the latter years of the 1990s. WINFA and NDF even together, could not mount the level of response needed to treat with the devastation caused by the decline of the banana industry. The structures that had developed to support all the needs of small farmer banana agriculture were never replicated in the development of approaches to support different types of crops, in terms of research, credit, post-harvest management, and farm-to-market processes, let alone marketing.

Indeed, given the importance of agriculture in the economy of SVG, the economic viability of the country is to a large extent conditioned by the effectiveness of the institutional structures in agriculture. Poverty reduction and poverty eradication in SVG will depend in large measure on the degree to which gaps in any of these areas are closed.

Table 10.1 provides a quick scan of some at the level of age cohorts of some of the institutions that treat with particular needs of the respective groups. The commitment on the part of the government to universalising early childhood care and education should impact positively on poorer children whose household circumstances in the context of a high poverty rate could otherwise have jeopardised their development. The presence of a proficient nutrition unit and of a nutrition support programme should ensure that babies born into poverty have better chances of escaping stunted growth and other constraints in their development in their earliest years. Access to school feeding programmes would guarantee that children of poorer parents are not denied proper nutrition.

There are problems that afflict a substantial percentage of female youth and male youth in the society. There are high levels of teenage pregnancy and also of pregnancies among minors. While the Ministry of Education provides for a return of girls to school, there does not seem to be an aggressive response in treating with the fathers responsible for pregnancies among

minors, let alone treating with the issue of incest which by all reports, has a disturbing incidence. Nor was there any firm evidence of any institutions involved in reducing pregnancies among teenagers in spite of the high risk of pregnancy. In respect of male youth, there is the challenge posed by the drug culture and the associated underground economy.

The NIT has put on very attractive programmes designed to encourage participation among a wide swathe in the population, and in particular among the youth in acquiring some of the skills and knowledge required for 21st Century production. Unfortunately, it has to compete with an alternatively institutional structure that enlists a large percentage of the youth in the planting and production of marijuana. To have been to the hills carries a badge of honour among sections of the male youth, and so widespread has become the use and peddling of marijuana that little opprobrium is attracted by this underground activity which seems to be rewarding for some significant number. Thus, even though NIT may be effective in its programme delivery, its purposes are frustrated in the absence of an institutional intervention capable of reorienting the psyche of hill-bound youth.

Meanwhile, the society has been undergoing major social change that has impacted community life. By all reports, not only is the extended family being denuded, but community organisation has wilted as individual material advancement takes prominence over involvement in one's

community. Indeed, it has been suggested that the 'education revolution' which is a positive force for social and economic change has undermined community in that some key community leaders like teachers and nurses have become caught up in advancing their own educational development. They have little time therefore, for community mobilisation. Table 2 lists the organisations which have been identified in this report and seeks to score them according to the main focus of their delivery. Most of them are state agencies. It should not be assumed however, that NGOs and CBOs might not be as numerous or even exceed these in number. It will be the responsibility of the NAT and other stakeholders in the conduct of institutional analysis to establish the presence or absence of institutional

structures in every specific context. Poverty assessment necessarily must include the examination of the institutional framework. People are generally poorer in the absence of institutions, whether public or private, that minister unto their condition. Table 10.1 can be replicated in examining every area in the functioning of the society and the economy, due regard being taken of the fact that institutions may be specialised but many may contribute general benefits.

Poverty reduction in the present realities of SVG will require the institutional structure that is well geared to deliver to individuals and communities the kind of services required to keep people out of poverty and or to provide with the capacity to take themselves out when they have some potential in that regard.

TABLE 10.1 AGENCY INTERVENTION BY COHORT

Age Cohort	Developmental	Preventative	Remedial	Supportive
Children	VINSAVE, Early Childhood Education	Primary Health Services	Nutrition Support Programme	Bread of Life, VINSAVE, School Feeding Support Programme
Male Youth	NIT, Learning Resource Centres	Family Planning Unit	Liberty Lodge	Liberty Lodge
Female Youth	NIT, NDF, Learning Resource Centres	Family Planning Unit	Ministry of Education	VINSAVE
Prime Age Males	NIT, WINFA, NDF	Marion House	HIV/AIDS	NIS
Prime Age Females	NIT	Family Planning Unit, Marion House	HIV/AIDS	NIS, Family Court
Elderly				Punnett Home, Thomson Home, NIS