



SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES
RECOVERY & STIMULUS
P A C K A G E

“Together, we can beat COVID-19!”



TOGETHER WE CAN BEAT COVID-19!

A MESSAGE FROM CAMILLO GONSALVES, MINISTER OF FINANCE, ECONOMIC PLANNING, ICT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented global challenge. As of the time of this writing, the World Health Organisation is reporting that over two million people in 213 countries and territories have been infected with the virus. More people have died as a result of the Coronavirus than there are residents of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Our Vincentian Diaspora in the

United States and London has suffered loss of life. We mourn those losses collectively.

From the moment that it became apparent that the COVID-19 pandemic was a global health threat that was likely to reach Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the Government has worked assiduously to chart a prudent course between complacency and hysteria, based on science, the experiences of other countries, and our particular national circumstances.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic is even more than a life-threatening healthcare emergency. We have learned the painful lesson of the pandemic's severe economic fallout. Hotels are shuttered, airlines are grounded, advanced economies are enduring lengthy emergency lockdowns, and global supply chains are broken.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, like the rest of the region, will suffer job losses, economic contraction, social anxieties and security problems as a result of the pandemic and its fallout. The ECCB is currently estimating a 16% contraction of the regional economy in 2020.

The certainty, severity and complexity of the socioeconomic challenge facing us demands coordinated action. In shaping that response, our policies must be guided by three clear objectives:

First and foremost, to minimise the loss of life and strengthen our public health system to cope with more widespread infections and transmission;

Second, to minimise as best we can the economic and social impacts on vulnerable Vincentians, displaced workers and most-affected sectors; and

Third, to keep the economy afloat through targeted stimulus spending, while maintaining macroeconomic stability and laying the groundwork to resume growth when the pandemic abates.

These three objectives inform the Recovery & Stimulus Package that was recently passed by our Parliament. While our limitations do not allow the Recovery & Stimulus

Package to be all things to all people, it represents our considered judgment as how to best allocate our limited resources.

At over 3.5% of our Gross Domestic Product, the Recovery & Stimulus Package is a \$79 million investment in healthcare, bailout, and economic stimulus.

The Package invests in new staff, new facilities and new equipment to bolster our public health capacity. It provides cash grants to affected workers, vulnerable Vincentians, small businesses, the transportation sector and cultural artistes. It provides farmers and fisherfolk with additional support in the form of seeds, feed, livestock, boats and low-interest loans. It establishes 3-6 month moratorium periods on the payment of bank loans and utility bills. It removes taxes and duties on a host of relevant products and services. And it seeks to continue delivering educational content to home-bound children.

Additionally, the Recovery & Stimulus Package invests in targeted spending on construction and public works projects to generate employment and help maintain some level of economic activity.

The unexpected COVID-19 pandemic will bring with it rough waters and severe challenges for the people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and our wider Caribbean Civilisation. But we are certain that Vincentians are up to the challenge. Our history is replete with examples of our indomitable spirit, and our unfailing capacity to overcome steep odds with courage, conviction and collective will.


We are all our brother's keeper. We are all Good Neighbours. And we are all enjoined in the fight against this virus and its impacts.

I am absolutely certain that, together, we will beat COVID-19!

Policies Against COVID-19

In addition to massive expenditure, the Government has taken a number of aggressive policy decisions in the fight against COVID-19, including:

- First OECS country to quarantine potential cases
- Over 400 persons in home quarantine up to Good Friday; numbers fell sharply by Easter Monday
- Two hotels used as quarantine facilities
- Mandatory 14-day quarantine for all visitors to SVG
- Public Health Act amended to allow for strict enforcement of quarantine and broad powers to Ministry of Health
- Grenadines' ports of entry closed to yachts and pleasure craft
- Isolation Centre built at Argyle
- Temporary Isolation Centres established in Grenadines
- Aggressive testing regime in accordance with CARPHA guidelines
- Cancellation of Easterval, Bequia Regatta and Vincy Mas festivals
- Police-enforced limit on number of passengers on public transportation
- Law passed to allow 8-week layoffs without incurring need for severance pay
- Law passed to allow National Insurance Services to provide unemployment benefits
- Accelerated fuel price reductions to ease burden on public transportation
- Duty-free barrels to ameliorate supply-line disruptions and facilitate Diaspora Vincentians to assist vulnerable family at home
- Facilitation of the return of Vincentian cruise ship and oil rig workers
- Establishment of price controls on essential items
- Establishing a COVID-19 hotline: 1 (784) 543-HEAL [543-4325]



The Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Recovery & Stimulus Package is a multifaceted programme of policy initiatives, targeted stimulus spending, investments in public health capacity and support for affected citizens. The main components of the Recovery & Stimulus Package are outlined in the following sections:

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“This economic recovery plan is designed to lift up our people, our nation. It will enable us to rise stronger from the feverish ashes of COVID-19. Every single one of us in our small country has an uplifting role to play; each of us has to put his or her mind, heart and hands to it. Together we are at war against the COVID-19 disease and are enjoined as one to meet unflinchingly the challenges connected thereto.”

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH E. GONSALVES
PRIME MINISTER**

The Recovery & Stimulus Package

At approximately \$79 million, the Recovery & Stimulus Package amounts to roughly 3.5% of the Gross Domestic Product of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Other expenditure beyond the central Government pushes the Package beyond four per cent of GDP. This urgent expenditure is necessary to fund healthcare preparedness, minimise impact on affected citizens and keep the economy afloat. On 7th April 2020, the Parliament of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines approved the Supplementary Appropriation Bill to fund the Recovery & Stimulus Package.

Summary of Expenditure

Capital Expenditure	\$57m
Recurrent Expenditure	\$11m
Concessions (estimated)	\$11m
TOTAL	\$79m

Sources of Financing

International Monetary Fund
World Bank
Eastern Caribbean Central Bank
SVG Contingencies Fund
National Insurance Services
COVID-19 Bond
Commercial Borrowings
Zero Hunger Trust Fund
SVG Port Authority
SVG Input Warehouse
Government of United Arab Emirates
Government of India
Government of Taiwan

budget



DISPLACEMENT SUPPLEMENTARY INCOME SUPPORT



ABOUT

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have been particularly hard on our hospitality sector. Hotels, guesthouses, apartments and tour companies are closing or laying-off workers. The Displacement Supplementary Income is a temporary monthly cash transfer to assist workers in the hospitality sector that have been laid off or asked to work reduced hours.

ELIGIBILITY

Any hospitality sector employee who was laid off, terminated or has been reduced from full-time to part-time employment is eligible for a Displacement Supplementary Income. Applicants will have to demonstrate that:

- They were formally employed prior to 29 February 2020 by a hotel, guesthouse, restaurant, nightclub, or tour provider;
- They were laid off, terminated or reduced from full-time to part-time employment between 1 March and 30 June 2020.
- Their employer will certify that the termination or lay-off was not due to

disciplinary action or typical seasonal employment.

BENEFITS

Qualified applicants will receive \$300 per month for up to three months, in the first instance. As such, terminated, laid-off or part-time hospitality employees will receive up to \$900 in Displacement Supplementary Income over the eligibility period.

HOW TO APPLY

Hospitality sector employees that are eligible for Displacement Supplementary Income may collect application forms at the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Social Development, the National Insurance Services or the Office of the Prime Minister after 27th April 2020, or download the applicable forms via the www.gov.vc website beginning on 1 May 2020.

Applicants will have to provide their name, address and telephone number; the name of their employer; the date of the disruption of work; and an employers' certification that the adjusted employment status is not due to disciplinary or seasonal considerations.



UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT AND PENSION SUPPORT



ABOUT

The National Insurance Services (NIS) is responding robustly to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to making a direct contribution to the Government's efforts to combat the disease, the NIS is providing important benefits to recently unemployed contributors as well as pensioners.

ELIGIBILITY

For Unemployment Benefit

Applicants will have to demonstrate that:

- They are currently insured under the NIS;
- They have not yet reached pensionable age;
- They were laid off or terminated no earlier than 1 March 2020;
- Their stoppage of earnings was related to the COVID-19 pandemic

For Pensioners:

All pensioners currently receiving pension payments through the NIS are eligible.

BENEFITS

Unemployment Benefit:

Qualified applicants will receive \$75 per

week for up to 13 weeks, in the first instance. As such, terminated, or laid-off NIS contributors will receive up to \$975 in Unemployment Benefits over the 13 weeks of their eligibility.

Pension Benefit:

Pensioners will receive an additional pension payment in May, effectively doubling that payment.

HOW TO APPLY

For Unemployment Benefit:

Eligible employees may collect application forms at the NIS Building or download them via the www.nissvg.org website.

Applicants will have to submit a completed "Declaration of Unemployment Status" form and the employer's "Lay-Off Certificate" to receive the applicable benefits.

For Additional Pension Benefit:

There is no application process for pensioners. Pensioners' augmented payment will be received automatically in their May pension. Call 1-(784)-456-1514 or email nis@nissvg.org for additional information.



INTERIM ASSISTANCE BENEFIT PACKAGE



ABOUT

The economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic will affect many vulnerable Vincentians. Some of these vulnerable citizens will be elderly or disabled, others will be employed in the informal sector, and others may be ordinarily dependent on remittances or family support. The Interim Assistance Benefit is a temporary cash grant programme designed to minimize the impact of the pandemic on our most vulnerable citizens.

ELIGIBILITY

All unemployed or underemployed Vincentians not already receiving State support are eligible to apply for Interim Assistance Benefits. However, priority will be given to the following persons:

- The elderly
- The disabled
- Unemployed single parents
- Those whose informal sector employment was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic
- Those whose receipt of financial support from family members has been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic

- Those who have underlying health conditions that place them at higher risk of COVID-19 infection, and have thus curtailed their activities.

BENEFITS

Selected applicants will receive \$200 per week for up to nine months. As such, vulnerable Vincentians negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic will receive up to \$1,800 Interim Assistance Benefits over the nine months of their eligibility.

HOW TO APPLY

Application forms will be available at the Ministry of Social Development or the Office of the Prime Minister after 27th April 2020. The forms will also be available via the www.gov.vc website beginning on 1 May 2020.

Final determinations as to recipients of the Interim Assistance Benefit will be made by the Ministry of Social Development after consideration of all relevant factors.

Call 1-(784)-450-0395 or email office.socialdevelopment@mail.gov.vc for additional information.



CONSTRUCTION & PUBLIC WORKS TARGETED STIMULUS



The COVID-19 pandemic will cause an economic slowdown in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Current Centroll Bank predictions suggest that the Vincentian economy could shrink by over 10% due to the pandemic. The eventual impact may be even greater, depending on how long COVID-19 affects global trade and travel.

This continued slowdown will affect Vincentian jobs while reducing revenues for businesses and the Government. Without some action by the Government, the economy may grind to a halt, affecting all aspects of life, living and production in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

We must do all that we can to minimise the effect of COVID-19 on jobs and our national economy.

The Government is investing almost \$30 million in targeted stimulus spending to help employ Vincentians and keep the economy afloat. That stimulus spending will be targeted at local public works and construction activities that can quickly employ large

numbers of Vincentians.

The Government will spend \$19.5 million on additional general road repairs; \$3.1 million on bridges, retaining walls and roadways in the Chateaubelair, Golden Grove and Fitzhughes communities; \$2.7 million to extend the popular PAVE (Pedestrian Access for Village Enhancement) programme of footpath construction; \$1.5 million to perform light refurbishments and facelifts to various Government buildings; and \$800,000 to upgrade specified hard courts and community spaces across Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Government's rapid \$30 million injection into the construction sector will help to stabilise the economy while providing jobs to those affected by the slowdown in construction as well as individuals displaced from other jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This targeted stimulus is an important component of the Government's plan to keep the economy afloat during the rough waters ahead.



“The Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines would do everything in its power to protect the lives and health of Vincentians. We will make use of all available resources. Everyone has a role to play. We will beat this Coronavirus pandemic together. Our faith will see us through. This could be our finest hour as a nation.”

**THE HONOURABLE ROBERT T. L. V. BROWNE
MINISTER OF HEALTH, WELLNESS AND THE ENVIRONMENT**



Sixteen experienced doctors and nurses from the Republic of Cuba (left) have arrived in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to join our own medical professionals in the fight against COVID-19

Our battle against COVID-19 is, first and foremost, a battle to protect the health of Vincentians. The Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is making the urgent and necessary decisions to better equip our public health system to battle the pandemic.

It is now apparent that no nation in the world – rich or poor, large or small – was prepared to withstand the COVID-19 pandemic. All countries have been forced to rapidly ramp-up their capacity to cope with the potential impacts of the disease. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is no exception.

We have worked with regional and international partners, including the World Health Organisation, the Pan American Health Organisation and the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) to facilitate COVID-19 testing, the purchase of equipment and the formulation of the most effective

policies to delay infection and minimise transmission in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Under the leadership of the Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves, Minister of Health Robert “Luke” Browne and Chief Medical Officer Dr. Simone Keizer-Beache, the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has worked tirelessly to keep the nation informed about measures to combat the spread of COVID-19, while enhancing our capacity to manage infection and transmission.

The Recovery & Stimulus Package, passed in Parliament on 7th April, contains a number of important provisions to better prepare Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to fight COVID-19.

The Recovery & Stimulus package provides for the hiring of an additional 40 local nurses and five interns, as well as facilitating the arrival of 16 medical personnel from the Republic of Cuba with ex-



public health

expertise in infectious diseases. As such, the frontlines of the battle against COVID-19 have been enhanced by 61 additional medical personnel.

The Government is also retrofitting and equipping a facility to serve as a 25-bed COVID-19 Isolation Centre (see photo, below). When completed in April, the Isolation Centre will be equipped to provide intensive care to patients with severe COVID-19 infections.

Provisions have also been made to use various facilities as quarantine centres for those persons who cannot be effectively quarantined at home.

The Recovery & Stimulus package sets aside over \$9 million for the purchase of necessary equipment, medication and protective gear. This expenditure includes the purchase of equipment to perform local tests for COVID-19 infection; the Cuban antiviral drug Interferon alfa-2b; and over 200,000 N95 face masks.

Additionally, the Government has made it easier, and cheaper, for the public to access hygiene products, including hand sanitizers, soaps, hydrogen peroxide, toilet paper, and a host of other products. These items can be imported duty-free and sold without additional VAT charges.

With a new isolation facility, expanded quarantine capacity, and additional medical personnel, equipment and medication, the Recovery & Stimulus Package represents an important investment in the health of Vincentians. The Government will continue to work and adjust its policies to minimise the impact of COVID-19 on Vincentians.

Investing in Healthcare

COVID-19 testing equipment, supplies, furnishings for the Isolation Facility, etc.	\$6.5m
Other medical equipment and protective gear, including N95 masks	\$2.6m
Construction of 25-bed COVID-19 Isolation Centre	\$1.7m
Accommodation, meals, transportation and quarantine of medical staff of the COVID-19 Isolation Centre (including Cuban Medical Brigade)	\$1.0m
Hiring of additional nurses and doctors to the SET Programme	\$1.0m
Programmes to sanitize minibuses and schools	\$0.5m
Rental of hotels to serve as quarantine facilities	\$0.5m
Medication and laboratory supplies	\$0.3m
Additional staffing for COVID-19 Isolation Centre	\$0.1m
Estimated value of duty and VAT waivers on hygiene and sanitation products	\$3.8m
TOTAL	\$18.0m



preparedness

“The support and co-operation of all citizens are needed at this time, if we are to minimise any further spread of COVID-19.”

DR. SIMONE KEIZER-BEACHE
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER





AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES BUSINESS SUPPORT

agriculture

an essential element in the battle against COVID-19

The shakeup of global trade caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has had profound impacts on national food supplies. Countries that import large amounts of food are increasing vulnerable as the pandemic makes it difficult to harvest, package and ship food. Meanwhile, in food-exporting countries, farmers are facing spoilage and erratic pricing as foreign ports are locked down and local businesses – particularly hotels – are ordering less produce.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is challenged as both an importer and producer of food. Disrupted sup-

ply chains threaten local food security, while shuttered local hotels and closed airports mean that normal markets are disappearing.

Nonetheless, despite the challenges, there are tremendous opportunities for local agriculture during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. Minister of Agriculture Saboto Caesar is optimistic that agriculture and fisheries can improve local food security, expand regional markets and provide employment for displaced workers from other sectors. Vincentian farmers and fisherfolk undoubtedly have the talent and fortitude to rise to the

occasion during these challenging times.

The Recovery & Stimulus Package provides \$12 million worth of investments in agriculture and fisheries.

Livestock farmers will be supplied with 2,000 sheep and goats, 1,000 piglets, and 200 calves to boost meat production in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Similarly, poultry producers will receive subsidised chicken feed from East Caribbean Feeds.

Fisherfolk will benefit from the provision of 40 fishing boats and engines, which will be distributed across Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to boost capacity



to supply seafood and to position fisherfolk to supply the growing regional and international demand in a post-COVID environment.

The Input Warehouse will supply free seeds to farmers, and farmers will be offered reduced prices on various tools and inputs. The Ministry of Agriculture will offer services in clearing farm land, and will provide refrigerated storage for perishable crops.

To improve food security nationwide, the Ministry of Agriculture will distribute 500,000lbs of arrowroot starch to schools, hospitals, and the homes of vulnerable Vincentians.

Further, banana exporters will enjoy a waiver of the traditional \$2-per-box banana export license, which will make the regional supply of bananas more competitive.

The Farmers' Support Company (FSC) has received additional resources under the Recovery & Stimulus Package. The FSC will have greater capacity to extend low-interest loans to agroprocessors, farmers and fisherfolk; enabling them to retool or expand their businesses in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Several food-producing sub-sectors will also receive support through the \$1.5 million grant programme avail-

able to small businesses.

Minister of Agriculture Saboto Caesar reminds Vincentians that "life and living must continue, amidst the monumental challenges of COVID-19." Central to life and living is a supply of fresh, healthy, affordable food to eat. The Recovery & Stimulus Package ensures that Vincentian food producers and consumers are not be left behind by the pandemic.

We will fully utilise the Vincentian skill and experience to ensure that agriculture provides nutrition, employment and economic activity during the trying times that we face together.



**“Life and living must
continue, amidst the
monumental challenges
of COVID-19”**

**THE HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND INDUSTRY**



TOUR BUS, MINIVAN AND TAXI INCOME SUPPORT



Minibus operators registering their vehicles for sanitization services to be conducted multiple times per day at designated locations.

ABOUT

The premature cancellation of the Cruise Ship Season negatively affected hundreds of Vincentians who provide tour bus, taxi and water taxi services to tourists. The similar cancellation of airlines' routes also affected the taxi drivers.

Similarly, minivan and private school bus operators have been affected by the changes to the academic year, the increasing numbers of people working from home, and physical distancing guidelines that have caused public transport to operate at less-than-capacity.

Recognising these challenges to the transportation sector, the Government is providing assistance to affected operators, while committing to rapidly reduce the cost of fuel at the pump to reflect the current falling oil prices.

ELIGIBILITY

Benefits will be extended to the following operators:

- All tour buses registered with the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Tourism Authority

- All taxis registered with the Tourism Authority or the Argyle International Airport
- All minivan operators with an "H" licence plate and current insurance, licence and registration documents.

BENEFITS

- Tour bus operators will receive a single \$2,000 payment
- Taxi operators will receive a single \$500 payment
- Water taxi operators will receive a single \$100 payment
- Minibus operators will receive two monthly payments of between \$350 and \$500 each
- The Government will accelerate the reduction of fuel costs in line with declining oil prices

HOW TO APPLY

Eligible operators may collect application forms at the Ministry of Transport after 27th April. The forms will also be available via the www.gov.vc website beginning on 1 May.

Call 1-(784)-457-2031 or email office.mtw@gov.vc for additional information.



**SUPPORT FOR SMALL BUSINESS,
YOUTH MICRO-ENTERPRISES
(PRYME), & CULTURAL ARTISTES**



ABOUT

Small businesses will be severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. So too will youth entrepreneurs and proprietors of microenterprises. The Government will offer assistance to these young and not-so-young businesspersons through a \$2.5 million expansion of the existing PRYME programme.

Additionally, the pandemic, the cancellation of flights, and physical distancing guidelines have wreaked havoc with the traditional cultural and entertainment calendar. The cancellation or postponement of major events like Easterval, the Bequia Regatta and Vincy Mas has reduced the earning potential of cultural artisans.

The Government will provide income support and assistance in retooling for these artisans.

ELIGIBILITY

Youth microentrepreneurs must be between 18-40 years old and registered with the National Insurance Services (NIS).

Small business owners of all ages must be registered with the NIS and present an ap-

proved business plan. Assistance is available for the creation of business plans.

Cultural artists and entertainers must be certified as such by the Ministry of Tourism, Sports and Culture, or by proof that they have been regularly employed in the private sector as an artist.

BENEFITS

All applicants are eligible for cash grants of \$2,500 to \$40,000. Depending on the size of the grant, successful applicants may be required to meet various preconditions to access the full grant amount.

HOW TO APPLY

All grants are being administered through the Promoting Youth Micro Enterprises (PRYME) Programme. Application forms are available at the PRYME website (www.finance.gov.vc/finance/index.php/pryme), the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Tourism, the Chamber of Commerce, InvestSVG, or Commerce and the Revenue Offices in Bequia, Canouan and Union Island.

Call 1-(784)-451-2235 or email pryme@gov.vc for additional information.



CONCESSIONS, TAX BREAKS
MORATORIA, ETC.

In addition to \$68 million in expenditure, the Recovery & Stimulus Package contains numerous policy innovations, waivers and forbearances to help minimise the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on individuals and businesses. These innovations involve the central Government, State-Owned Enterprises, and the private sector.

LOAN FORBEARANCE

Banks and Credit Unions have agreed to provide moratoria on loans of up to six months for affected individuals and businesses.

The terms and conditions of the various moratorium programmes vary among lenders. Please contact your bank or credit union for information.

UTILITY BILL MORATORIUM

For the next three months, the Saint Vincent Electricity Services (VINLEC) and the Central Water and Sewerage Authority (CWSA) will not disconnect electricity and water service, respectively, for current consumers. Indebtedness incurred over the three-month moratorium period will be repaid incrementally over two years. Reconnection fees will also be waived.

Consumers that are able to continue paying their VINLEC bill are eligible to receive a 15% discount.

Please contact VINLEC at (784) 456-1701 (vinlec@vinlec.com) and CWSA at (784) 456-2946 (cwsa@vincysurf.com) for information.

VAT & TAX WAIVERS

To assist consumers, support businesses, and facilitate the availability of certain critical products, the 16% Value Added Tax will be waived on the following items and services for three months, in the first instance:

- Hygiene and sanitary products
- Electricity bills
- Intra-island travel on local airlines

Withholding Tax for local airlines is also waived, as well as certain rental charges incurred at the Argyle International Airport.

SUPPORT FOR TOURISM & HOSPITALITY

In addition to local airlines receiving waivers of Withholding Tax and VAT on intra-island travel, the following policy investments are made:

- 50% reduction on departure tax for all inter-CARICOM travel
- \$2.7 million to support LIAT Airlines
- \$1 million to support the Tourism Authority in quickly reestablishing post-pandemic tourism demand
- Telecommunication provider FLOW will offer customised support packages to hotels regarding the cost of their Internet, cable, and telephone costs.

DUTY-FREE BARRELS

Barrels imported between May 1 and August 31 will be exempt from Duty.

INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT

Extensions on filing income tax returns and for payment of motor vehicle licences and liquor licenses are available.

For more information, please contact the Inland Revenue Department at (784) 457-1493.

recovery



SUPPORTING TEACHERS, STUDENTS
& EDUCATION





These are uncertain times for education in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the current Ministry of Health guidelines on physical distancing and large gatherings, have upended traditional instruction and learning.

Children are largely indoors, separated from their peers, and deprived of physical, social or educational outlets. Students in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions are uncertain as to when they will sit their CPEA, CXC and CAPE examinations. They are also concerned about their level of preparedness.

Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves has called on families, communities, churches, social organisations and the media to “be creative in helping to build further a climate for our children and young persons’ health, safety, learning and happiness.” The Prime Minister has pledged that the Ministries of Education, Health, Sports and Social Development are paying special attention to students’ health learning and happiness.

The Ministry of Education is in consultation with teachers, parents’ groups, telecommunication providers and the Agency for Public Information to provide an online system to

deliver digital educational content to students. This system will involve, among other things, having teachers record classes that can be accessed by students using digital devices.

In order to ensure that lack of digital access will not disadvantage students, the Recovery & Stimulus Package provides \$4 million for the purchase of over 12,500 affordable “tablet” devices to access online educational content.

Additionally, the Ministry of Education has secured commitments from the telecommunication providers that educational content on specified websites will be “zero-rated.” This means that students will be able to access the content for free, whether or not their devices have paid data.

All children in the sixth grade of primary school and all secondary school students will receive tablets.

Although there is still uncertainty about the upcoming academic calendar and resumption of classes, and although at-home tablet use is no substitute for structured classroom instruction, the Ministry of Education will continue its efforts to minimise the impacts of the pandemic on students.



Good Neighbour Partnership

On 5th April, Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves launched a "Good Neighbour Partnership" to fight COVID-19 in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. In launching the Partnership, the Prime Minister said "each of us is a neighbour to each other. Each of us has a responsibility to look after ourselves, our families, our neighbours, our community, our nation. This responsibility resides, too, in our churches, our NGOs, our various organisations, businesses and workplaces."

"The Good Neighbour Partnership is a broad-based national family to which each of us is entitled to belong," said the Prime Minister. "You join immediately by your actions, not mere words, in fighting COVID-19." The Prime Minister outlined 10 principles as a Good Neighbour, namely:

1. Be a good neighbour and citizen
2. Practice best personal hygiene: washing hands, wearing protective masks
3. Observe personal and physical distancing: avoid or reduce gatherings
4. Stay in quarantine if advised or ordered to do so
5. Adopt a home and help a family which is not your own
6. Show especial love for the afflicted, the elderly and children
7. Care for your immediate community in every way
8. Be nice to nurses, doctors, and other frontline employees, including the police
9. Be disciplined, focused, resourceful and creative in all we do; do not panic
10. Listen and follow the advice of the authorities

Let us all be Good Neighbours in the fight against COVID-19 in St. Vincent & the Grenadines!



“Together, we can beat COVID-19!”

Symptoms? Questions? Call the COVID Hotline

1-(784)-543-HEAL [543-4325]

**Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning,
Sustainable Development & ICT**
www.gov.vc

