

**ADDRESS BY THE ECCAA REPRESENTATIVE MR
DONALD MC PHAIL**

**Delivered at the Ground Breaking Ceremony of the Argyle
International Airport on Sunday July 13th 2008 at Argyle, St. Vincent and the
Grenadines.**

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good Afternoon,
Please allow me the use of the established Protocols

This afternoon I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Director General of the Eastern Caribbean Civil Aviation Authority, ECCAA on this historic occasion not only for the People of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, but for the people of the entire Easter Caribbean.

The Director General is unable to be here today, but he has asked me to extend his best wishes to the Government and People of St Vincent and the Grenadines for today's proceedings and for this project.

This ceremony represents the beginning of a project that will impact positively on the Caribbean in general and on St. Vincent and the Grenadines in particular.

It is the first phase in the long, complex and tedious process of building an international jet airport.

However, there will be rewards after it's completion. This airport will be the major gateway linking St Vincent and the Grenadines to the world. It will remove the limitations to air travel currently being experienced and will offer many options in air transportation and the movement of people, goods and services and enhance the associated benefits.

Improved tourism, trade, commerce, education, manufacturing are just some of them.

The decision by any State, to build an airport of this magnitude presents many challenges regardless of the size of that State. These challenges are of greater significance for smaller States especially Small Island Developing States with limited resources like ours.

Due consideration has to be given to a number of factors. These include but may not be limited to:

- Cost- Benefit factors
- Environmental factors
- Social Factors
- Economic Factors
- Financial Factors

Once the decision to build is taken, the State is then faced with the major challenge of location i.e. where to build the airport.

In large territories, demographics is critical; but on small islands, like ours, with limited territorial expanse, the focus is on finding a large enough portion of land anywhere on the island that meets the general requirements wholly or partially and do whatever is necessary to make it suitable to accommodate the airport.

Having achieved all of this, the work of the various stages of designs of all installations, facilities, building, grounds, drainage, services and communication begins.

At this point we must highlight the importance of consultation. This airport is being built to satisfy the needs of the Government and People of this nation and it will be operated and used by many different personalities with varying disciplines, perspective, jobs and needs.

Against this background, it should not only be useful but imperative that the views, opinions, needs and ideas of as many as possible are considered.

Regular consultative meetings should be an integral part of this project. They should be budgeted for, in terms of time, money and human resources as the results of these consultations can influence the final designs.

In this regard we recommend consultation with the following groups:

- Members of the Community
- Airlines
- Customs, Immigration and other Law Enforcement Agencies
- Health
- Agriculture
- Ground Handling Companies
- Concessionaires
- In-Flight Caterers
- Freight Handlers, Shippers and Forwarders
- Ground Transportation Providers
- Hoteliers
- The workers
- The travelling public
- People with disabilities
- Insurance companies

Although the our functions do not include advising Member States on the decision to build or not to build an airport, we at the ECCAA are prepared to provide technical advice to States with respect to such projects as they fall within the ambit of Civil Aviation and in this case we are convinced of the need for the airport as it represents growth in Civil Aviation.

We congratulate the government and people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines on the decision to build this airport and look forward to working with you every step of the way to ensure that it will be built in accordance with the Standards and Recommended Practices of the International Civil Aviation Organization.

We have attended a number of meetings and are happy with what we have seen thus far.

We urge that no effort is spared in the designing, building and when complete, the operation of this airport in accordance with the Standards and Recommended Practices of the International Civil Aviation Organization and in keeping with the tenets of the ECCAA and the ICAO. These are: Safety, Security, Environmental Protection, Efficiency, Continuity of Operations and the Rule of Law.

In closing please allow me on behalf of the Director General, the Directors and staff of the ECCAA, to extend our congratulation to the Government and People of St. Vincent and the Grenadines for this important project.

We look forward to be among the first to come to St. Vincent using the Argyle International Airport.

I thank you.