

ARGYLE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT UPDATE

Pressing Towards The Mark With Purpose and Commitment



A general view of the project site



Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves on tour of the project site, here he reminisces about when he planted this coconut tree



P.M. Gonsalves, meets Vincentian Konrad Sam, said to be the best heavy equipment operator on the project



Prime Minister Gonsalves, accompanied by the Rev. George Frederick, leaving the site of the workshop and the fuel station



Engineers from Taiwan's Engineer and Consulting company CECI, on a recent visit to the project site



Work in progress on the New Windward Highway



A section of the project site showing the height attained so far during the filling in process. They are expected to fill to a height of some 18 meters

THE PROGRESS OF EARTHWORKS

On May 19th 2008, the first 13 pieces of heavy earth moving equipment promised by the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for earthworks on the airport project arrived. These first pieces were followed by several other shipments, altogether numbering 37 pieces of heavy equipment and a variety of spares, costing US\$10 million (EC\$27 million).

Austria too has made to the Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines a grant of US\$185,000 to assist with the purchase of three compactors needed, as part of the full compliment of heavy machinery, for the earthworks. The compactors have since arrived and have been fully operational on the site.

On August 13th 2008, earthworks on the Argyle International Airport began in earnest. At present, the work team is concentrating on filling in the valley (following the clearing and grubbing of the area), demolishing the houses, and removing the top soil in the first kilometer of the runway. This first kilometer stretches from the Stubbs Bay cliff to the intersection at the Estates of Colonel Sydney Anderson and the Johnsons at Argyle.

Despite the challenges associated with the construction of such a massive project, the government led by Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, and a dedicated team of workers at the International Airport Development Company (IADC) continue to work assiduously to ensure the delivery of the international airport by March 2012.

Work on the 1st kilometer of the project was slightly delayed due to time lost as a result of rain and holidays. However, the IADC has met this challenge head-on in a very creative way, by extending the hours of work to 12 hours per day and 3 Sundays per month.

The airport project has so far created employment for 60 Vincentians. Many of whom are technical workers (operators and drivers) who form part of the **Chatoyer-Che** contingent, which includes 47 Cuban engineers, technicians and operators.

To support the earthworks, a workshop has been constructed on site to carry out repairs of all equipment to reduce downtime, and a fuel station has also been erected on site, thus eliminating long trips into Kingstown and significant loss of time.

Work on the bye-pass road (The new segment of the Windward Highway) is also progressing well, and is now scheduled for completion by the end of April. A new beautiful Argyle bridge has also been constructed. The lands where the new Catholic Church and Cemetery are to be relocated have been cleared and roads have been put in.

Honourable Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, the main architect of this airport project, toured the airport site extensively on March 6th. Following a meeting with the staff at the Office of the IADC, Dr Gonsalves proceeded on a tour of the site and admittedly became emotional when he saw, first hand, just how much had been already accomplished at Argyle. He spoke with several of the Cuban engineers and

heavy equipment operators and was visibly overwhelmed by the level of dedication shown towards the work in ensuring that the international airport is built and ready on time.

It was at this point that Prime Minister Gonsalves implored Vincentians to not allow the nay sayers to make them believe that the airport will not be built. He told them that the airport will be built, but only by a Unity Labour Party Government. He reiterated that the airport is being built for our children's children, and though the cost is great now, we have to make provisions for them, so that they are not faced with an even greater cost in the future if the airport was not built today.

Heavy equipment operator Vincentian konrad Sam, described as the best operator on the project, was also quoted as saying "people are saying all sorts of things that the airport is not going to be built, but we are going to show them that it will be built. We will do whatever it takes to ensure that it is built".

Shortly after the Prime Minister's visit, a group of three engineers from an engineering firm in Taiwan called CECI Engineering Consultants Inc, also visited the site, at the invitation of the IADC. The CECI engineers were particularly interested in the area earmarked for the construction of the terminal building and other landside facilities. The firm felt it necessary to come to St. Vincent to gather first hand information as they prepare to bid for the job of designing and supervising the work on the terminal building and other landside facilities for the airport project.

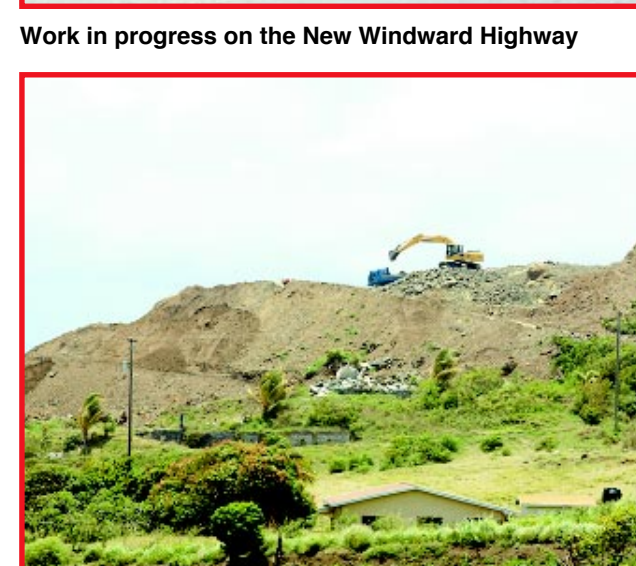
One may recall that the government of Taiwan has pledged an amount of US\$30 million for the construction of the terminal building and other landside facilities for the Argyle International Airport. It is expected that these designs will be completed by the third quarter of 2009 and will be put on public display so that Vincentians can comment on the proposed designs.

On Monday April 20th, the IADC also welcomed a team of Cuban cricketers to the site, giving them a chance to see what their countrymen are helping us to do here in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

The first kilometer of the runway accounts for 60% of the total runway work. The work will continue apace in the weeks and months ahead.



Excavation being done in the Mt. Coke area



Removal of soil and rock from Super Hill



Heavy machinery and trucks engaged in the filling in process in the 1st kilometer of the runway



Excavation work, this soil is being used to help fill the embankment



The Workshop located on the project site



More, excavation work



The Hills come down as excavation work continues



Another view of the earthworks. The soon to be developed Mt. Pleasant/Rawacou road is above



Another view of the project site



Prime Minister Gonsalves, meets members of staff of the IADC, here he greets Jose' Mini'-Chief of the workforce



Prime Minister Gonsalves, being welcomed to the offices of the IADC by C.E.O Dr. Rudy Matthias



The new Argyle Bridge on the Windward Highway



The new fuel station located on the project site



Soil testing at the laboratory in Argyle



The New Windward Highway, nearing completion