ISSUE PAPER

SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT

ST. VINCENT & THE GRENADINES

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JULY, 2013.
## GLOSSARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARDP</td>
<td>Agriculture Reform and Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBD</td>
<td>Convention on Biological Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITES</td>
<td>Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wildlife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLIS</td>
<td>cadastral land information system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSME</td>
<td>CARICOM Single Market and Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWSA</td>
<td>Central Water and Sewage Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC$</td>
<td>East Caribbean Dollar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECCB</td>
<td>Eastern Caribbean Central Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIA</td>
<td>Environmental Impact Assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HLDC</td>
<td>Housing and Land Development Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MHILP</td>
<td>Ministry of Housing, Lands, Informal Settlements and Physical Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEMS</td>
<td>National Environmental Management Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NESDP</td>
<td>National Economic and Social Development Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPA</td>
<td>The National Parks, Rivers and Beaches Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECS</td>
<td>Organisation of East Caribbean States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDG</td>
<td>St. Georges Declaration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVG</td>
<td>St. Vincent and the Grenadines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVGNT</td>
<td>The Saint Vincent and the Grenadines National Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN-Habitat</td>
<td>The United Nations Human Settlements Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNCCD</td>
<td>United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNCLOS</td>
<td>United Convention on the Law of the Seas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNFCCC</td>
<td>United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VINLEC</td>
<td>St. Vincent Electricity Services Limited</td>
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</table>
1.0 BACKGROUND

Historically land has been the main source of wealth and power in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG). Land remains the major natural resource for economic development, employment, poverty reduction, social equity and the realization of sustainable livelihoods for the population. Land is the platform for most human activities despite the state having over 90 times more sea space than land space. Traditionally, agricultural land development based on a mono-cultural export led model has been the mainstay of the economy. With the decline in competitiveness and loss of the preferential UK banana market, greater attention has been placed over the last two decades on the development of both beach and eco-based/nature tourism. Notwithstanding, this recent thrust at greater utilization of ocean resources it is still envisaged that in the foreseeable future there will be a continued and perhaps even higher dependence on the land resources to provide sustainable social and economic development while the potential of the other resources is being explored.

In the past, the fragile and limited land resources have not been utilized in an optimal manner and the land utilization and management experience has revealed that despite some economic growth, there is significant poverty, social inequality and degradation of resources which seriously affect the sustainability of the resource base and the socio-economic development process.

Increasingly, in light of globalization, the global economic and financial downturn since 2008, the threat of climate change and recent natural disasters which have all placed the economy in a tail spin and brought
economic and social hardships on sections of the population there is the recognition by major stakeholders to work towards greater sustainable development and in particular on Sustainable Land Management (SLM). SLM is defined here as “a system of technologies and or planning that aims to integrate ecological, with socio-economic and political principles in the management of land resources to achieve intra and inter generational equity (Hurni et al 1996).

The government and populace now are committed to working together to develop relevant land policy, appropriate legislation and implement efficient land use management initiatives to ensure the orderly and progressive utilization of the land to meet both current and future needs of the entire population in a sustainable manner. The government is therefore grappling with policy and initiatives which will:

1. improve economic efficiency and productivity in the use of the limited and fragile land resources by developing more dynamic land markets and enhancing security of tenure;
2. increase access of disadvantaged groups to land and housing; and
3. ensure greater protection, conservation and sustainable use of resources to satisfy current and future generation needs.

It should be noted that these goals are not necessarily complementary and in the context of the East Caribbean states they can be conflicting and offer great implementation challenges.

It is in this context that the SVG government is participating in the OECS Sustainable Land Management Project, (SLMP) which is funded by the Australian Government. The project is intended to improve land policies and land management within the OECS Member States. The project goal
is to achieve “enhanced sustainability of development in the OECS - economic development, poverty reduction, social stability and the protection of environmentally sensitive areas - through the formulation, adoption and implementation of comprehensive land policies.”

UN-Habitat and the University of West Indies are collaborating with the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), National Land Agencies, other National Ministries with interest in land issues, and other land stakeholders including Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and professional bodies in pursuit of this goal.

One of the project’s key outputs is the development of OECS Land Policy Guidelines, which highlights the importance of land management to the achievement of economic development, poverty reduction, social stability and the protection of environmentally sensitive areas; and recommending key principles in development and implementation of land policies. These issues papers will facilitate the development of Land Policies at country level for the Member States. The generic policy document development process will entail inclusive stakeholders’ consultations where some inputs will be through country papers, which provide a succinct analysis of land issues in all the Member States.

This report, the Issues Paper for SVG, is part of the development of the OECS Land Policy Guidelines. This study assesses some of the successes and challenges in Land Management in SVG as well as their adequacy and effectiveness. With respect to the way forward, the paper discusses critical concerns identified by stakeholders with far reaching social, cultural, economic and political ramifications.
The specific objective of this consultancy is to produce a synthesis of national land related issues guided by thematic areas such as land markets and development, social equity and access to land, environment and sustainable land use, climate change and climate variability, Effective Land Management and Administration Systems, and Key Legislation. This report, the Issues Paper for SVG, is part of the development of the OECS Land Policy Guidelines. With the support of the Australian Government, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) is implementing a project for improving land policies and land management in its Member States.

The report is presented in this manner.

**Section 1:** presents the back-drop against which these issues are discussed. The current situation is the product of our geography and history and these themes are elaborated. It will be noted that the small size of the country; the location within the inter-tropical convergence zone; the ruggedness of the terrain; the relatively youthful and friable soils, the relatively high precipitation combines to make the land susceptible to erosion and challenging for both agriculture and urban development. Some details on the state of the economy have presented in Tables and Charts.

**Section 2:** A review of the country’s land use status and policy and legal frame-work is presented in this section. It will be seen that there is no scarcity of information relative to land development and management for SVG. The Laws have been reviewed under four (4) separate sub-headings: Legislations related to land use planning and development; land ownership and title legislation; legislation relating to conversation and
environmental concerns and a miscellaneous group. The National Non-governmental organizations and the Environmental conventions to which the country is a signatory are in this section listed.

Section 3: Discusses the themes relative to sustainable development: land uses planning including the processes involved along with the role of non-governmental organizations are discussed. Also dealt with is a wide range of environmental issues that impact sustainability. Three conflicting themes urbanization, informal settlements/squatting and agricultural productivity receive some extended attention. The final part of this section deals with land market and land taxation.

Section 4: Focuses on those cross cutting issues not raised in the previous sections.
2.0 INTRODUCTION TO COUNTRY LAND ISSUES

This section provides brief background information on the country’s status and trends in areas such as demography, economy, land ownership and land use. More details on these topics are presented in Annex 1.

2.1 Geography

(a) Location

St. Vincent and the Grenadines is an archipelagic state in the southern Lesser Antilles comprising of more than thirty islands, islets and cays situated approximately 13 degrees north latitude, and 61 degrees west longitude. It is approximately 97 miles west of Barbados, 24 miles southwest of St. Lucia, 68 miles north-northeast of Grenada, and 170 miles north of Trinidad and Tobago. (See Map 1)

Map 1: The Location of St. Vincent and the Grenadines
(b) **Size**

The state covers a total land area of approximately 150.3 square miles (approximately 95,800 acres) and a larger marine area including a shallow coastal shelf encompassing an area of approximately 690 square miles.

The main island, St. Vincent, the largest and most populated, is located to the extreme north of the archipelago. The island is roughly elliptical in shape with its greatest length 18 miles north to south and its greatest width 11 miles west to east. The land area is approximately 133.8 square miles, or around 85,350 acres.

The Grenadines cover a land area of approximately 16.5 square miles altogether - approximately 10,450 acres - and stretch a distance of 45 miles to the southwest of St. Vincent toward Grenada to latitude 12 degrees, 30 minutes.

The seven inhabited islands are Bequia and Mustique in the Northern Grenadines; Union, Canouan, Mayreau, Palm Island, and Petit St. Vincent in the Southern Grenadines. The land area of the Northern Grenadines totals 9 square miles, and the Southern Grenadines 7.5 square miles.

There are a number of uninhabited islets and rocks including the Tobago Cays - Petit Rameau, Baradal, Petit Bateau, Jamesby, Balliceaux and Petit Tabac - which are of environmental, historic and economic significance.
(c) Topography

The main topographical feature of St. Vincent is the backbone of volcanic mountains that stretch much of its length and rise northwards to an elevation of approximately 4,084 feet above mean sea level at La Soufriere, the highest point on the island and where a volcano is located.

Further south are Richmond Peak (3,523 feet), Mt. Brisbane (3,058 feet), Grand Bonhomme (3,181 feet), Petit Bonhomme (2,481 feet), and Mt. St. Andrew (2,413). These are all part of the axial range which divides the island longitudinally into two nearly equal parts which are further subdivided by lateral spurs radiating outwards to the windward and leeward coasts.
Highly dissected ridges and valleys extending down to the edge of the water characterize the topography on the leeward side. The spurs are steep and the valleys deep and narrow. This side of the island is indented with numerous deep embayments, which provide safe harbours and offer potential for port development.

On the windward side the relief is more gently rolling, with an almost straight coastline with less high cliffs and shaped by the continuous erosional forces of waves energised by the Northeast Trade winds. The more gently undulating foothills on this windward side enclose shallow valleys which occasionally merge into extensive coastal plains. (Map 3)
The Grenadines are lower-lying, with no point being higher than the 1,000-foot high, Mt. Taboi on Union Island. The second highest point is on the island of Canouan at Mt. Royal which is 877 feet high.

The steepness of the land in the country as indicated by the above table shows the percentage of the land in five slope categories in each of the major island units.

This characteristic makes much of the land in the country extremely susceptible to erosion and difficult for urban development.

(d) Geology

The geological structure of mainland St. Vincent comprises of a chain of mainly extinct volcanoes, whose craters coincide with the central ridge of mountains. The most common rock type is Agglomerate which is principally andesitic and basaltic in composition. There are also several lava flows comprised of Andesites or Andestic Basalts. Pyroclastics are the most abundant volcanic products on the island and include particles varying in size from clay to small boulders. Marine Sediment and beach sand are found mainly in the Buccament River Valley, Arnos Vale, Argyle, and Georgetown.
The Grenadines have more varied rock types of both volcanic and sedimentary origin. The geological composition of the larger islands is as follows:

- Bequia comprises of Andesite, Mixed Pyroclastics and Ash, River Alluvium and white coral sand.
- Union Island is predominantly of Andesite, Mixed Pyroclastics and Ash, and beach sand.

Canouan is made up partially of volcanic material - Andesite and Mixed Pyroclastics and partially of consolidated marine sediments.
(e) **Soils**

The soils in St. Vincent are very fertile because of its volcanic origin, and in most areas it is highly permeable. According to the map of soil types in St. Vincent (see Map 5) the soils on the island are grouped into five categories, based on original material from which they were derived. These include yellow earth, recent volcanic ash soil, alluvial soil, aeolian soil and shallow clay soil, locally known as “shoal”. The yellow earth, developed on original volcanic rocks, is sub-divided into high-level yellow earth and low-level yellow earth. The high-level yellow earth is believed to be the oldest soil type in St. Vincent, and is found in the north of the island close to the volcano. The low-level yellow earth occurs at elevations below 200 meters.

**Map 5: The Soil Composition in SVG**
(f) **Climate**

The country enjoys a tropical marine climate with pleasant conditions during most of the year. The temperature ranges between 69 and 92 degrees Fahrenheit, with an annual average of around 80 degrees.

There are two distinct seasons - a dry season from January to May, and a wet season from June to December, with the wettest period between June and September. The average total wet season rainfall for the country is approximately 67 inches, while dry season rainfall averages 32 inches.

Precipitation totals vary spatially on mainland St. Vincent from an annual average of 60 inches on the southern coast to over 150 inches in the mountainous interior. Intensity decreases from North to South and from the windward side of the island to the leeward.

Evapo-transpiration is 50 inches a year on average along the coast, decreasing progressively with altitude.

Rainfall is significantly lower in the Grenadines. The average annual rainfall for those islands which have meteorological stations - Bequia, Union and Canouan - is about 49 inches. The wettest months are June to November when the monthly average is 6 inches. The driest period is from February to April during which the average monthly rainfall slightly more than one inch. (Map 5)
2.2 Demography

In 1980, 92.6 percent of the total SVG population resided on mainland St. Vincent and in 1991 the figure was virtually unchanged, 92.1 percent. However, in 2001, the mainland accounted for 91.9 percent of the total SVG population of 106,253, registering a slight decrease. 85% of SVG’s population live in the coastal zone. The major concentration of the population is in the more developed areas in the south, with 45% of the population in the census divisions of Kingstown: 12.3%; Kingstown suburbs: 11.77%; and Calliaqua: 20.79%. The average density for the island is 707 per sq mile distributed as follows: Kingstown - 6,954/ sq mile; Kingstown Suburbs -1,954/sq mile; and Calliaqua (1872/sq mile). The areas with the least densities are in the north – Chateaubelair (197/sq mile); Georgetown (311/sq mi); Barrouallie (382/sq mi) and Sandy Bay (512/sq mile).

According to the 2001 Census, 30.7 percent of the population is in the under 15 age cohort. The median age is 26.4 years. There were 30,518 households compared with 27,002 in the 1991, an increase of 13.0 percent. Significant internal migration occurred in the period 1991-2001. There was a net loss of persons from the Kingstown census division (-14.6%) with gains in the suburbs (+16.3%) and Calliaqua (+8.9%). Density levels across census divisions vary significantly, from a high of 6,954 in Kingstown to a low of 197 in Chateaubelair.

While the population density in Kingstown was lower than the 8,140 recorded in 1991, in 2001 it was almost ten times the national average. This high population density in Kingstown, although showing declining trends over the last 20 years, continues to put severe pressure on social and other services within the country’s capital.
The census report also showed that in 2001 Kingstown, Kingstown Suburbs and Calliaqua accounted for 45.6 percent of the total number of households. Given that these Census Divisions occupy 13.4 percent of the total landmass, and have a combined population density of 2,378 per square mile there are implications for spatial planning and for transportation, housing and other social services as well as disaster risk.

Table 1: The Population and Density by Census Division

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kingstown</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>16,532</td>
<td>15,466</td>
<td>13,212</td>
<td>8,701</td>
<td>8,140</td>
<td>6,954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburbs of Kingstown</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>8,609</td>
<td>10,757</td>
<td>12,508</td>
<td>1,345</td>
<td>1,681</td>
<td>1,954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calliaqua</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>17,440</td>
<td>20,290</td>
<td>22,095</td>
<td>1,478</td>
<td>1,719</td>
<td>1,872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriaqua</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>8,408</td>
<td>8,864</td>
<td>8,145</td>
<td>894</td>
<td>943</td>
<td>866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridgetown</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>6,762</td>
<td>7,532</td>
<td>6,754</td>
<td>939</td>
<td>1,046</td>
<td>938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonaire</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>7,210</td>
<td>7,890</td>
<td>7,482</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>589</td>
<td>558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgetown</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>6,494</td>
<td>7,303</td>
<td>6,914</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy Bay</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>2,867</td>
<td>2,793</td>
<td>2,716</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Layou</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>5,510</td>
<td>5,993</td>
<td>6,303</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrouallie</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>4,667</td>
<td>5,199</td>
<td>5,422</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chateaubelair</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>6,101</td>
<td>6,045</td>
<td>6,087</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Main Land</strong></td>
<td><strong>133.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>90,600</strong></td>
<td><strong>98,132</strong></td>
<td><strong>97,638</strong></td>
<td><strong>677</strong></td>
<td><strong>733</strong></td>
<td><strong>730</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Grenadines</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4,740</td>
<td>5,514</td>
<td>5,389</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Grenadines</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>2,505</td>
<td>2,853</td>
<td>3,226</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Main Land</strong></td>
<td><strong>16.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>7,245</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,367</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,615</strong></td>
<td><strong>439</strong></td>
<td><strong>507</strong></td>
<td><strong>522</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL SVG</strong></td>
<td><strong>150.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>97,845</strong></td>
<td><strong>106,253</strong></td>
<td><strong>106,253</strong></td>
<td><strong>651</strong></td>
<td><strong>709</strong></td>
<td><strong>707</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2.1 Employment and Livelihood

In 2001, 41.6 percent of the total employed population worked in the Agriculture, Construction and Wholesale industries, compared with 49.1 percent in 1991 (Population and Housing Census Data Report, 2001). This was due to the 37 percent decline in employment in the Agricultural industry, although there was positive growth in the Construction and Wholesale and Retail Trade sectors. The industries which experienced significant decline in employment were Fishing (-22.0 percent) and Manufacturing (-13.0 percent) Table 2.

### Table 2: The Change in employment from 1991-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDUSTRY</th>
<th>Number of Percentage Distribution</th>
<th>% Change 1991-2001</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2001 Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Hunting and Forestry</td>
<td>4,793</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining and Quarrying</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>2,444</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity, Gas and Water</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>3,659</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale and Retail Trade</td>
<td>5,887</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels and Restaurants</td>
<td>2,384</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport, Storage and Communication</td>
<td>2,594</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Intermediation</td>
<td>802</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities</td>
<td>1,302</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration and Defense</td>
<td>2,151</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Social Work</td>
<td>743</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Community, Social and Personal Activities</td>
<td>1,203</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Household with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Persons</td>
<td>1,584</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra Territorial organizations</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Stated</td>
<td>1,449</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>34,521</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Economic expansion during the intercensal period occurred mainly in: Hotels and Restaurants (76 percent); other Community, Social and Personal Activities (62 percent); Financial Intermediation (52 percent); Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities (24 percent); Transport, Storage and Communications; and Wholesale and Retail Trade (13 percent). These industries combined accounted for 52 percent of the employed workforce, a noticeable increase of 23 percent over 1991.

**Table 3: Changes in employment Sector by Gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th></th>
<th>1991</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Hunting and Forestry</td>
<td>3,800</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>993</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining and Quarrying</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>1,726</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity, Gas and Water</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>3,480</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale and Retail Trade</td>
<td>2,890</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>2,997</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels and Restaurants</td>
<td>1,036</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>1,348</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport, Storage and Communication</td>
<td>2,141</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Intermediation</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>643</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration and Defense</td>
<td>1,384</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>803</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>1,697</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Social Work</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>559</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Community, Social and Personal Activities</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Household with Employed Persons</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1,179</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra Territorial organizations</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Stated</td>
<td>933</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>21,274</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>13,247</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 3 illustrates the gender distribution of employment. Wholesale and Retail Trade; Hotels and Restaurants; Education; and Private Households with Employed Persons accounted for 7,218 or 54 percent of all employed females. The Hotels and Restaurants industry attracted 10.2 percent of females, an increase of 3.3 percent over 1991.

It was noted, however, that male employment in Agriculture declined by more than 50 percent between 1991 and 2001. By contrast, female employment in Agriculture declined by 6.4 percent during the intercensal period. Some males would have found alternative employment in Hotels and Restaurants where male employment grew by 88 percent during the intercensal period. Employment in four industries (Agriculture,
Construction, Wholesale and Retail Trade, Transport, Storage and Communications) accounted for 58 percent of the total males employed.

2.3 Economy

SVG is ranked as a lower-middle income country, with a developing economy that is vulnerable to external shocks and natural disasters. Historically the economy of SVG has been small, open and based on the production of a very limited range of agricultural products principally for export markets. Today SVG remains highly dependent upon international trade and service linkages to sustain its economic activities. Agriculture has been on the decline due largely to the loss of the preferential EU markets for bananas, natural disasters, negative exogenous shocks and crop diseases, which have placed tremendous strain on the agricultural sector. As a consequence, agriculture’s contribution to national output has diminished from 16.7 percent in 1990 to 6.3 percent in 2011. Also, export earnings from the sector has contracted from EC$73.0 million in 1993 to EC$20.0 million in 2011. This outturn has badly affected private investment in the sector, rural employment and is one of the prime contributors to rural poverty.

There has been a major thrust towards economic diversification through targeted strategies at the development of the services sector - tourism and financial services. This dependency upon the external environment makes the country highly vulnerable to changes in the international environment. The economy of SVG has shown continuous growth during the period 2000 to 2009 as indicated in Figure 1 (The GDP at Market Prices) and GDP per capita 2000-2008 (Mott Macdonald, 2010).
Agriculture since 2000 has been in the decline (see Figure 2) and the situation worsened since 2010 with the impacts of natural disasters. Preliminary estimates suggest some marginal improvements in the sector since 2011.

**Figure 2: Primary Agricultural Production (Tonnes 000)**

Source: Mott Macdonald (2010)
The tourism sector which showed strong signs of growth during the 1995-2006 period declined in 2007 (see Figure 3). Foreign Direct investment which increased significantly since 2004 began to show signs of decline in 2008 also. (see Figure 4)

**Figure 3: SVG Tourism Visitor Arrivals**

![SVG Tourism Visitor Arrivals](image)

Source: Mott Macdonald (2010)

**Table 4: Foreign Direct Investments 2000-2008**

![Table 4: Foreign Direct Investments 2000-2008](image)

Source: Mott Macdonald (2010)
However, between 2008 - 2010, the economy has been in decline. The data from the Annual Economic and Financial Review, 2010, of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) show the average economic growth rates for St. Vincent and the Grenadines in 2009 and 2010, at -0.9 percent. The Prime Minister in his 2012 Budget address attributed this decline in socio-economic conditions to ‘the external economic crisis, the regional insurance collapse, the natural disasters of drought, Hurricane Tomas and the 2011 April freak storm, and the Black Sigatoka disease.’ The economic decline has brought great hardships on the population as rural communities have been unable to earn income due to crop damage. Homes damaged by hurricane Tomas are not fully rehabilitated and as government faced economic contraction wage and salary restraint have been imposed on government employees and government projects expenditures have been significantly affected.

Preliminary assessments indicate that the economy of St. Vincent and the Grenadines improved in 2012, as real economic activity rose by 1.5 percent, following growth of 0.3 percent in 2011. This expansion was attributed mainly by growth in Agriculture (2.1%), Wholesale and Retail Trade (1.5%) and Financial Intermediation (8.4%).

Poverty has fallen from 37.5 percent in 1996 to 30.2 in 2008 with a significant reduction in the percentage of indigent poor which went from 29.7 to 2.9 for the same time period.¹ More so, the Gini co-efficient fell from 0.56 to 0.41 illustrating an improvement in income equality.

It must be borne in mind that as a small island developing state, SVG is attempting to realize high levels of development and achieve within the

¹ SVG budget speech 2010.
context of a number of development constraints as detailed in Box 7.2:

US$ (million)

**Box 7.2: Development constraints in SVG**

1. It is a small resource-challenged, structurally-dependant, open economy, which is prone to natural disasters and ranks very high in the league tables of disaster-prone countries internationally.
2. St. Vincent and the Grenadines has limited agricultural land for cultivation of about 20,000 acres out of total land acreage of over 100,000 acres.
3. It has an economically-active population of 50,000 and a high dependency ratio.
4. St. Vincent and the Grenadines is hugely dependent on capital flows from overseas whether by way of foreign direct investment, grants or loans, and remittances.
5. St. Vincent and the Grenadines' domestic market or internal demand is quite limited and is thus dependent upon external source markets for trade in goods, tourism, and services.
6. Globalisation and the resultant loss of market preferences internationally for St. Vincent and the Grenadines' agricultural commodities, including bananas, has made the agricultural sector internationally un-competitiveness.
7. The poor tourism infrastructure, including the absence of an international airport has reduced the great potentials of tourism.
8. The limitations of the private sector especially regarding its size, the unavailability of a sufficiency of competitively-priced credit facilities, the comparatively high cost of electricity, its lack of a sufficient creativity and risk-taking, and public sector inefficiencies, contain optimal economic development.
9. Institutional inefficiencies in the public sector and limited skills limit both public and private sector economic activity.
10. St. Vincent and the Grenadines is a middle-income country, with a per capita GDP of EC$19,323, geographically close to the USA, with highly-sophisticated and expensive consumer tastes. This fuels a very high level of expenditure on imported goods and services and provides challenges to the sustainability of the country’s external account.
12. The topography and archipelagic nature of the state pose real challenges to providing physical and social infrastructural services to the communities especially those in remote locations.

Source: Gonsalves (2012 January)
The overall development agenda of St. Vincent and the Grenadines as outlined in the draft National Economic and Social Development Plan (NESDP) 2013-2025, has been built around five (5) strategic goals:

- Re-engineering Economic Growth;
- Enabling Increased Human and Social Development;
- Promoting Good Governance and Public Administration;
- Improving physical Infrastructure, Preserving the Environment and building resilience to climate change; and
- Building National Pride, Identity and Culture.

During the medium term (2013-2015) Government’s overarching focus will be to stabilize the economy while at the same time address issues of poverty reduction and promote social participation.

Government will seek to achieve these goals through the following strategies which are particularly relevant to land management:

- Promoting agricultural entrepreneurship, and Food and Nutritional Security and conservation of the natural environment;
- Increasing the role of the private sector in economic and social development;
- Expanding the manufacturing Sector;
- Further development of the tourism sector;
- Preserving, maintaining and promoting the cultural heritage of St Vincent and the Grenadines;
- Promoting a healthy, active and physically fit population through involvement in physical education, sports and recreational activity;
- Improving in the general health of the population;
- Creating an adaptable, functional and literate population;
• Maximizing benefits afforded through integration into the OECS Economic union, CSME and the Global Economy;
• Enhancing accountability, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency in the provision of public goods and services;
• Improving the housing and living conditions of the population by providing reliable access to potable water to the population;
• Providing adequate solid waste management in St. Vincent and the Grenadines (waste disposal);
• Creating an energy sector that ensures sustainable supply and efficient use of energy while preserving the natural environment;
• Developing the Telecommunications Sector;
• Establishing a proper road network; and
• Reducing the adverse impact of Climate Change and other Natural Disasters.

2.4 LAND HISTORY

In the early periods of the country’s development, land was acquired through conquest and coercion. St. Vincent and the Grenadines was inhabited by a group of indigenous peoples known as the Kalinagos or Caribs. These people recognised the right to land operated on a communal ownership system. The arrival of French and later, British settlers resulted in a change to private ownership, control and use of land, and ultimately gave rise to the forms of tenancy which later evolved.

On St. Vincent, the French forcefully appropriated large tracts of fertile land from the Kalinagos. The Kalinagos defended the ownership of land (not mere access to it) and there were major disputes and struggles between Kalinagos and the French up until 1763, when the island was ceded to Great Britain. The new colonists were more ruthless than their
predecessors in dispossessing the Kalinagos of land, including acreages “purchased” by the French. The year 1797 saw the British in full control of the island after they defeated the Kalinagos in the final Carib war, and subsequently deported a significant majority to British Honduras (now Belize). The remaining natives were quarantined on a reserve on the northeast coast of the island. According to Adams (1996) “the exile of the Caribs, stemmed from... the greed of the colonists for the acquisition of fertile Caribbean land” (p 45). The British then moved quickly to regulate ownership and use of land including strict prohibition on ownership by African slaves, who represented the largest ethnic grouping of population.

Land, especially agricultural, became the main source of wealth and power during the period of British colonisation. From the period of slavery and into the late 19th century, British planters controlled all of the island’s cultivable land in the form of plantations. Land was classified into two categories, namely land which could be “successfully cultivated”, and land which could be “cultivated with difficulty and risk” (Richardson 1997, p134). The English planters controlled lands in the former category. However, when the need arose, they also cultivated lands in the latter category. It is noteworthy that there was absolutely no regard for the natural environment. Concern for soil fertility was only shown if it related directly to sugar production, the major export.

Throughout the 19th century and into the early 20th century, the majority of Vincentians were landless and lived in absolute poverty. The genesis of this situation was plantation slavery. The pattern of the slavery era, when the cultivable lands in St. Vincent were in the hands of a few British planters, continued into post-emancipation colonial society, facilitated by new discriminatory land laws. According to Richardson (1997) in 1897, “the 44,049 cultivable acres on St. Vincent were divided unevenly among
515 landholders, with 270 persons who owned 5 acres or less accounting for only 505 acres” (p 43). Overall, there were only 1,360 acres in smallholdings. At the other extreme, 10 of the largest landholders ... together owned 29,241 of St. Vincent’s cultivable acreage. One planter was the sole owner of 11,936 acres (Richardson 1997, p 136).

In an effort to gain access to land, mainly for peasant farming, many Vincentians squatted on marginal lands on the fringes of estates and in the mountainous interior. In some cases, they rented small parcels of land from adjacent sugar cane estates, but these lands tended to be infertile, and tenancy was conditioned on labour provided to the estate. However, planters continued to use the Byres Plan of 1776 (i.e. survey plan completed by Chief Surveyor John Byres in 1776) during the late 19th century, as a legal instrument to extend their plantations into the interior, and to control lands occupied by the working class, with no redress from Government. Clearly, Vincentians had little or no legal access to land, and absolutely no control over that which they cultivated. This situation sparked off social unrest and led the British Government to initiate the Royal Commission.

The Royal Commission of 1897 was the major catalyst in bringing about a change in land tenure in St. Vincent. It recommended among other things, that land be expropriated from planters and distributed to the landless. By 1902 (the same year the island was devastated by a volcanic eruption) more than 16 estates, totalling 13,800 acres were expropriated and distributed to small holders (Richardson 1997). This marked the first effort at land reform on the islands. Although many of the landless poor benefited, land distribution was still skewed towards the wealthy, mostly descendants of Europeans. However, the landless/poor that were given access to land had no formal title to those lands. This situation was never
resolved, so that most small occupiers of land today have no deed of title granting undisputed rights. Up to the third quarter of the twentieth century distribution of land in St. Vincent and the Grenadines continued to favour the more privileged.

Land distribution was so badly skewed that it took other Government-sponsored land redistribution schemes in the 1970s and 1980s to change this situation, though formal titles are yet to be provided.

2.5 Ratio of State Land to Private land

The government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines is the major landholder owning in excess of 60% of the total land area. Private lands account for 40% of the total land area. The Land area owned by the Government varies in size, use and location. The State owns all of the approximately 34,000 acres of land above the 1,000-foot contour line of St. Vincent (or 30% of lands on St Vincent), over 7,000 acres of agricultural land acquired by the state and which is leased and some Grenadine islands which have been leased to small holders and some Grenadine islands which have been leased for tourism purposes, as well as over eighty percent of the island of Canouan.

State Lands are owned and managed by a number of public agencies with the Land and Surveys Department being the major state agency for management of state lands. This department is responsible for the management of over 80% of state lands including the central state forest lands, above the 1,000 ft contour as well as a great deal of agricultural leased lands. Forested areas, beach lands, and peri-urban lands in SVG are mainly by the Forestry Department, the National Parks Authority and the Housing and Lands Development Corporation respectively.
The main reason for this high level of state ownership of lands is linked to the fragile ecology of the central portion of St. Vincent and the need to preserve the area for biological diversity, watershed protection for sustainable water supplies. A great deal of the state lands are not classified as developable lands but are deemed as ‘preservation and protected areas’. In addition, given the historical landlessness problem and the decline of plantation agriculture the state had to acquire a large number of the abandoned plantations to create economic activities in rural areas, to address the vexed problems of high rural poverty, unemployment, social inequity and the need to enhance physical and social infrastructure in response to current and future needs.

(a) Landholdings

The latest agricultural census in 2000, cited in the St. Vincent National Agricultural Programme, indicated that 87.5 percent of the number of holdings, representing 23.5 percent of the holding acreage, was less than 5.0 acres in size, and 96.8 percent or approximately 35.3 percent of the total area in holdings, was less than 10 acres. Only 27 holdings - 0.4 percent of the total number - were 100 acres and over but these accounted for 53.6 percent of the total area in holdings.

Of the land area in holdings approximately 87.0 percent was held in freehold ownership, the remainder being either rented or held rent-free or under share tenancy arrangement.

According to the 1986 agricultural census the total extent of the 6,799 holdings with land was approximately 29,690 acres. The
percentage of holdings in various size categories is indicated in table 9.1.

**Table 4: Size Of Agricultural Holdings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 0.5 acre</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5 to 2.49 acres</td>
<td>51.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 to 4.9 acres</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.0 to 9.9 acres</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.0 to 24.9 acres</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.0 acres and over</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures show that just over 86.0 percent of holdings were less than 5 acres. Approximately 97.0 percent were under 10 acres in size. The average size of holding was 4.4 acres. The picture therefore remained virtually unchanged in the inter-censal period, except that there appears to have been increased agricultural squatting activity.

In 2001, the State owned over 30 percent of the total cultivable area. The redistribution of this land under the land reform programme and the fragmentation of privately-owned agricultural estates for inheritance and other purposes would have had the effect of increasing the percentage of farms in the small holding categories.

It has been suggested that most agricultural land holdings are too small to be economically viable under the crops which dominate the economy of the country, and those into which the agricultural sector is to be diversified. Land use policy for the country would need to address this
increasing fragmentation of land into plots which might be below the economic farm size.

The issue of security of tenure will also need to be addressed as in 1987 almost half of the estimated 10,000 small farmers in the country were reported to be without secure title to the land which they were cultivating. The land reform programme would have also affected a decrease in this figure and improved the security of tenure for a large number of small farmers.

Information on urban land tenure obtained from the 1991 census indicates that approximately 74.0 percent of households enjoy freehold tenure of the land which they occupy, and 2.2 percent leasehold tenure. Approximately 9.7 percent were squatting. In other instances land was either rented, or held under other informal arrangement.
2.6 **Land use Patterns**

Land use in St. Vincent and the Grenadines is influenced by topography and to some extent by history. In the early 19th century most of the lowlands were plantations and the highlands forested. Later, villages evolved adjacent to these plantations. Today, a significant majority of the land is still used for agriculture. Of the 96,000 acres of land in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, approximately 32% is available for agriculture. According to the Agricultural Census (2000), 67% of the agricultural land is in permanent crops\(^2\), of which banana cultivation accounts for 63%. The remaining 33% is in temporary crops. Approximately 22% of the land area is designated for built-up areas and miscellaneous land uses, at 11% and 10% respectively (Sylvester 2002, p 4). Forestry accounts for 47% of the land space. However, recent data show that the amount of land in forest can be considerably less than reported as a result of squatting. The Deputy Chief Agricultural Officer revealed that the forest reserves decreased from an estimated 47% between 1985 and 1986 to 29% in 2004 (Personal Communication August 16, 2004). Similarly, the agricultural land under bananas has declined drastically.

Tropical rain forest still exists on the island but on the central mountains where it is difficult to penetrate, and precipitation is greatest. Other significant forest reserves are the Kings Hill forest enclosure. The 2003 estimate puts natural forest at 70% of forest cover. The remainder comprises secondary forest, of which 25% is “planted forest” and 5% agro-forest. The “planted forest” reflects the efforts of the Forestry

\(^2\) According to the Agricultural Census Report for 2000, permanent crops do not need replanting after harvesting.
Department in its fight against deforestation, the fulfilment of its forest conservation mandate, and its effort to maintain the watershed areas (Department of Forestry 2003).

Interestingly, the Agricultural census provides no data for lands under marijuana cultivation, even though this activity uses considerable portions of the un-surveyed lands and is highly visible to the public. (Ivor Jackson & Associates, 2004)

Urban land uses are concentrated on the coastal areas of St Vincent with the greatest concentration of settlements in the south and south east of St Vincent where 40% of the population resides and where most of the economic, financial and other services are located. Hotels and related tourism services are concentrated in the Grenadines and in the Southern portion of St Vincent.

Economic forces especially the decline of agriculture over the last thirty years have resulted in rural-urban migration to the Grenadines and the Greater Urban area of Kingstown as persons move for jobs in the tourism and urban sectors. This has placed great pressure on the land resources leading to great population and development densities and uncontrolled expansion of informal settlements into the fragile and ecologically sensitive hillsides surrounding Kingstown. However, with enhanced road communications, greater car ownership and bus transport improvements there is greater daily commuting (even from distant areas) but with more traffic congestion in the Greater Kingstown area.
Maps 6 and 7: Land uses in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in that order
GRENADINES

Land use
3.0 STATUS OF LAND USE POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Prevailing Policies

In SVG there is a plethora of documents with national and sectorial policies related to Sustainable Land Development and Management. Many of these documents were developed under various projects with donor resources. In a great deal of cases, it is not clear if these documents have been formally accepted and approved by government for implementation. However, there is no single comprehensive document which outlines the National Land Policy and details the sectorial strategies. In addition, there are varying pieces of legislation which focus on land and environmental management. All these documents and pieces of legislation related to land management are initiatives to develop and promote policies and strategies to:

1. Improve economic efficiency and productivity in the use of the limited and fragile land resources by developing more dynamic land markets and enhancing security of tenure;
2. Increase access of disadvantaged groups to land and housing; and
3. Ensure greater protection, conservation and sustainable use of resources to satisfy future generation needs.

In this section of the report an attempt will be made to present in summary fashion governments stated land policies as can be gleaned from documentary reviews and statements by Government Ministers. The report also relies heavily on the policies and strategies enunciated in the St George’s Declaration on Principles of Environmental Sustainability, The National Environmental Management Strategy, The draft National Physical

The overriding goal of the government’s land policy is to promote the integrity of the physical environment for sustainable development and provide a framework within which citizens can achieve desired social and economic objectives.

The goals and objectives for specific themes are outlined below.

3.1.1 NATURAL RESOURCES

**Goal**
The conservation and protection of natural resources for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.

**Objectives**
The management of natural resources in a way that minimises degradation of terrestrial, coastal, and marine areas through:

- The conservation and management of all forest reserves and water catchment areas;
- The restoration of degraded forest resources;
- The conservation of prime agricultural land;
- The restoration of degraded coastal and marine resources.

3.1.2 Economy

**Goal**
The efficient utilisation of available resources to achieve sustainable economic growth and development.
Objectives

- The efficient utilisation of suitable land for agricultural development.
- The further development and maintenance of a more efficient and competitive banana industry.
- The diversification of agriculture towards the provision of a range of commodities for food security and foreign exchange earnings through:
  - The stimulation of production of non-banana crops;
  - The rationalisation and development of the livestock and poultry rearing sub-sector;
  - The sustainable development of the fishing industry.
- The allocation of suitable land for the development of manufacturing activity.
- The expansion of the tourism industry consistent with social and environmental carrying capacity.
- The provision of adequately serviced space to facilitate the development of informatics and off-shore financial services.
- The promotion of linkages between the major sectors of the economy.

3.1.3 Employment

Goal
The expansion of opportunities for all adults to engage in productive activities for proper remuneration.

Objective
The reduction of unemployment in all areas of the country.
3.1.4 Settlement

Goal
The rationalisation of the pattern of population distribution and settlement.

Objective
The development of an orderly system of towns and villages in proper relation to employment, physical and social infrastructure and services.

3.1.5 Built Environment

Goal
The attainment of a satisfactory standard of built environment.

Objectives
- The restoration and rehabilitation of decayed areas and abandoned settlements.
- The improvement of development standards to promote healthy and pleasant environments.

3.1.6 Technical Infrastructure

Goal
The development of efficient systems of transportation and public utilities to support economic activity and ensure public health and well-being.
Objectives

• The improvement of the public land transportation system and the network of roads to ensure safe and easy movement of persons and goods within each of the units of the state.

• The provision of facilities which will allow adequate and safe air transportation links within the country and with the outside world.

• The provision of facilities adequate to the demand for internal and external sea transportation links.

• The improvement of the information infrastructure with intensive information technology skill building, telecommunication sector reform, and promoting on-line applications and databases to allow for the transmission of information at the lowest possible cost.

• The improvement in the quantity and quality of water for domestic, agricultural, and other purposes, particularly in areas of deficiency.

• The adequate provision of facilities for sewage and solid waste disposal.

• The upgrading of the system and network for the generation, transmission, and distribution of electricity.

3.1.7 Education

Goal

The provision of a quality education that will equip all persons with the values, skills, attitudes and knowledge necessary for creating and maintaining a productive, integrated, innovative and harmonious society.

Objectives

• The provision of facilities with regards to the cost-effective delivery of educational programmes and the economic use of educational resources.
• The provision of additional school places where necessary.
• The siting of schools in relation to catchment populations such that travel time will be minimised.
• The provision of adequate facilities for the teaching of children with special needs.
• The provision of facilities in keeping with the demands of the school curricula and instructional programmes.
• The improvement of the quality of the school environment.

3.1.8 **Health And Safety**

**Goal**
The availability and access to all citizens of the requirements for the maintenance of good health and safety.

**Objectives**
• The adequate provision of comprehensive and affordable health services at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels.
• The provision of specialised care to vulnerable groups within the society such as children, the elderly and the disabled.
• The prevention of communicable and non-communicable diseases with emphasis on health promotion and health education.
• The reduction of vulnerability to natural hazards.

3.1.9 **Housing**

**Goal**
The allocation of land and the establishment of a framework within which the housing needs of the population can be adequately met.
Objective

- The expansion of the stock of housing and reduction of overcrowding in all areas of the country.
- The provision of affordable and resilient housing to meet the needs of all Vincentians through the following:
  - Increasing access to affordable housing;
  - Upgrading informal settlements; and
  - Improving land use management.

3.1.10 Social Equity

Goal

The equitable distribution of economic and social benefits among all parts of the state.

Objectives

- The reduction of disparities in the level of physical and social infrastructure and services between different geographical areas.
- The reduction of disparities in income between various parts of the country.
- Improvement in the standard of living in depressed areas.
- Equal opportunity for all to participate in development and to hold and enjoy property regardless of race, colour, gender or age. (For example, 77.5% of the beneficiaries of the Orange Hill Estates Land

These policies are developed further in Annexxxx

With respect to its Medium term 2013-15 policies and strategies in the area of sustainable land management the government has indicated its land management and biodiversity policy and strategy as follows:
The objective of this Land Management component is to provide security to landholders, reduce land disputes, and contribute to economic development by effectively targeting rural and urban poverty through the following:

- Establishing a land information system;
- Implementing the Land Titling project through the development of a digital parcel based cadastre and register;
- Monitoring vigorously all crown land to reduce the incidence of squatting;
- Surveying all lands identified for distribution;
- Finalising the preparation and implementation of the National Physical Development Plan;
- Increasing efficiency in the administration of the Town and Country Planning Act and National Building Regulations;
- Implementing training programme in GIS to include the GeoNode project system use; and
- Promoting awareness on sustainable land management, through the mass media.

1. Enhancing management of the forests and biodiversity by:
   - Developing a forest and natural resource inventory.
   - Evaluating the natural resources.
   - Developing specific and site specific management plans.
   - Enhancing and strengthening forestry education and public awareness programs.
3.2 **Laws & Regulations related to status of Land Policy:**

Several Policy statements and legislations have been issued with regards to land ownership, land titling, land administration and management, and land use in SVG. However what is noticeably absent is a clear cut overarching legislation or policy on land use zoning. For convenience and perhaps ease of reference an attempt is made to group the most significant pieces of legislation below.

3.2.1 **Legislation relating to land use Planning and Development**

In SVG there are 24 pieces of legislation covering land and environmental management matters.

The principal pieces of legislation relevant to land development are:

- The Town and Country Planning Act No. 45 of 1992;
- The Waste Management Act, No. 31 of 2000;
- The Environmental Services Act, No. 14, of 1991;
- The Environmental Health Services Act, No. 15 of 1991
- The Quarries Act, 1941;
- The Fisheries Act No. 8, 1986 and Fisheries Regulations, 1987;
- The Wildlife Protection Act No. 16, 1987;
- The Forest Resource Conservation Act, No. 47, 1992;
- The Marine Parks Act of 1987 and Marine Parks Regulations, 1998; and
- The National Parks Authority Act, No. 33, 2002
- The Land Surveyors Act of 1973
3.2.2 The Town and Country Planning Act No. 45 of 1992

The Town and Country Planning Act No. 45 of 1992 is the main planning and development legislation in SVG. The Act provides for the orderly and progressive development of land and the proper planning of town and country areas and provides for the control of development and matters connected therewith. The competent authority responsible for carrying out the purpose and provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act is the Physical Planning and Development Board.

The main functions of the Board are to prepare national, regional and local area land use plans and to administer the development control process. This Board is comprised of 10 public sector representatives and three members not in the public service. The Physical Planning Unit (PPU) within the Ministry of Housing, Informal Settlements, Lands and Physical Planning provides professional, technical and administrative support to the Board.

3.2.3 The Land Surveyors Act of 1973

This Act empowers the Chief Surveyor to:

1. Examine all general and particular plans of surveys and approve such plans if satisfied that such surveys have been carried out and the plans prepared in accordance with this act and regulations made hereunder:

2. Take charge of and preserve all survey records

3. Cancel or amend in accordance with the provision of any law and survey plan or diagram found to be incorrect, out-dated or inadequate.
4. Prepare, certify and issue at the request of any person upon payment of the prescribed fees, copies of diagrams and documents filed with the department which are available to the public.

5. Function as the authority for the preparation and publication of the official maps of SVG.

6. Manage the rental and sale of state/crown lands is managed by the department.

Section 4 of the Act established the Land and Surveys Board with the power to grant to persons duly qualified licenses to practice land surveying in SVG. The law also mandates that each parcel or piece of land for which a survey plan has been prepared must be registered with the Department of Lands and Surveys and certified by the Chief Surveyor.

3.2.4 The Central Water & Sewerage Act

The Central Water & Sewerage Act provides a basis for water abstraction and distribution and for water quality management in SVG. The Act makes provision for the designation of protected areas for the protection of water resources. However, national standards for the discharge of treated effluents into surface water are not in place but the CWSA applies relevant WHO or EU standards.

3.2.5 The Waste Management Act No. 31 of 2000

The Waste Management Act No. 31 of 2000 defines the roles and responsibilities of the National Solid Waste Authority and provides the framework for waste management planning and waste management operations in SVG. The Act is supported by the Solid Waste Management Regulations of 2006, which, among other things, establish the national
standards for the handling of solid wastes such as derelict vehicles, scrap tires, used oil, special waste etc and specify the requirements for obtaining licences and permits in connection with waste management operations.

3.2.6 **The Environmental Services Act No. 15 of 1991**

The Environmental Services Act No. 15 of 1991 makes provisions for the control of emissions and effluent discharge into water bodies. To date, no regulations are in place to assist with the enforcement of this Act.

3.2.7 **The Environmental Health Services Act, No 14, 1991**

The Environmental Health Services Act, No 14, 1991 makes the Ministry of Health and Environment the competent authority for the promotion and protection of public health by providing for and ensuring the protection and maintenance of the environment. Major functions under this Act which fall under the Environmental Health Unit of the Ministry are regulating, monitoring and controlling any present and likely environmental pollution and investigating, preventing and remediating environmental pollution, including the management and disposal of solid, liquid and gaseous waste.

3.2.8 **Noise Control Act, 1988**

Noise pollution is regulated by the Noise Control Act, 1988. The Act describes a code of practice for noise control at construction sites, which is enforced by the police. The Physical Planning Board may serve a notice specifying the type of plant to be used for construction and setting limits noise levels and working hours. Where works of the listed type are intended the developer needs to make an application to the Board and
specify the nature of works, construction methods to be applied and noise control measures proposed.

3.2.9 **Beach Protection Act, Cap. 331**

This Act protects beaches and regulates the removal of sand, coral, stones, shingle, gravel and other materials from the shores of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and adjoining sea-beds. In this regard, mechanisms exist for imposing absolute prohibitions on the removal of materials from specified beaches and granting permission to move material from any beach if it is in the public interest to do so. The Minister, however, also has the power to grant permission by Order to remove all or some beach material and may collect fee for their removal.

3.2.10 **The National Trust Act 1969**

The National Trust Act 1969 establishes the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines National Trust (SVGNT) as a corporate entity and mandates the Trust to make provision for the management of a range of natural and cultural resources.

Section 4 of the Act sets out the objectives of the Trust which include the conservation of areas of natural beauty; the conservation of buildings and other assets of archaeological, architectural, artistic, historic, scientific, or cultural interest; the conservation of flora and fauna in areas of natural beauty and public education related to natural and historical assets; and collection and allocation of funds to further the objects of the Trust.

The Act No. 37, 2007 is an amendment to the principal Act, which would enable the Trust to designate any place, building or object as ‘protected national heritage’.
According to the provisions of this Act, the owner of any protected national heritage may enter into a written agreement with the Trust providing for the due conservation of the protected national heritage and for its protection from any danger of destruction or removal or from damage by neglect or injudicious treatment.

3.2.11 **National Parks Act No. 33, 2002**

The National Parks, Rivers and Beaches Authority (NPA) takes its mandate from the National Parks Act No. 33, 2002. The Authority falls under the Ministry of Tourism and Culture. The Government of SVG is in the process of setting up a functioning NPA.

The primary responsibilities of the Authority are to preserve, manage, protect and develop the natural and cultural heritage of SVG, including the historical and cultural heritage of the island. The Authority also has the mandate to establish National Parks, to operate facilities for national enjoyment and tourists, to promote and advance conservation, to educate the public, to regulate activities in national parks and the buffer zone, and to undertake restorative measures in marine areas. The NPA Board is a multi-sectoral body established by the Cabinet of Ministers.

3.2.12 **Housing and Land Development Corporation (HLDC) CAP 98 Vol. 3 Act #7 of 1976**

The Act provides for the establishment of the Housing and Land Development Corporation. The functions of the Corporation to give effect to the planning and development of housing, and land for residential and
community purposes, to provide for the designation and acquisition of land by Corporation for development and for matters connected there with and incidental thereto.

Central Government has used this legislation over the years to provide the framework for the implementation of housing policy and in particular for the provision of housing for middle, lower and no income persons in various parts of the state.

3.3 Land Ownership and Titlement Legislation

3.3.1 The St. Vincent Constitution Order 1979

Chapter 1, Section 6 (1) of the constitution protects the right of citizens to own and hold property and for the enjoyment of property.

3.3.2 The Crown Lands Act

CAP 319 of the Revised Laws of SVG 2009 Act # 77 of 1926 and its several amendments including the last SRO 11 of 1991 recognize state ownership of lands.

“The crown lands of SVG entered over a large area of the island’s surface. They occupy the entire interior and in the period under review were said to total in excess of 25,000 acres (approximately 30 percent of the island’s surface area). They comprise for the most part, that area of the land surface described by John Byres as “impracticable”, and are included in that one-third of the island which the 1987 Royal Commissions bluntly described as “worthless”. It is rugged, inhospitable, and completely un-
serviced by roads or water, remote from villages, towns and markets.” (Karl John, 2006)

3.3.3 Land Acquisition Act


3.3.4 Alien Land Holding Act

CAP 316, Laws of SVG, Revised 2009 Act # 96 of 1926 with its amendments the last being Act # 17 of 2002. These regulations provide the procedure and fees to be paid by a non-citizen who desires to own and hold property in SVG. An unlicensed alien cannot hold more than 5 acres of land. The State has the power to revoke an alien land holding license.

3.3.5 Land Titling Through Deeds Of Conveyance

The Real Property Act CAP 84 of the Revised Laws of SVG 2009 makes provision that “no partition exchange assignment or surrender of freehold or leasehold shall be valid at law unless the same shall be made by deed.” The Registrar of the Supreme Court administers this law. “Tile deeds are maintained in date-order of registration and a deed index number is allocated consecutively within each year. Annual volumes of title documents are bound and stored at the Court House.”
3.3.6 Possessory Title Act

CAP 328 of the Laws of SVG, Revised 2009; Act # 38 of 2004 amended by Act #29 of 2006 and Act # 40 of 2007. An Act to facilitate the obtaining of title to land by persons claiming through adverse possession. Through this legislation the court may grant a person who claims to be in adverse possession of a piece of land in SVG for more than 12 years the title to the said land provided that the following conditions are met:

- The application for possessory title is accompanied by the signature of the Surveyor (section 6 (1)).
- Notice of application for possessory title is published in two of the newspapers circulating in SVG (Section 7).
- Notice of the application for possessory title of the said parcel of land is served to owners/occupiers of adjoining land. (section 8).

3.3.7 Registration of Documents Act#30 of 1937

This act provides for the compulsory registration of deeds and other documents. Section 3 entitled- Documents Requiring Registration includes:

- Documents relative to the title, to transfer, or encumbrance on any real estate (lands, etc.)
- Allotment plans certified by the Chief Surveyor

A schedule prescribes the fees for Registration of deeds of the deeds registered. It was estimated that over 8,000 deeds are stored at the Registry (Williams Allan N.)
3.4 Legislation Relating to Conservation and environmental concerns:


Amended by other acts. This Act is to ensure that owners and occupiers of Agricultural land fulfill their obligation to the community by managing their land in such a manner as to prevent erosion and ruination of the soil and by cultivating all cultivatable land under their control.

The owner of the Agricultural land should manage the land by taking steps to:

- Terrace sloping land under cultivation
- Prevent or check the formation of gullies
- Prevent surface water from causing erosion on adjourning land
- Protect water courses or public roads
- Preserve forest and vegetation on ridges and steep slopes.
- Cultivate all cultivatable land under his control in accordance with the accepted standards of good husbandry.

The Chief Agricultural Officer under the Act has the authority to bring a delinquent owner/occupier under supervision until remediation is effected. The owner/occupier on whose lands remediation was effected is obliged to maintain any anti-erosion works.
3.4.2 **Forest Reserve Conservation Act # 47 of 1992/CAP 60 vol, 2-**

An act to make provision for the conservation, management and proper use of the forests, watersheds, the declaration of a forest reserve, cooperative forests and conservation areas. The prevention and control of forest fires. A conservation plan is to be prepared by the department every 10 years. The plan must be commented on by several stakeholders- Department of Agriculture, Central Planning Unit, Central Water and Sewage Authority (CWSA), St. Vincent Electricity Services (VINLEC) and National Trust in a stakeholder consultation. In addition lands are to be demarcated as forest reserves and conservation areas in order to maintain clean and reliable water supply for domestic industrial and commercial use. Measures are to be taken to facilitate agricultural development and stabilize the land. Declared forest reserves include Kings Hill Enclosure, Cumberland Forest Reserve.

Authority for Enforcement: The Forestry Department, through the Director of Forestry is responsible for the enforcement of this legislation.

3.4.3 **Beach Protection Act #10 of 1981/CAP 462 Vol 14 of the Laws of SVG**

Revised Edition 2009 with its amendments Act #23 of 1982 and Act # 20 of 1982. This Act is to protect the beach and prohibit the removal of sand, coral stones, shingles, gravel and other materials from the shores of SVG and sea beds adjourning. The Act further empowers the minister to make regulations to protect the beaches and to designate any beach for a protected area.
3.4.4 **Marine Parks Act # 9 of 1991**

Marine Parks (Tobago Cays Declaration Order) SRO 40 of 1997 Amended by SRO 25 of 2007/ CAP 62 vol, 2 Marine Parks (Tobago Cays Regulations) SRO 26 of 1998 the Authority of the Marine Parks Board with the duties to administer the provisions of the act.

The Tobago Cays have been declared a national park and fishing and related activities are prohibited within the area. The Tobago Cays consist of the islands/islets: Jamesby, Baradol, Petit Rameau, Petit Bateau and Petit Tabac.

3.4.5 **National Parks Act # 33 of 2002 CAP**

This act provides for the establishment of the National Parks, Rivers and Beaches Authority, whose duties will include the management and maintenance of national parks to ensure the permanent protection of species and habitats, especially species which are threatened, rare and endemic.


This act makes provisions for the declaration of wildlife reserves where no land shall be granted, devised sold or leased. The reserves shall be managed as natural areas. The first schedule of the Act lists the current wildlife reserves- Central Mountain Range (10,870 acres) Young Island-entire Island, Kings Hill Forest Enclosure, small islands and cays including Tobago Cays, Isles de Quarte.
3.5  **Related Miscellaneous Legislation**

3.5.1  **Land Tax Act #...........CAP 43 of the Laws of SVG Revised Edition, 2009**

This act provides for the payment of taxes for all parcels of freehold land on the tax roll. Payable on a parcel of land of under 6 acres is a nominal $10. Per annum. The act makes provision for exemption paying land tax for parcels of land 5 acres or less in agriculture, and for acres held for forest growth. ns. (Toppin-Allaha Christine)

3.5.2  **Central Water and Sewage Authority (CWSA) Act # 17 of 1991 CAP 403**

An Act to make better provision for the conservation, control apportionment and use of water resources in SVG.

Section 15 provides the authority to acquire land in accordance with the Land Acquisition Act and subject to section 6 of the constitution section 17 gives the authority to construct works for the protection of the source of any body of water conservation and storage of water. Under section 21 the Minister on advice of the authority may declare protected areas for the conservation of water.

3.6  **NGOs**

Traditionally, the private sector and NGO’s have played a minimal role in environmental and sustainable development matters. By and large the State sector has been the major actor. In the last decade, however, the
NGOs have had greater involvement in environmental issues. NGO’s involvement relates largely to participation in consultations on environmental and sustainability development issues as well as the planning and execution of small community environmental projects. A list of NGOs involved in environmental management is provided in Table 5 below:

**Table 5: NATIONAL NGO’s INVOLVED/INTERESTED IN Sustainable Land Management MATTERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The St Vincent National Trust</td>
<td>Conservation of Historic Building and Historic sites throughout the country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Hegg Turtle Sanctuary Park</td>
<td>Turtle Conservation and Coastal conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects Promotions Ltd</td>
<td>Community advocacy and sustainable development related issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The North Leeward Tourism Association</td>
<td>Maintain and develop tourism sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Buccament Development Organisation</td>
<td>Community Group- Co management of Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Island Museum and Ecological Society</td>
<td>Advocacy and Management for Fragile Ecological areas in the Southern Grenadine Island of Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayreau Environmental Development Organisation</td>
<td>Advocacy and Management for Fragile Ecological areas in Mayreau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JEMS Progressive Organisation</td>
<td>Train Youth and Environmental, Advo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends of the Environment</td>
<td>Advocacy and Management for Fragile Ecological area of the Tobago Cays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grenadines Environmentally Sustainable Development Programme Group</td>
<td>Coastal Zone Management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.7 **Conformity to international conventions**

The Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is a signatory to a number of international and regional environmental agreements as detailed in the Table 6 below:

**Table 6: List of Environmental Conventions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conventions</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basel Convention on the Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Waste and Disposal</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyoto Protocol</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the Ozone layer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biosafety Protocol</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramsar Convention</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cartagena Convention</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Spaw Protocol</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Oil Spills Protocol</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- LBS Protocol</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARPOL Convention</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regional</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Georges Declaration (SGD)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Whilst SVG has signed on to many of these international conventions despite its best intentions, it has found it challenging to implement and uphold some of the requirements under these international agreements. This is largely due to limited finances and limited human and technical capacity.

3.8 Gender

The Government of SVG over the last decade has been mainstreaming gender in the national development process. There has been a significant amendment to policy which may have discriminated against female in particular. Today while policies may not overtly show gender biases there may be instances where gender issues still exist and in particular work against females headed households by being poor and marginalised may have significant problems with access to land and security of tenure. According to the Land Management Unit records, 33% per cent of the plots under recent land reform programmes was given to women. Female headed households according to the 1985/86 Agriculture Census accounted for 28% of the total number of farmers in the country. It should also be noted that females under the Land Reform programme are defaulting more on their lease payments when compared to men. (Annex)

With respect to housing, a recent study of informal settlements around the Greater urban area found that the majority of households were female
headed and generally their social, economic and physical condition of the building was worse than the male headed households. These statistics may be pointing to poverty issues rather than gender related issues and may require more pro-poor policy solution than gender specific resolution.
4.0 LAND ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 Introduction

In SVG there are a number of state entities engaged in land administration and management. Over the last six years some attempts have been made to place all of these entities under one Ministry. Today there is the Ministry of Housing, Lands, Informal Settlements and Physical Planning (MHILP) which has responsibility for the major lands administration and management functions including, land surveys, land management, physical planning, development control, settlements (and in particular informal settlement) and geographic information management, housing policy and programme implementation. Land Taxation and Property registration are the two major functions which remain as standalone entities outside of the MHILP mandate. The major Units and Departments under this Ministry include:

General administration

- The Land and Surveys Department;
- The Land Management Unit;
- and The Physical Planning Unit.

The mission of the Ministry is “To facilitate National Sustainable Development for Private and Public Sectors through the implementation in an integrated approach to Physical Planning, Land Surveying, Land Management, Housing Development, Local Government and the Upgrading of informal Communities”.

The Ministry has been allotted a budget of 4,051,901.00 for 2013 as detailed in Table 7:
Table 7: showing Budget for Ministry of Housing, Lands, Informal Settlements and Physical Planning (MHILP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary by Programmes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Administration</td>
<td>682,974</td>
<td>688,274</td>
<td>699,579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land and Surveys Department</td>
<td>1,536,699</td>
<td>1,555,039</td>
<td>1,583,956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Management</td>
<td>379,123</td>
<td>386,449</td>
<td>393,621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Planning Unit</td>
<td>1,453,105</td>
<td>1,489,784</td>
<td>1,519,079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td><strong>4,051,901</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,119,547</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,196,230</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 General Administration

The General Administration Department’s main role is to:
- To advise on the formulation of government policies as regards to land management, physical planning, physical plans, informal human settlements and housing.
- To implement such policies effectively
- To exercise budgetary control over funds voted by Parliament for use by the Ministry.

It has a political head which is the Minister of Housing, while the Permanent Secretary is the administrative head. There are also two other
technically trained staff members and six other administrative support staff.

4.3 **The Department of Land and Surveys**

The Land and Surveys Department has the following objectives:

- The production of maps (in collaboration with the Directorate of Overseas Surveys in England)
- The survey of Crown Lands for allocation to applicants
- The fixing of private property
- To supervise the subdivision of estates owned by the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines
- To oversee the distribution of sub-divided estates to small farmers
- To ensure that all the necessary infrastructural development are put in place
- To assist with the preparation of leases and collection of rents
- To prevent squatting and vandalism of lands.

The Surveys Department has a staff of 32 including:

1 Chief Surveyor
1 Senior Surveyor
7 Surveyors
1 Assistant Secretary
1 Valuation Officer
1 Senior Surveying Draughtsman
1 Senior Executive Officer
3 Surveying Draughtsman
4 Surveying Assistant II
3 Assistant Draughtsman  
2 Surveying Assistant I  
1 Clerk/Typist  
2 Vault Attendant/ Printer  
3 Chainman  
1 Office Attendant

This Department is led by the Chief Surveyor and has approximately eight senior technical staff with the others acting as supporting technical and administrative support staff.

4.4 The Physical Planning Unit

The main objectives of the Physical Planning Unit are:

- To prepare national, regional and local physical development plans;
- To enforce the laws, regulations and building codes with respect to the physical development, informal human settlements and housing.

The Physical Planning Unit has a staff of 32. The Unit is headed by the Town Planner. There are five technically trained staff members and 27 Technical and Administrative support staff.

4.5 The Land Management Unit

The objectives for the land Management unit are:

- To prepare leases for government owned lands
- To maintain a database and provide relevant information on crown/state lands
- Assist in the settling of crown lands disputes
• Process applications for the purchase of Crown Lands
• Supervise Land Management Unit

The Unit is headed by the Land Management Officer which is a technically trained staff member along with the Senior Bailiff and the Executive Officer. The Land Management Unit has a staff of eleven (11) including:

1 Land Management Officer
1 Senior Bailiff
1 Executive Officer
1 Clerk Typist
3 Bailiff
3 Rangers
1 Office Attendant

4.6 Valuation Unit

The Valuation Unit is part of the Inland Revenue Department of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.

The Objectives of the Unit are:

• The Assessment and collection of revenue of Property Tax.
• Interpretation and execution of Property Tax laws as they affect inland revenue.
• Advising Government of Property Tax Policy.

The Valuation Unit has a staff of nine and is led by the Senior Valuation Officer who is professionally trained. There are three other staff members who are technically trained at the degree level while the remaining staff members offer technical and administrative support.
4.7 HLDC

The Housing and Land Development Corporation (HLDC) falls under the Ministry of Housing, Lands, Informal Settlements and Physical Planning (MHILP) but is a legal entity which was created by law. The HLDC is the implementing agency of the state’s housing policy and was established under the Housing and land Development Corporation Act 1976 to give effect to the planning and development of housing and land for residential and community purpose and provide for the designation and acquisition of land for development. The Corporation has a 12-member Board of Management with government officers and four private sector members.

Its main objective is to give effect to the planning and development of housing and land for residential and community purposes. This is facilitated through the following functions:

1) To acquire, hold, mortgage lease and dispose of land and property
2) To engage in any business or other activity carried out for the purpose of the promotion or execution of the development of a designated area
3) To assist any local authority towards the provision of housing

The HLDC has been very active over the past 10 years since the commencement of Low income housing programme in 2003. The low income Housing Programme received $9 million (XCD) dollars in funding from the Venezuelan Government. This programme has produced over 500 houses on ten sites throughout St. Vincent. It is projected that the HLDC will construct between 2013-2015:
• A total 110 low income houses at these sites: 70 at Clare Valley and 40 at Green Hill.
• A total of 70 Middle Income houses disaggregated as follows: 30 at Clare Valley, 20 at Green Hill and 20 at Queensbury
• Both middle and low income houses on lands privately owned.

4.8 The National Properties Limited

The National Properties Limited was created by Parliament to institute a new system to manage, direct, control and supervise the operations of certain government properties and other real estate in the country.

Its role as defined by the Company Statute No.84 of 2003, is to:
(1) borrow money for the benefit of the Company; (2) Mortgage, charge, pledge or otherwise create security interest in all or any property of the Company, owned or subsequently acquired, to secure any obligation of the company. Further the company seeks to harness and optimize the performance of various underperforming assets previously owned by the Crown and to facilitate the provision of certain proven financially and commercially viable Crown properties. The business of the Company is under the control of a 10 member Board.

4.9 Land Valuation Department

The Valuations Department performs all valuations for property taxation/rating purposes and is also required to formally certify market value on all property transactions for Estate Duty and Stamp Duty purposes. The Registrar can refuse to register transfers of property if the value is not certified by Valuations Department. This reinforces the influence of the Valuations Department. The last revaluation took place in
1990, in which some 40,000 properties were involved. There are exemptions for Crown Lands, land used exclusively for worship or education and parcels of agricultural land of 5 acres or less.

A tax is payable on all land included in the tax rolls prepared under the Land Tax Act cap 316. The system of taxation of land relies on a traditional annual rental value (ARV) methodology. This may not be so appropriate where only a small leasehold market exists. Questions have also been raised concerning the lack of real evidence to sustain that system, and the fact that the rental value system excludes unused land, which may have considerable capital value for future development purposes.

4.10 The Registry of the Supreme Court

The Registry of the Supreme Court is the major institution with responsibility for land administration. According to The Real Property Act “no partition, exchange assignment or surrender of freehold or lease hold shall be made valid at law unless the same shall be made by deeds” (Chapter 84). The main functions of the registry as it relates to land administration are:

- Function as depository for all documents relating to real estate (i.e. titling, encumbrances, transfers, mortgages etc) have to be registered at the Registry.

- Recording of deeds at the Registry which enables those with interest in land - lease, mortgages, and ownership - to determine the true status of the land in question.
• Provides the public with information on the nature and extent of rights to land.

The Human resources and budget allocated for the Land registry function are contained in the wider budget for the Registry of the Supreme Court.

4.11 An Assessment of the Land Management and Land Administration Systems

4.11.1 Environmental Management Legislation

Although Saint Vincent and the Grenadines does not currently have any comprehensive land management and administration law, there exist many pieces of legislation which address various land and environmental management issues. Similarly there is no single document which expresses in a comprehensive manner land policies, strategies and programmes.

There are significant amounts of sectorial policy documents prepared by consultants but which have not formally been approved by Cabinet. Presently there are problems in determining what are the prevailing policies. Generally, implementation of land and environmental legislation and policies are constrained by a number of factors including:

1. Limited political/bureaucratic commitment to sustainable land and environmental programmes

2. The absence of comprehensive land policies or comprehensive legislation on environment and land policy especially land use.
3. Limited financial resources with which to support land programmes

4. Organisational weaknesses in the implementation of programmes and their coordination at both the national and local levels

5. Limited technical expertise and experience at national and local levels

6. The influence of the policies of the International agencies currently providing financial assistance to the country

7. Limited integration of environmental costs into economic policies

8. Limited Land and environmental standards in place for the enforcement of key legislation

9. limited regulations to accompany major land legislation

10. archaic, and overlapping legislation which leads to duplication of roles and inaction by the various agencies with implementing and enforcement powers

11. Limited Bureaucratic will for implement and enforcement of Land Policies and Legislation.

Some of these issues will be discussed in the sections below.

There is the absence of an overall framework for land use planning in the country despite the existence of planning legislation and a planning
system since 1975. While various draft national physical development plans have been produced with donor support, successive governments have not moved to make these plans into statutory binding documents in keeping with the Town and Country Planning Act.

There is now a situation where there are a series of sector /area reports which are generally in conflict with each other. A good example of this is the National Port Study, The ET Joshua Redevelopment Plan and the SVG Tourism Master Plan which were all recently produced and approved by the government but not part of the National Physical Planning Programme. There is urgent need for an overall national land policy and Land use plan to guide the physical development of the country to ensure optimal use of land resources for sustainable development.

It should be noted that the Planning Authority has been engaged in development control without any reference or basis for there is no approved national, regional or local area plans to inform decision making on planning applications. Additionally, while building regulations have recently been made, there are no planning and infrastructure standards regulations in place. Planning guidelines exist which carry no legal status. The Planning Act of 1992 (SEC 29) provides for environmental impact assessments (EIA) for some categories of development but no regulations for the procedures, environmental standards to be used exist. As a consequence very few impacts are requested and the quality of the EIAs submitted as well as the evaluation of these reports leave much to be desired resulting in significant negative environmental impacts on the ground of implemented approved applications. The Buccament Hotel development project is a case in point. Without legally established national and area plans and regulations for planning standards and EIAs the Planning Authority is in a weak position in guiding future land
developments, controlling bad development and ensuring environmental integrity since most planning decisions can be challenged successfully in the court of law.

The development control system is weak and ineffective especially as it relates to enforcement of the planning legislation. While the planning records show that around 650 planning applications are received annually (see annex) this represents only about 40% of the development (as defined by the Act) on the ground. Today only the formal sector developments which may require funding from financial institutions submit plans for planning permission. Informal sector developments (which may represent near 40% of all development annually), land subdivisions, advertisement and noise control activities by-pass the development control process. In 2011 745 subdivision plans of various sizes were lodged at the Surveys Dept however only 11 subdivision applications were received by the Planning Board even though the Planning Act requires all persons to receive prior permission for subdivision developments. The Planning system has therefore little control over what is actually being implemented on the ground since most developments occur outside the system. To compound matters, given the limited technical and human capacity of the Physical Planning Unit most approved developments are carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved plan as the planning system is used by applicants basically as a means of accessing funds for their development.

The planning legislation provides provisions to ensure enforcement which includes prosecution in court and demolition. Given the high level of non-compliance with the legislation the number of matters taken to the court or the number of demolitions remain in single digits annually. There is the
public perception that developers can get away with impunity for violating the planning legislation which reinforces the non compliance with the Act.

Besides, the Town and Country Planning Act (Sec 16) does not bind the crown and most government development projects are exempt from planning permission Government being a major developer of lands usually execute projects with little land use, planning standards and environmental integrity considerations with grave consequences.

In St. Vincent and the Grenadines, there are major deficiencies in land management and land registration/administration (Williams 2003, Browne 2003 and 1989, Land Tenure Centre 1989, and Corker 1993). Most difficulties are associated with management of public lands which amounts to over fifty percent of the total land area. These problems are exacerbated by political interference, lack of political will to deal with law breakers and the overall “institutionalised reluctance” (Sylvester 2002, p 13) to enforce existing laws and reverse invasion on public land.

Several institutions are responsible for managing public lands but they have all been ineffective in dealing with the land capture and squatting problem, which is occurring on significant proportions of crown lands. In 2002, there were some 16,000 squatters on government land, which was believed to represent only two-thirds of the true figure (Sylvester 2002, p 13).

In many instances, the areas occupied by squatters were either preserved for substantial government development projects or considered environmentally sensitive. The major areas of squatting are:
1. The semi urban area of Ottley Hall, Sharps., Green Hill, Largo Height, Campden Park, Lowmans Hill, Diamonds, Fair Hall, Pole Yard, Mallah Village;

2. Agricultural lands on the sections of the estates recently acquired by government for land requisition- Rabbaca, Colonaire, Black Point, Cane Grove, Sans Souci, Grand Sable. Richmond and Wallilabou;

3. Central Forest Reserve lands where it is estimated that 1500 farmers utilize 3000 acres for marijuana cultivation;

4. Other-rural lands on Union Island, Canouan;

5. Open spaces in and around government facilities and buildings-playground, schools, cemeteries, road reserves, river reserves and gullies.

The main reasons for squatting in SVG are linked to:

1. Limited area of the State and the limited developable area as a result of topography, etc as stated in section 2.

2. High demand/need for land especially in locations close to employment centres and areas for livelihoods and social services;

3. Limited affordability of the population for housing-it is estimated that over 65% of household cannot provide housing without significant subsidy.

4. High preference for ‘owning home’ rather than renting;
5. Large areas of State land which is perceived to be developable but unused or underutilized;

6. Poor and ineffective management of State lands and limited enforcement capacity by public sector agencies.

7. Slow land delivery systems for housing;

8. The absence of clear criteria for selection of plot beneficiaries and application of test results. Thus persons squat on lands prior to establishment of plot distribution arrangements as a means of ensuring their selection as a beneficiary;

9. The political and bureaucratic culture of corruption where senior public officials distribute state lands through verbal permissions;

10. The existence of a public building material distribution programme to the poor which facilitate construction and consolidation of substantial buildings on state lands in relatively quick time.

In most cases, the squatters are the poor and needy genuinely in need of shelter close to work and social services, political clients and agents of ruling in party, criminal elements, capitalist squatters who exploit the weakness in the land management as a means of amassing wealth through land capture and rental housing units on public lands.

The Crown Land Act of 1990 provides the framework for penalizing squatters on crown land, but penalties are rarely administered. In fact, squatters are sometimes given financial “rewards” as incentives to relocate even when they are warned not to occupy. In St. Vincent and the Grenadines, squatting has reached unprecedented proportions, and is
presenting challenges for sustainable economic, social and environmental development.

4.11.2 Leased lands

A significant amount of state lands in SVG are leased for agriculture purposes to small farmers and for large touristic developments (including whole or significant parts of islands) in the Grenadines.

In an effort to provide land for the landless and to provide income, employment and ensure greater social equity in the rural areas, the government acquired several plantations between 1890 - 1985 and developed a land reform programme by providing 3-5 acre agricultural plots to farmers on a lease to purchase agreement. (Karl John, 2006)

Crown lands that are leased and rented are also not effectively managed. Over the last two decades, the Government distributed land to farmers under lease to purchase agreements totalling 863 leases, and accounting for over 4,000 acres. Accordingly, the Government should have received an annual income of EC$1,077,730.54 (US$399,159.46) from these leases. However, up to August 2004 over EC$7,935,126.74 (US$3,967,563.2) was outstanding in lease payments (Financial Report on Estate Status in SVG 2004). The situation has worsened with respect to lease payments as indicated in Table 8. In addition, some of the tenants have breached the lease agreement by subletting, non-utilisation of the lands and utilisation of the land for non agricultural purposes. Monitoring of the leases has been nonexistent and the government continues to accept money from beneficiaries/leaseholders, without ensuring observance of the leases conditions.
Given the high levels of defaulting on leases and the limited funds received by government it would appear that government leases equates to squatting on government land. It would therefore be more beneficial to all parties to convert these leases into freehold, which would generate more revenue over time in the form of land taxes.

Table 8: Showing Payment required from lease Lands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESTATE</th>
<th>Annual Lease Payment 2012</th>
<th>Payments made (2012)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabacca Farms \ Orange Hill</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARDP</td>
<td>$249,154.58</td>
<td>$122,621.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langley Park</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sans Souci</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonarie</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallilabou</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Sable</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These problems have little to do with the absence or adequacy of legislation guiding land management and land administration. In fact, SVG has over 25 different pieces of such legislation. What is lacking instead, are: the political will to implement the legislation, competent human resources to ensure proper monitoring of land use, and public awareness about environmental issues.

Another challenge for land management is institutional fragmentation. The diagram in fig 1 shows a myriad of institutions and agencies with responsibility for land management. Many of these agencies have overlapping responsibilities.

The following examples will support this point:

1. The Physical Planning Unit, The Forestry Dept, The National Trust, The Parks and Beaches Authority, all have powers for designating or allocating land for preservation and conservation uses as provided for in their respective legislation that they have responsibilities for administering;

2. The Central Water and Sewerage Authority, The Parks and Rivers Authority, The Physical Planning Unit and The Forestry department all have responsibility related to water resource and water management as mandated in legislation;

3. The Planning Unit, The Surveys, Department the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of works, have responsibility for beach management and sand mining in particular as mandated by legislation;
4. The Planning Unit, the Land and Surveys Department, The Forestry Dept, Parks and Beaches Sports Council and other public owners which own lands have responsibilities which permit action to prevent squatting on public lands.

These overlapping responsibilities related to legislation and agency functions result in duplication of effort and inaction especially on enforcement matters since many bureaucrats want to ‘avoid offending citizens’ and lay blame on other agencies.

This lack of coordination and cooperation within Ministry and across Ministries limits effective land management and is a major drain on the limited state resources. Some attempts have been made to place many land related issues under one Ministry or even under one roof in order to reduce the strictures of Ministerial Government system. However this has not affected efficiency levels. In this context, The Land and Surveys Department and The Planning Unit have been placed under one Ministry about six years ago. Today the major problem of the procedure for land subdivision continues with less than 10% of the land subdivisions registered having prior planning permission.

The Lands and Surveyors Act of 1976 empowers the Chief Surveyor to register subdivisions; the Town and Country Planning Act requires that all planning subdivisions be approved by the Planning Board. The Planning Board in approving subdivisions will issue a condition for the developer to provide necessary infrastructural services- roads, water, electricity, etc before the sale or disposition of any parcel of land. To avoid costs most developers by-pass the Planning Board and submit their survey plans to the Chief Surveyor (who is a member of the Planning Board) who approves the plan if it meets the requirement of the Surveyors Act. This
situation exists for decades despite a Cabinet directive in 1983 that plans must have planning approval prior to being registered at the Survey’s Department and different persons having occupied the post of Chief Surveyor. As a result, most developers sell land which is poorly infra-structured and which results in the State having to expend significant funds for infrastructural work (as plot owners place pressure on the state).

This institutional fragmentation and limited coordination among land management and administration entities hinder the realisation of objectives of national land policies to ensure the sustainable, productive and equitable development, use, and management of the national resources.

In order to ensure long-term development in St. Vincent and the Grenadines there is a need for a system of integrated land management (ILM). Integrated land management “is the process of organizing the different human uses of land in such a way as to produce the greatest value of outputs from that resource over a given period of time” (Loomis 2002, p 8). It is based on the recognition that land serves a variety of functions and by incorporating inputs on land-use decisions from all sectors of society, the economic, social and environmental benefits of land can be optimised to achieve ILM. Excessive sectoralism among government departments and agencies must first be overcome.

4.11.3 Cost of Land transactions

In SVG the government has sought to minimize the cost of land transactions to ensure land investments in agriculture and housing are affordable to low income sections of the populations. Thus a great deal of the fees charged are not reflective of true costs or market rates for
providing the services. Registry costs have been increased in March 2013 and most deed registration and related matters now cost $60.00 for stamp duties and registration except for possessory title deed where the stamp duty charges amount to 3% of land value and deed of gift with valuation certificate which is 10% of land value. Planning application fees varies with land use and size of development. Thus single family residential development applications of around 1200 sq ft will pay $20.00 while larger residential buildings will pay more based on a sliding scale. Commercial development in Kingstown Central Business District with 5000 sq ft of building space will pay $75.00. Residential Subdivision of 10 acres cost around $400.00. It costs $40.00 for registering a survey plan with one lot and there is a sliding scale for fees based on number of plots in the subdivision despite the use of the plots in the subdivision plan.

4.11.4 Land information system

The land information and recording system is very inefficient and the estate records often constrain effective land administration and management. The problem is compounded by the fact that there are two agencies with responsibilities for managing land records- the Registry of the Supreme Court and the Land and Surveys Department which are in different locations using manual systems of recording with limited connectivity between agencies. The Surveys Dept focuses on the storage of cartographic, spatial information related to properties while the Registry records deeds and property transactions.

The system of recording deeds in St. Vincent and the Grenadines is referred to as an unregistered title system, as the land registered may not be referable to a certified survey plan (Sylvester 2002, p 19). Survey plans make it easier to locate precise parcels of land, its size and
dimensions. Instead, general boundary descriptions are used to identify parcels of land which often disappear over time, creating problems for land-transfer and other forms of transactions. It was estimated in 2005 that around 50% of the transactions in land were carried out by deeds with certified survey plans.

In order to certify one’s claim to land, complex “searches have to be conducted by, a legal practitioner, in relation to the parties to the transaction concerning the land, and not in relation to the specific parcel of land” (Ibid). Searches are very time consuming and pose their own problems, especially since conveyances, mortgages, leases and other forms of land transactions are not recorded separately, and the system is not computerised.

A major deficiency of the present registration system is the high incidence of deeds without survey plans to describe the property legally. Generally, the system of conveyancing used in St. Vincent and the Grenadines is believed to be archaic, and the existing land administration system inappropriate to deal effectively with the increase in land transactions (Browne (2003), Corker (2003) and Sylvester (2002)) . The system of conveyancing is based on the United Kingdom’s Conveyancing Act of 1881 and the United Kingdom’s Statue Uses Act 1535 (Sylvester 2002, p 18). Currently, all real estate documents are maintained in order according to date of registration and indexed using consecutive years of numbering. Annual volumes are then bound before storage. With the fragmentation of the estates and the increased use of land as collateral, the number of land transactions is increasing. According to the registry records there have been a 65% increase in deeds over the 1980 - 1999 period and within the 2000 – 5 period an annual average of 4,896 transactions were recorded annually (Land Registry February 2005). This situation created problems
for storage and security of the deeds, as well as the efficiency with which the deeds can be retrieved on request.

Land transactions are usually made between the individual buyers and sellers. Once the seller can demonstrate with relevant documents, that s/he has legal rights to the land, s/he can sell. It is the responsibility of the buyers to ensure that they receive clear or merchantable titles. This requires the service of an attorney, who carries out a “title search” to ensure that the deeds are unencumbered. After the transactions are completed the deeds are stored at the Registry according to legal stipulations.

The Land and Surveys Department Information System for survey plans and general maps and government lands are in hard copy and many are deteriorating due to age and excessive use. Similarly, public land records related to crown rent, leases etc are incomplete, inadequate and needs to be improved. The poor state of the spatial information and survey plan records make it difficult to establish the total area of state lands, the plot areas occupied by renters, lease holders and squatters which have implications for government income in terms of receipts from rental, sales etc. There is urgent need for a comprehensive cadastral land information system (CLIS) which would provide accurate and timely data on boundaries of parcels, nature of title, tenure and identification of rights of holder modelled on the St Lucia’s system. Such a system will be of significant benefit to the land use planning, environmental planning, land valuation and land administration system.
4.11.5 **Private Lands**

With respect to private lands, The Registry maintains records of land transfers through the registration of deeds. However, the influence of the Registry is tempered to some degree by the cultural expectation of people engaged in land transactions. Some persons are still content with transferring land rights without the benefit of a lawyer or surveyor and do not register their transactions with the Registry. Rental arrangements are most prone to this type of behaviour. The ability to identify locality, however, gives the Department of Lands and Surveys the basis for establishing linkage between the indexing system of the Registry and that of survey plans.

Mortgaged- secured loans are most demanding in terms of documentary proof of ownership and Planning permission. Where deeds are available, bank solicitors conduct a title search at the Deeds Registry. Affidavits are also utilized when applicants have only possessory titles. Where the financing of a project does not require commercial support, planning permission is seldom obtained.

4.11.6 **Family Lands**

Family land (ownership in common) may be described as the equal and undisturbed interest that all the offspring of an individual has in the parcel of undivided land through successive generations. It is a practice of not subdividing nor selling the land but allowing it to be passed down through generation as an inheritance.

In St Vincent and the Grenadines and by extension the West Indies it is a common practice to pass “family land” undivided through generations.
Although family land is very common in SVG, the incidence of it as an issue is not known. The term “Owner-like possession” is used in SVG census to describe land occupied by persons with a beneficial interest that is not expressed as a legal interest. The practice in SVG is to combine the data for “owned” and “owner-like possession”, so that the latter is indistinguishable.

However a survey in the town of Layou in 1987 revealed that as much as 1/3 of the property was held in this manner. The concept of ‘family land’ avoids the problems and costs of sub-dividing land according to the rules of inheritance. The current occupiers may claim a legal right to the land, although the “legal” owner of land may have died several generations ago. This “right” may be a squatter’s right and not a legal right due to inheritance. According to the laws of inheritance it may be that each “heir” is only entitled to a very small part measured in a few square feet. In addition the cost of determining the rights of all the heirs, (many of whom may be overseas, and perhaps no longer have the right to hold land in SVG without a Alien Landholders Licence), may be far more than the land is worth. Family land in many cases may be surrounded by an all-but insoluble legal tangle. Family land is considered an obstacle to development for five reasons:

1) co-owners seldom have legal evidence of their right to ownership;

2) lack of documentation makes it difficult for owners to obtain credit;

3) investment is discouraged by the conventional right of harvest by co-owners whether they participate in cultivation or not;

4) since not all owners are interested in farming, some land is idle or
underutilized; and

5) successive subdivision over time has fragmented the land into uneconomical units/parcels.

Advantages of the system are:

1) it has served as a mechanism to avoid the excessive fragmentation implicit in succession laws

2) guaranteed significant portions of the population access to land

3) It provides garden plots which subsidize urban wages and wages of commercial farms workers, serving as a form of social security.

4.11.7 Possessory titles

Most of the existing deeds are possessory titles and are based on a declaration of a claim to the land. Possessory titles are not legally binding against possible counter declarations or documented title. Such title may provide rights for the occupier’s immediate use, but is of little value to source a loan, create a lease or sell the land. Even where land is held by deed it is estimated that 50% of properties do not have plans, making it difficult to prove legal occupation of a specific parcel of land.

The current system has a particularly adverse effect on poor people. The poor are most likely to hold land without deeds, and even if they hold deeds, they may not have the survey plans to support them, nor the resources to defend counter ownership claims.
The lack of legal title is a disincentive to improving property, as is the inability to obtain commercial loans, including student loans. Because they cannot offer security of tenure, they are also not able to rent their lands at its full value. In some cases the absence of legal title also means that they are denied infrastructure, such as water, electricity and paved roads.

4.11.8 Perception on tenure security.

Traditionally land was seen as an asset to be acquired and not sold. It was to be used to satisfy household shelter needs and livelihood through economic activities mainly agriculture. There was always the perception that given the land scarcity situation land must be utilised and passed on to future generations. Little emphasis was placed on subdivision and transfer of title on inheritance. With the development of capitalism and financial institutions operations, increasing numbers are accessing mortgages, investment loans and land is being used as collateral. Land is now seen as a crucial asset which may be utilised to access funds for economic and social improvements of households. Thus persons who had lands without clear title whether through the family land concept, possessory title, squatting or leases from government are demanding free title so they can access finance. Thus the society is moving from an era where unsecured title or leases was sufficient to one in which full title is a necessity. In addition it is very difficult to get electricity water and other infrastructural services without presenting proof of clear land title.

It should be noted that most residential squatters consider that shelter is a basic right and the state has a social and moral obligation to provide shelter. Given the state’s limitations to provide shelter they have resorted to help themselves in the provision of shelter. They work on the premise
that they should consolidate their housing structure rapidly and have a substantial structure in place which will be difficult for the state to demolish on moral and humanitarian grounds given their efforts. Once a sizeable squatter settlement has been established on state lands in a particular locality, the squatters will use their voting power and will place demands on the political parties for squatter regularisation including provision of services and security of tenure.

4.11.9 **Equity on access to land**

St. Vincent & The Grenadines is faced with the challenge of moving from a society organized around large parcels of land owned by Government and a few private estates to a more diversified and viable economy with wider access to property ownership. Although a more vibrant land market can facilitate such a transition, intervention by the State is still required to address the social issues relating to land ownership.

SVG has steadily reversed the historical problem of landlessness of the masses through various land reform programmes over the last three decades. Rural agricultural workers have gained access to land through leases on agricultural lands and avoided the high cost of land purchase. Many have the option of buying the leased parcels once they have the affordability. The terms and conditions of the leases have been most favourable as farmers pay annual fees of $100.00 depending on the location of the parcel and date of receipt of the lands. In some cases where persons have been renting or occupying public lands for extended periods land s have been sold for peppercorn rates for agricultural and residential purposes for under one dollar per sq ft to as much as $4.00 per sq ft which is less than 20% of the prevailing market value.
Government has been engaged in significant land banking over the years and has been able to acquire land at reasonable rates which are utilised for site and services housing and low income housing units programmes. These serviced lots and housing units are sold to targeted low income households market rates with as much as 60% subsidy in some cases.

In addition to providing land for the lower income groups the government have sought to address the family land problem and ensure greater title to land to facilitate greater use of titles for collateral in the banking system to facilitate investment housing, education etc. To this end the Possessory Title Act was introduced and many individuals are now securing land title and are now able to turn their ‘dead capital into live capital’ and improve their quality of life. As mentioned above land transaction costs have been kept to a minimum to assist the poor with access and many legal fees related to sale of state lands are not passed on to beneficiaries.

4.11.10 Land Governance Principles

The government has sought to ensure that land management operations are carried out in keeping with in the general high principles of governance and transparency. Thus attention was placed in developing procedures, eligibility criteria to ensure that there is efficiency and effectiveness in its operations and that all sectors of the population have equal opportunity of accessing land and have their land rights protected.

4.11.11 Access to land Information

In SVG there is access to most available land information. The records at the Survey Dept relating to survey plans are available and copies can be
provided at minimum cost. Similarly searches for deeds and other land transactions are possible on payment of minimal rates. The record of planning applications and the actual details of the planning application are available to the public at no cost.

It should be noted that some sensitive and confidential reports on sustainable land management may have restricted access and may need permission from senior state officials.

Problem may arise in getting the information due to the limited range of data collected and the poor recording and information management system utilised by most land agencies.

4.11.12 Land Conflict Resolution

Most land management and administration legislation provides provisions for resolving conflicts. Conflicts may arise over boundary disputes, entitlement, and tenure or tenancy arrangements. Thus persons who feel aggrieved by decisions made by state agencies or private citizens can use relevant appeal tribunals to get their matters redressed. In all cases, the Court system provides for resolution of issues concerning public agencies and citizens as well as between private citizens. There have been recent incidents where land compensation matters following compulsory land acquisitions have been taken as far as the Privy Council.
5.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Planning Process

The Town and Country Planning Act, No. 45 of 1992, as amended by the Town and Country Planning (Amendment Act), No. 2 of 2005; Town and Country Planning (Amendment) (No. 2) Act, No. 19 of 1999; Town and Country Planning (Amendment) Act, No. 18 of 1993 provides the legal framework for the Town and country planning system in SVG.

The Act provides for the orderly and progressive development of land and the proper planning of town and country areas and to make provisions for the control of development. The Act, pursuant to its Section 3, establishes the Physical Planning and Development Board. The functions of the Board include, inter alia, instituting and maintaining a study of town and country planning; the preparation of a national plan as well as local and regional plans. These plans will set out at the appropriate levels of details, the policies and proposals of the Board as they relate to the planning of the use and occupancy of building and the development of land in SVG. They will provide the basis for decision-making by the Board on matters pertaining to land use and development. In the preparation of a national plan the Board, is mandated to consider the following matters:

a) The distribution and foreseeable variation of the distribution of the population;

b) The progress of, and current trends and policies relating to economic and social development;
c) Prevailing physical and environmental conditions;

d) Current trends and policies relating to the systems of communication within, and connecting with, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines;

e) The foreseeable need and availability of land for natural aquaculture and forestry reserves, national parks, public open spaces, and other areas which appear to the Board to be in the national interest to retain or provide.

After the plans have been prepared they must go through a public consultation phased prior to being approved by cabinet and becoming legally binding.

As discussed above while there is a draft National Physical Development Plan and a few local area plans none of these documents have gone through the process required by law to make them legally binding.

5.2 The Development Control Process And The Environmental Impact Assessment System In SVG

5.2.1 The development control process

To give effect to the control of development, Section 16 of the Planning Act requires all persons wishing to carry out development to first apply and receive prior written permission for such development from the Physical Planning and Development Board.
The Act defines the term ‘Development’ as meaning ‘all building, demolition, rebuilding and mining works, any subdivision of land, the display of any advertisement and any change of use.’

In the context of this project, the following definitions from the Act are relevant in the determination of the requirement of planning permission for the proposed development; ‘Building’ is defined to include ‘any structure or erection wherever situated on, over, or under land and whether temporary or permanently and any part of a building or structure so defined but does not include machinery contained in a building’.

‘Structure’ is defined to include ‘anything floating on water or submerged under water or partly floating and partly submerged’.

Persons who carry out developments without prior written permission may be fined twenty thousand dollars or may be imprisoned for a period not exceeding two years.

5.3 The Application process

Section 16 of the Act requires all persons to apply for planning permission for development on the prescribed forms. These forms are available in hard copy only at the offices of the Physical Planning Unit, Kingstown. The complete application forms, relevant drawings and other documents should be submitted in triplicate to the Secretary of The Planning Board and left at the office of the Physical Planning Unit.
All applicants must pay application fees as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Fees) Regulations 1996. Given the high level of squatting, the Board usually requires some proof of ownership of land or permission to use land especially state-owned lands.

Persons can apply for the following types of planning permission:

**Outline Approval** (permission in principle) Applicants will submit conceptual plans and designs for the Board’s approval of the proposed land use at the site related to the development. This is particularly useful in cases where there is no approved land use or zoning plan relevant to the site of the proposed development.

An Outline approval does not provide a license to commence development activity but rather conforms the use of the site ‘in principle’ for the proposed development. The applicant is required to proceed with detailed plans and drawings which will detail the development standards etc. Outline approval is usually sought when developers have large or complex developments which entail extensive preliminary work and detailed designs and by extension high costs or where persons are contemplating purchase of a site for a particular purpose.

Outline approvals are valid for a period of two years within which time application for final permission should be submitted to the Board.

**Final Approval** (Full Application) Applicants will submit all the detailed drawings and other documentation required (as detailed in the Planning Guidelines) and the approval granted will provide the license to commence development activity. The development approved will be given
a two year period for completion unless a different period is specified in the grant of permission by the Board.

**Limited period approval** - Applicants wishing to carry out temporary development activities or activities for limited time periods can apply to the Board and receive ‘valid permission for a limited period only’.

In addition to the main Town Planning legislation there has been some regulations passed. Regulations concerning payment of application fees, beach use and management, designation orders which prohibit certain land uses at various locations in the state and hotel development standards are in place.

Of critical importance to this project however, is the recent implementation of the Building Regulations 2005 which came into effect in September 2008. The Building Code provides standards for materials and construction standards, public health and safety, physical infrastructure and utilities and structural integrity of buildings and engineering operations. The Planning Board is responsible for the administration of the Building Code and buildings under 2500 sq. ft and other minor developments are exempt from the provisions of the regulations. A major provision of the Building Code 2005(sec14) is that all buildings subject to building approval by the Planning Board must be designed by and constructed under the general supervision of a professionally qualified architect or engineer licensed to practice in SVG. In cases where the national Building Code is deficient provision is made for referral and use of the Caribbean Uniform Building Code (CUBIC) standards.
5.4 The Planning Guidelines

The Unit has prepared Planning Guidelines which detail the planning application process and outline the minimum Planning and Development Standards that will be accepted by the Board. While the Guidelines lack the force of law (since they are not regulations), architects and other development professionals have accepted and utilized these standards for most of the subdivisions, residential, commercial and other regular built development applications. However, these Planning guidelines are silent and not helpful on more complex development applications including marine, engineering, mining and industrial type developments.

The guidelines provide limited information on Environmental Impact Assessment but list the types of projects which will require EIAS and provide the general information to be contained in an EIA/EIS. In addition to the Planning guidelines, the PPU has recently produced Building Guidelines for the Public. With the recent passage of the Building Regulations (2005), the PPU and the PPDB which will be administering the Building code are busy sensitizing the public on the code prior to the enforcement of the provisions of the Building Regulations.

5.5 The EIA Process

Sec 29 of the Planning Act gives the Board the power to request EIAS/EIS in such form and contain information as prescribed’. Section 36 of the Act makes provisions for regulations which may include the arrangements and procedures to be followed in the preparation content and review of EIAS. The PPU has a list of projects which would require EIAS. Most major applications may require EIA/EIS reports especially those which require public notice. The EIA process in SVG is unclear and to date there are no
regulations in place to guide the process. The Planning Authority has been requesting and processing EIA's on an ad-hoc and arbitrary basis with no consistency in the management of the EIA process. As a result, many developments which require EIA reports are approved without submission of such reports while in many other cases the Planning Authority request Assessment reports without specifying the scope of the EIA.

Based on discussions with the senior staff of the Physical Planning Unit, the EIA process for this particular development would be based on the following steps:

1. Discussion of the project concept with the Planning Authority
2. Scoping of the project
3. Preparation of a Scoping report for approval by the Planning Authority
4. Approval of the Scoping Report
5. Preparation of the Detailed EIA based on the approved Scoping Report and Terms of Reference for the EIA
6. Submission of the EIA with the full planning application for review by the Planning Board
7. Review of the full planning application including the EIA report;
8. Decision making on the application;
9. In the event of planning approval, the implementation of the development by the contractor must be in keeping with the conditions of planning approval including the Environmental Management Plan included in the EIA report;
10. Monitoring of the construction on an organized basis by the PPU staff and other relevant environmental regulatory bodies;
11. In the operational phase of the project, monitoring of key environmental indicators through the establishment and
maintenance of relevant baseline monitoring systems by the developers and state agencies.

Persons involved in the preparation of the plans, drawings and designs related to planning applications rely heavily on the following policies, standards and procedures as detailed in the following policy, legislation, manual and guidelines documents:

1. **Policy documents**
   - Saint Georges Declaration 2001 - Principles for Environmental Sustainability in the Eastern Caribbean.
   - National Environmental Management Strategy (NEMS)
   - Draft National Physical Development Plan.

2. **Applicable legislation**
   - Town and Country Planning Act
   - Electricity Supply Act Cap.288
   - Public Health Act and Regulation Cap.288
   - Consumer Protection (Bureau of Standards) Act No.70 of 1992
   - Fire Brigades Act
   - Central Water and Sewerage Authority Act No.17 of 1991
   - Saint Vincent and Grenadines Building Regulations 2005
   - The Waste Management Act, No. 31 of 2000
   - The Environment Services Act, No. 14 of 1991
   - The Environmental Health Services, No. 14 of 1991
   - The Noise Control Act, 1988
   - The Quarries Act, 1941
   - The Fisheries Act No. 8 1986 and Fisheries Regulations, 1987
• The Wildlife Protection Act No.16, 1987
• The Forest Resource Conservation Act, No.47, 1992
• The National Parks Authority Act, No.33, 2002.
• The National Trust Act 1969 and Amendment Act NO 37 of 2007

3. **Guidelines and Manuals**

• PPDB -Physical Planning Guidelines
• UNCHS-Planning and Infrastructure Standards Caribbean Uniform Building Code
• The OECS EIA Planning Procedures Hand Book prepared by Ivor Jackson (1993)
• The UNEP Regional Seas ‘Guidelines to Environmental Impact Assessment in Developing Countries’ by D. Sammy et al (1990).
• The UNEP Regional Seas ‘An Approach to Environmental Impact Assessment for Projects Affecting the Coastal and Marine Environment’ (1990).

Planning applications received by the PPDB are reviewed by the PPU. Minor applications which are single family residential developments are approved by the Town Planner while all other applications are referred to the Board for approval. In reviewing applications the Board and staff of the PPU will give consideration to:

• Site suitability for the proposed development Compatibility of the
proposed use to surrounding uses

- The likely short and long term environmental and social impacts of the proposed development
- The quality of the development in terms of physical planning, building and environmental standards
- The availability of adequate social and physical infrastructure
- Social costs versus benefits to the community resulting from the development
- Vulnerability to natural and manmade hazards.
- Conformity with zoning plans, declaration orders and development areas.

5.6 Implementation

On approval of applications, the developer must inform the planning Authority of the proposed date for commencing of the development activity. The PPU is expected to engage in regular monitoring at the development and operational stages of the development to ensure that it is carried out in keeping with the terms and conditions of the planning permit.

5.7 Role of non-state actors

Traditionally many non-state actors were not involved in sustainable land management activities. Government governance structures have changed over the last two decades with civil society groups participating on many Boards, (including the Planning Board, HLDC, National Properties) Statutory bodies (CWSA,) and land development and administration agencies and public sector Project Steering Committees. Increasingly in keeping with the St Georges Declaration the private sector, professional bodies (architects Assn etc) community based organizations and special interests groups are being encouraged and are playing more critical roles on land and environmental issues. A list of the NGOs
engaged in land management and related issues are provided above.

5.8 Environmental considerations

Recognizing the fragility of the resources and the potentials for environmental degradation from unwise use of the resources government have been paying more attention to incorporating environmental concerns into the national development process. It has established an environmental management entity to address environmental concerns and to improve collaboration among government and non-governmental agencies on matters related to environment. More pieces of legislation have been developed to address environmental concerns including the Draft Environment Management Act which is intended to assist with better coordination of government environmental policies and programmes. In additional a multiplicity of policy sector studies has been prepared.

Environmental Impacts Assessments are now a requirement for development applications which are likely to impact negatively on the environment in keeping with the provisions of the Planning ACT.

However despite a great deal of new legislation, policy documents etc the major environmental issues of limited and ineffective land use planning, deforestation, coastal and marine resource degradation, solid and liquid waste disposal, water pollution, coastal erosion and sand mining, lack of public Awareness of the importance of environment to survival and the quality of the built environment persist and are worsening in some cases.

Government efforts to address these problems are severely hampered by the lack of bureaucratic will, limited human and technical capacity, limited finances and institutional management and coordination issues.
Protection of Natural Resources and Fragile Ecosystems

Forests

SVG has large areas of its mainland as critical forest reserves which must be protected for biodiversity, water supply, scenic and touristic purposes. However these areas have been under serious threat from encroaching farming activities and illegal crop cultivation. The removal of forest vegetation has serious implications, particularly in critical water catchments in the south of St. Vincent where the Diamond, Greiggs, Higher Lowmans, Montreal, and John Hill catchments have been degraded. The Fancy and Owia catchments are also affected. Deforestation of steep slopes is likely to lead to soil-erosion, landslides, and lowered water quality through siltation of potable water sources. Siltation can result in degradation of offshore reefs and fisheries, and cause damage to hydroelectric equipment. The continued denudation of forestland in St. Vincent threatens wildlife habitat including that of the St. Vincent parrot in Vermont, and Cumberland, and the Congo, Jennings, and Perseverance Valleys. The nature-tourism potential of affected areas can be severely impaired.

Human agents have been responsible for much of the deforestation that has taken place in the country. Over the last thirty years bananas and other crops were cultivated on marginal land which has been cleared of forest vegetation, particularly along the windward side of St. Vincent.

Much of the threat to the forests derives from the play of economic forces. During the late 1980s, the guaranteed external market and favourable exchange rates resulted in banana cultivation in and around the forest reserves and the water catchment areas. The current uncertainty about
the sustainability of widespread banana production is impacting on land use with some reduction of acreage under production. If this continues, it is likely that banana production would cease on marginal lands, allowing these areas to revert to forest cover, or to tree crops, which can be more environmentally friendly than bananas.

Forest reserve boundaries are unmarked, and lack of patrolling sanctions encroachment on the reserves and other government lands which, in turn, has caused conversion from forest to banana and food crops. This expansion of the agricultural frontier has affected areas that should have been kept under natural vegetation for water catchment purposes. The economic consequences of deforestation for St. Vincent include, in addition to the threat to the country’s water supply, decreasing agricultural productivity because of soil erosion, and impairment of St. Vincent and the Grenadines’ eco-tourism potential, considered to be the best growth opportunity sector. There is also the danger of destroying important wildlife habitat in the highland ridges. Forests have also been destroyed in the process of fuel wood extraction, charcoal production and residential squatting.

Apart from the human factor, deforestation has resulted from eruptions of the La Soufriere volcano - most recently in 1979 - that caused severe denudation of the mountain slopes. The amardillo, a recently imported species from neighbouring states is causing significant levels of deforestation in the central forest lands of St Vincent.

**Coastal and Marine Resources Degradation**

The coastal resources of the islands, including beaches, coral reefs, mangroves, fisheries and wildlife, are among their most important assets
for the Tourism Industry and fisheries sub-sector. Mangroves, beaches and coral reefs provide shelter and food for a myriad of juvenile and adult marine organisms and are therefore critical to their survival. Coastal wetlands provide an important habitat for migratory wading birds and waterfowl. Coral reef systems are important for the regeneration of white sand beaches, which are the primary attractions for tourism in the Grenadines. Mangroves, sea grass beds, and coral reefs are therefore critical to coastal ecosystems, inshore fisheries, and protection against beach erosion.

The coastal area, particularly the southwest coast of St. Vincent, is the most heavily populated and industrialized area in the country. Further economic development in St. Vincent and expansion of the growing tourism industry in the Grenadines will involve additional development in coastal areas. Streams, rivers and coastal water quality in populated areas may become threatened by pollution from inadequate disposal of sewage and gray water from domestic and industrial activities. In some coastal areas such as Kingstown and Georgetown, the high ground water level impedes the absorptive capacity of the soil, and increases the possibility for water pollution and nutrient enrichment of marine waters in coastal areas.

Water polluted by industrial effluent run-off into coastal waters results in the deterioration of reefs. The Indian Bay-Villa-Young Island-Calliaqua-Carenage reef and beach ecosystems appear to be under stress from liquid waste generated in the densely populated southern area of St. Vincent.

There is currently no comprehensive coastal zone management program nor specific regulations or requirements for protecting coastal resources.
Yet, the degradation of these resources, resulting from improper construction practices, removal of sand from beaches, possible contamination from agricultural run-off, and improper disposal of solid and liquid wastes, both sewage and industrial effluent, are becoming apparent throughout the coastal zone.

Encroachment on, and destruction of coastal habitat is becoming a serious problem in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Near shore fisheries species appear to be overexploited due to (1) the high exploitation pressure exerted on near shore fish species by fishermen who take not only large quantities of adults but also a myriad of juveniles; (2) the destruction and degradation of the natural habitats which result in reduced availability of food and shelter for near shore marine organisms and a subsequent reduction in the abundance of fish. Recognising the threat to fisheries and other marine, the Government has designated ten (10) fisheries conservation areas.

Coral Reefs are important for the protection they provide to mangroves, sea grass beds and beaches from the destructive erosive effects of waves during heavy storms and hurricanes. Their protection is essential to the continued high quality of the beaches in the Grenadines. They are also important to the productivity of inshore fisheries as they provide a habitat for a large number of commercially valuable fish species and invertebrates such as conch and lobster. Their scientific and educational values are another important reason for the protection of these resources. Widespread deterioration of the coral reefs throughout the islands, particularly those in the Tobago Cays, has occurred, although it remains unclear whether this degradation stems from natural or human causes. Coral Reefs are under stress from land-based sources of pollution including agricultural run-off, and water borne soil from eroded farmlands.
Significant damages to these reefs are caused by boats anchors, lobster trapping, and other intense tourism activity. In order to protect these natural resources, the Government has declared Tobago Cays as a National Marine Park and is establishing the appropriate management framework.

In recent years, Tourism is considered to be the country’s best opportunity for increased foreign exchange earnings, especially with the impending adjustment in banana exports to the European Community. Tourism is also a vital source of revenue and employment. The large-scale tourism investment projects that are now being planned or implemented are being carefully monitored and managed in an effort to eliminate negative effects. Moreover strict measures must be taken to ensure that adequate setbacks from high water mark are provided for guidelines for sewerage and drainage are established and enforced.

Activities in adjacent watersheds also affect the coastal zone offshore area. For example, housing, industrial pollution, agricultural practices, and waste disposal all impact on the water quality and flooding potential of the inland bays.

Human-induced coastal erosion is a major problem along parts of the coast of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. It is most evident at Indian Bay, Diamond, Calliaqua, Argyle beach, Georgetown, Colonarie and Lowmans Bay on St Vincent, at Admiralty Bay on Bequia and Big Sands on Union Island are similarly affected.

A major contributory factor is beach sand mining which continues to be carried out in restricted areas despite the passage of the Beach Protection Act (1987) prohibiting the mining of all but the designated beaches at
Brighton and Diamond, and efforts by the Government to import sand to meet demand. Unchecked sand mining on the islands' beaches has resulted in serious beach erosion in recent years. Various proposals for carefully regulating sand mining on a limited number of beaches and charging a sufficiently high fee for sand removal are under consideration, as is the proposal for importation of sand.

Apart from sand mining, other causes of beach erosion will have to be addressed to fully protect the resource. In some locations naturally occurring beach erosion has been accelerated by the placement of hard engineering structures in close proximity to the shoreline. The erection of jetties without proper technical guidance and the construction of groynes to counter coastal erosion on a specific site serve to impede the natural long shore movement of sand along the bay, and may lead to the erosion on other areas of the beach. The destruction of mangrove and other coastal vegetation and swamps to facilitate built development and other land uses further contribute to the alteration of coastal processes which leads to increase beach erosion. Coastal erosion from natural processes is likely to increase in St. Vincent and the Grenadines as a result of the effects of climate change/ global warming which is expected to produce more frequent and severe hurricanes and storms.

**Water Resources**

Main land St Vincent has significant water resources when compared to the Grenadines due largely to high rainfall quantity, topography and geology. St Vincent's drinking water supply comes from 13 watersheds. The potable water supply is estimated at 6.2 million gallons per day in the rainy season and 3.5 million gallons per day in the dry season which comes mainly from four water supply systems. The low rainfall in the
Grenadines does not provide for rivers and there are no public water supply systems on the islands. Rain water is harvested from roofs and stored in cisterns at the household levels. There are usually severe shortages of water in January to June which coincides with the peak tourism season and the period of highest water demand. St Vincent water supply is under threat from the destruction of vegetation by squatters. The cultivation of crops 9bananas on steeply sloping land accelerated sedimentation in water courses from erosion of slopes, contamination of water supplies by agro chemicals.

Water pollution resulting from municipal, agricultural and industrial sources is of serious concern. Contamination of drinking water sources and water use for bathing and recreation may pose serious threat to public health. Agriculture development, and the production of banana in particular over the last four (4) decades, with the intensive use of fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides and other agro-chemicals has threatened to contaminate drinking water sources, to endanger marine life and to negatively impact on soils, bio-diversity and water quality in streams and rivers. Many of the highly toxic chemicals used in agricultural production have been restricted for use in the USA because of their toxicity to human. There is therefore need for greater control over the importation and application of agro-chemicals. Increasing attention must also be given to controlling and regulating the discharge of industrial effluent as well as used oil from vehicles.

5.9 **Water Resources**

The surface water in the many rivers and streams on mainland St. Vincent are abundant, and are considered to be adequate to supply domestic and other water requirements at reasonable cost into the foreseeable future.
The occurrence of groundwater in St. Vincent is evidenced by the large number of springs and perennial streams which are found throughout the island. Potable groundwater occurs at three locations - the Rabacca area, which has a very good supply; Dumbarton; and the Buccament area. These resources can supplement surface supply and meet future demand for water. They need to be kept free from housing settlements, intensive agriculture, and any other land use activity which might impact adversely upon them.

Rainfall is the only source of groundwater recharge. Conditions for recharge are expected to be good because of the degree of permeability of most of the soils. Because of the abundance of surface water sources, it has not been necessary to tap ground water supplies in St. Vincent to date.

The situation is markedly different in the Grenadines where neither reliable surface water sources nor substantial potable ground water sources are available. This is due to the low annual rainfall, the limited aerial extent of possible ground water aquifers, and proximity of the sea. The limited amount of groundwater which occurs in Bequia and Union is too brackish to offer any real potential for potable purposes or agriculture.

5.10 Climate Change considerations

5.11 Climate Change

By definition, Climate Change refers to “distinct changes in measures of climate lasting for a long period of time “. As the evidence for Climate change has become unequivocal many countries are trying to assess the effects which will affect them. As a small island state with high levels of vulnerability and limited economic human and technical capacity the
government has been taking the threat from climate change seriously. It is recognized that climate change can have significant negative impacts on its development efforts and roll back its development to date.

It has been projected by the UWI Disaster Risk Reduction Centre that St. Vincent and the Grenadines will experience:

- Increase in temperature
- The frequency of very hot days and nights will increase while very cool days and nights will increase
- Decrease in Rainfall of up to 24% (2030’s), 41% (2060’s) and 58% (2090’s)
- Overall number of stimulated storms will decrease but storms that do occur tend to be more intense with higher rainfall rates and increased maximum winds.

The topography and size of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines also increases the vulnerability to Climate Change. The mountainous Backbone, limited land space, narrow coastal plains, infrastructure on the coastline are features which makes St. Vincent more sensitive to climate change. The effects of climate change are predicted to have huge implications for on land and its uses in SVG. It estimated by the UNDP/Caribsav (2010) that:

- 1% percent of SVG land area would be lost
- 2% lost in agriculture land
- 1% of the population will be displaced
- 10% tourism resorts damage or lost, with beach assets lost or greatly degraded at many more tourism resorts
• Storms surge is projected to affect 3% of land and 7% Agricultural land.

Government has therefore been engaged in a number of adaptation and mitigation measures with assistance from development partners to address the issue of climate change. Adaptation measures have included relocation of settlements from unsafe coastal location development of sea defenses, the development and enforcement of building codes and strengthening its disaster reduction management capacity.

5.12 Balancing economic considerations and sustainability

Economic Policies and The Environment

The Government recognises that environmental quality is critical for successful implementation of its developmental policies and the realisation of sustained growth and development for its population. Tourism and agriculture, its main economic drivers are dependent on a quality environment. Given the quest for development projects to provide income, jobs and foreign exchange it must weigh heavily potential economic benefits versus social and environmental negative impacts. his is realised is not an easy task as market operations will not necessarily adequately address the immediate needs of the poor and most vulnerable sections of the population. Thus the Planning machinery is to be strengthened and measures taken to incorporate environmental, social and vulnerability concerns in the national development process and EIA processes are to be applied on a more routine basis on development initiatives.
Government is aware that certain strategies to hasten economic growth could unintentionally result in economic behaviour inimical to the efficient management or preservation of the natural resource base. It is recognized that effective management of the natural resource base requires a combination of regulatory as well as economic incentives, and in some ways the latter can be less costly to implement.

Over the years, St. Vincent and the Grenadines has moved substantially towards a policy and incentive framework that favours growth with efficiency. The pricing system is essentially market determined, though there are still some price controls. Direct production and consumer subsidies have been largely eliminated.

The Government is pursuing a policy whereby energy and water charges fully cover the operating costs of providing these services, with the exception of public facilities such as standpipes and baths, which serve depressed communities. The water-metering project has not only helped improve the finances of the Authority but has raised the efficiency of water use, having a conservation effect.

The above policies are good for the economy as well as for the environment since they provide correct signals regarding resource use. The Government is cognizant, however, that much scope remains to use economic policies and incentives for environmental protection and the management of the country's natural resources. An improved system has now been put in place for the proper valuation of land tax purposes since the current property taxes contributes approximately 1% of Government revenues. It is hoped that the new land valuation system which is not only expected to generate additional revenue but to put land to its most efficient use and therefore act as a mechanism for proper land management.
Opportunities exist also to apply the pricing mechanism in the tourism sector to help preserve the economically vital tourism assets. To this end, it has imposed a tax on cruise ship and yachts visiting St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Similarly, the mining of beach sand has rapidly exhausted the available resource, and has created severe threats of coastal inundation. Government is addressing this situation by implementing proposals for importing sand for Public Sector projects, collecting fees for sand from approved beaches and sand dunes and is rigorously prohibiting further sand mining on threatened beaches.

In addition to providing an adequate legal and regulatory framework, and strengthening enforcement, the Government review its economic policies and subsidy programs with a view to reforming those that unintentionally encourage environmental degradation. It will also examine ways of requiring economic agents to internalize environmental costs in prices.

5.13 Urbanization

The areas of highest population growth and densities over the last forty years have been in the south and south central districts on St Vincent. The result being that over 50% of the mainland population being concentrated in a 6 mile radius of capital Kingstown. This increased urbanization is due largely to the decline of agriculture in rural areas which led to rural- urban migration as rural residents came close to Kingstown in search for job in the service sector and the expanding tourism sector. Rural residents also left the northern areas as a result of the eruption of La Soufriere in 1974 and 1979 and in search of non agricultural jobs and the better social services available in Kingstown. The 1980 census showed that 625 of the persons who lived in the Greater urban area of Kingstown were born in another part of the island. Poor rural residents were flocking the hillsides
around the city centre and illegally appropriating large tracts of public land with little or no infrastructural services. Densities in the Greater Kingstown area rose to over 1300 persons per sq mile compared to 250 per sq mile in other areas.

Kingstown’s significant growth over the last three decades has resulted in residential squatting on available state lands, haphazard and uncontrolled development without adequate infrastructure, congestion, poverty, unemployment, informal sector vending in central Kingstown and major health, environmental and social problems as crime and lawlessness emerged as real social issues which require immediate attention. The problem was intensified by the limited planning and enforcement of development control by the Physical Planning Authority and agencies with lands or responsible for public land management.

Increased demand for commercial space has resulted in significant increases in building height and commercial expansion into some traditional residential areas which have become derelict and blighted with the poor being evicted from some of tenement yards. The absence of a ring road around St Vincent, contributed to over-centralisation of development and increased vehicle use have contributed to significant traffic congestion.

Urban management agencies are numerous with the major ones being the Physical Planning Authority with responsibility for urban planning and development management and the Kingstown Town Board which functions merely as a collector of land tax for urban properties. Most agencies are hamstrung with limited resources and powers to carry out the major tasks of urban management.
The historic city of Kingstown has lost its special ambience, resulting in loss of the distinctive built heritage and water-front character due to insufficient preservation and maintenance. There is now a concerted attempt to clean up the town, to enhance its appearance, protect and preserve some of the urban architecture and the streetscape to bring it in line with a city of touristic value. Major touristic projects are including the Waterfront Redevelopment, Regeneration of Upper Bay Street Kingstown Port Improvement, Kingstown Historic Centre Regeneration and the Arnos Vale Redevelopment Projects.

5.14 Squatting

Squatting on publicly owned land is considered pervasive in St. Vincent & The Grenadines. Several institutions are responsible for managing public lands but they have all been ineffective in dealing with the land capture and squatting problem, which is occurring on significant proportions of crown lands. In 2002, there were some 16,000 squatters on government land, which was believed to represent only two-thirds of the true figure (Sylvester 2002, p 13). In many instances, the areas occupied by squatters were either preserved for substantial government development projects, or considered environmentally sensitive. The major areas of squatting are:

i. Semi urban areas of Ottley Hall, Sharpes, Green Hill, Largo Height, Campden Park Lowmans Hill, Diamonds, Fair Hill, Pole Yard, Mallah Village

ii. Agricultural lands on the sections of the estates recently acquired by government for land redistribution – Rabacca, Colonarie, Black Point, Cane Grove, Sans Souci, Sable, Richmond, Walliabou, and Richmond

iii. Central Forest Reserve lands where it is estimated that 1500 farmers utilise 3000 acres for marijuana cultivation.
iv. Other- rural areas Union Island, Canouan

v. Open spaces in and around government facilities and buildings-playground, schools, cemeteries, road reserves, river reserves and gullies

The main reasons for squatting in SVG are linked to:

a. Limited land area of the state and the limited developable area as a result of topography etc.

b. High demand/need for land especially in locations close to employment centres and areas for livelihoods and social services

c. Limited affordability of the population for housing- it is estimated that over 65% of household cannot provide housing without significant subsidy.

d. High preference for ‘owning home rather’ than renting

e. Large areas of state land which is perceived to be developable but unused or underutilised

f. Poor and ineffective management of state lands and limited enforcement capacity by public sector agencies

7. Slow land delivery systems for housing

8. The absence of clear criteria for selection of plot beneficiaries and application of means test results. Thus persons squat on lands prior to establishment of plot distribution arrangements as a means of ensuring their selection as a beneficiary.

9. The political and bureaucratic culture of corruption where senior public officials distribute state lands through verbal permissions.

10. The existence of a public building material distribution programme to the poor which facilitate construction and consolidation of substantial buildings on state lands in relatively quick time.
In most cases the squatters are the poor and needy genuinely in need of shelter close to work and social services, political clients and agents of the ruling party; criminal elements and capitalist squatters who exploit the weaknesses in the land management as a means of amassing wealth through land capture and rental of housing units on public lands.

The Crown Land Act of 1990 provides the framework for penalising squatters on crown land, but penalties are rarely administered. In fact, squatters are sometimes given financial "rewards" as incentives to re-locate even when they were warned not to occupy. In St. Vincent and the Grenadines, squatting has reached unprecedented proportions, and is presenting challenges for sustainable economic, social and environmental development.

The practice of squatting has led to extensive degradation of land resources as is manifested by shrinking agricultural areas, denuded forests and water catchment areas, spontaneous settlements with limited infrastructure, development activities in hazardous locations, inadequate solid and liquid waste management systems, coastal and marine resource degradation and suboptimal utilisation of land.

A government study on 750 residential households of squatters from 10 informal settlements in 1996 revealed that:

1. 60% of the squatters were women between the age of 25-55 years and 73% of the households were women
2. 50% of household had no income and 45 % of household had less than $1500 as their monthly income
3. Unemployment was high with 28% of heads of households having permanent employment
4. Housing condition was generally fair with 83% with water connection, 83% had electricity and 75% having access by unpaved roads.

5. 30% of the housing was in vulnerable locations.

6. 28% of households were renting housing from capitalist squatters

The report recommended the following multi-pronged short and long term solutions to address squatting:

1. Regularize existing squatter settlements and embark on initiatives to increase employment levels and social services in existing informal settlements.

2. Establish a small unit within the Ministry of Housing and Informal Settlements to police the sites that have been surveyed for regularisation. The survey data inclusive of names and pictures of existing properties that have been collected shall form the basis of those persons that shall be regularized as part of the several projects. Nobody else shall be allowed to occupy lands without the appropriate Cabinet permission in accordance with the land laws of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

3. Any properties or structures established from hereon without permission shall be demolished in accordance with the authorities bestowed upon the Chief Surveyor and Town Planner of the Physical Planning Department.
4. In the case of lands owned by statutory organizations, the parent ministry must ensure that policing arrangements must be made through and by their relevant lands management Departments within the Statutory Organisations. Authority and assistance could also be obtained from the unit developed within the parent ministry.

5. Improve the rate of delivery of land for residential purposes to the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. This should be achieved by diminishing the role of the Ministry of Lands as it relates to residential land distribution. Government lands appropriate or earmarked for residential purpose should be vested to the HLDC for proper, orderly, effective development and distribution. The state would also purchase such lands and vest to the HLDC for social land and housing programs at subsidized cost if so desired.

6. Continue the work of the established lands management policy; state owned lands suffer from poor management systems and an absence of policy and monitoring.

7. Continue and improve upon the government initiated Low-Income Housing Project. This will not only contribute to the rapid delivery of lands to the people but also has the added advantage of providing safe quality housing.

8. All of these initiatives must be supported by a zero tolerance policy on the part of Government. It is important to be mindful of the fact that politicians and weak Government administration contributed to a large extent with the great number of squatter settlements.
9. Reduce the demand for isolated plots of land by initiating a program to develop, encourage and promote apartment dwellings as a real long term option to the provision of sustainable housing.

10. The establishment of a Public Sector Task Force with wide representation from agencies connected with land, housing and social services to develop squatter improvement projects and supervise their implementation.

5.15 Agricultural Productivity

A soil and land use survey of St. Vincent carried out in 1957-1958 classified the soils of the surveyed area into seven agricultural capability categories, based principally upon the degree of slope of the land. The most cultivable land on the island falls in the first three classes and totals approximately 21,426 acres as described hereunder:

- **Class 1** - slope limits 0 to 5 degrees: this land is flat or relatively flat with deep fertile soil which is suitable for cultivation with almost no limitations - 6,904 acres;
- **Class 2** - slope limits mainly 5 to 20 degrees: land which is suitable for cultivation with moderate limitations - 4,882 acres;
- **Class 3** - slope limits 20 to 25 degrees: land which is suitable for cultivation with severe limitations for intensive practice - 9,640 acres.

Land falling outside of these areas is not recommended for intensive agriculture because of unfavourable gradient, potential for erosion, and other restrictions. In some locations such lands might be utilised for tree
crop cultivation and pasturage. Attempts have been made to irrigate farms to enhance agricultural productivity but the effort produced short terms result as issues with respect to maintenance emerged at the end of the donor funded projects and local farmers failed to through collective financing cover the maintenance costs.

While most of the land measured in Classes 1 and 2 have been protected from development, large areas of Class 3 land in the Calliaqua Census Division continue to be built upon at a rapid rate, and are irretrievably lost to agriculture.
A major issue related to land capability is the land tenure and in particular the size of land holdings which have developed based on the land capability.

A great deal of the agricultural land is not owned by the farmers and there is the tendency for farmers not to uphold good agronomic practices or to manage the land agricultural sustainability concerns in mind.

The recent land reform programmes had developed plot sizes based largely on the profitability of banana cultivation. Now banana has lost competitiveness it is very difficult for farmers to diversify to new crops which will earn good returns and which can be grown on five acre sized farms. The land holding system is very inflexible in terms of agricultural production. Farmers with small plots are unable to exploit the opportunities available from the lucrative cultivation of cocoa. Additionally since the land reform programme concentrated on giving former estate workers land, many of the small farm holders lack the business acumen, are risk averse and find major difficulties in continuing agriculture given the loss of the formerly protected banana market.
5.16 Structure and operations of the Land Market

In St. Vincent and the Grenadines, sales of landed property (freehold interests) take place but the local land market is small, undeveloped and the market does not operate under conditions of perfect competition. In most cases buyers and sellers are not aware of properties for sale on the market and their asking prices. In St. Vincent and the Grenadines while there are 4 established real estate agencies, there are no specialists/professional estate agents. Over 95% of sales take place outside the real estate agencies and the market operates at the level of the "word of mouth" or from information derived from surveyors, lawyers and limited advertisement in newspapers. It is therefore common for the sale of identical or comparable adjoining properties to take place at the same time with great variations in property prices. It should be noted that parallel to the local market is a growing international market for SVG properties which consist of sales of lands under alien control through several foreign direct investment initiatives in tourism including the Mustique Development, Canouan Development and the Buccament projects.

There are very few large land developers and few persons are involved in assembling and developing serviced subdivisions. The usual practice among Vincentians is to sell off land only during period of hardships and "you don't sell off land" is the common reaction of land holders given the land scarcity situation. As a result there is an acute shortage of land especially for urban and residential uses as few lots are coming on the market. Governments large ownership of land, slow public land delivery system, poor public land management and limited enforcement of the requirement for the provision of physical infrastructure prior sale of developable lands lead to distortions in the market.
Land development takes place in an unplanned and ad hoc manner and in most cases land developers are able to sell lands without the provision of basic services and infrastructure or with very poor and inadequate infrastructure. This problem has retarded sale and the development of plots on sub-divisions and created major hardships for persons who have developed lots on these un-serviced subdivisions.

Annually there are around 800 property market transactions of which over eighty percent of all land transactions relate to land alone as is shown in Table 9.

**Table 9: St. Vincent and the Grenadines Property Market**

**Transactions 1985 - 1997**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Land</th>
<th>No. of Transactions</th>
<th>Percent Dev. Property</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>791</td>
<td>9.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>886</td>
<td>989</td>
<td>10.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>867</td>
<td>956</td>
<td>9.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>1039</td>
<td>1182</td>
<td>12.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>689</td>
<td>809</td>
<td>14.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990’</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>701</td>
<td>778</td>
<td>9.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>8.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>591</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>13.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>582</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>14.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>678</td>
<td>11.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>726</td>
<td>14.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>708</td>
<td>774</td>
<td>8.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>646</td>
<td>741</td>
<td>12.82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Land value capture

In SVG there are no capital gains tax or programme for the state to capture portions of enhanced private property values as a result of state provision of infrastructure, zoning etc. In a similar way property owners are not compensated for blighted properties as a result of state action. However the states indirectly receives some of these gains through increased taxes from enhanced property values and the transfer fees of 5% paid by buyer and seller on property transfers.

5.17 Land Market Performance

In SVG the price of land is not controlled by the state and prices are determined by mutual agreement between buyers and sellers. In most cases land sales and prices are divided into categories of agricultural land and developable land. There is no land value index but interviews with persons operating in the property market assisted in the development of recent residential land prices as provided in Table 10. The land prices presented in the Table are based on groups where Group A reflects prices in the main tourism and high income residential areas, Group B presents prices in semi-urban areas with middle to high income settlements. Group C represents low income urban residential area prices while Group D reflects rural residential land prices in fairly established towns or settlements. Land prices on Bequia are also presented which shows comparatively high prices in the areas of residential tourism as against land prices in the port area and the local village communities. It has been observed that locals on Bequia sell lands to locals in the local currency but sell lands to foreigners in US currency. It should be noted that while
averages land prices for areas are provided there is variation within areas based on the plot attributes (location, view, beach frontage etc), level of infrastructure etc. It is believed that there is some level of undervaluation of properties in SVG as the declared values may be purposely lowered to avoid payment of stamp duty which is fixed as a percentage of property value.

Generally residential land prices are greatest in the south of St Vincent where development pressures are greatest for land and decline northwards from Kingstown Urban Area and is lowest closest to the volcano. The recent development of the Argyle Airport and the Buccament Resort in predominantly rural areas have led to significant price increases in the surrounding areas and have affected the spatial trend of land prices.

Commercial land values are highest in the Central Business District of Kingstown and may range from 480- $500 per sq ft.

5.18 Land taxation

The Land Valuation Department is responsible for assessing land tax for most of the country. Some agencies in local government agencies like the Kingstown Board are also responsible for tax collection. A tax is payable on all land included in the tax rolls prepared under the Land Tax Act cap 316. There are exemptions for Crown Lands, land used exclusively for worship or education and parcels of agricultural land of 5 acres or less. Until last year The Annual rental value was the methodology used to value properties. This methodology had major problems as it was difficult to establish properties especially in areas where there was a high number of owner occupied properties and few rented properties, and it made taxes unrelated to market values. In particular in the Grenadines, persons with
owner occupied property were assessed base on the high rental rates on
the island linked to the high price short term tourism rental market on the
islands.

The property taxes rates which were in existence since 1990 were fairly
reasonable but the state had great difficulties in the collection of these
taxes. It is estimated that property tax accounted for less than 1% of
government revenue. In 2012 the state collected $2.85 million dollars in
taxes out of an approved estimate of $6.2 million.

In October of 2012 the Valuation and Rating Act, which authorizes the
introduction of the market value assessment system for the property tax,
was passed in the House of Assembly. The new system became effective
from January 2013. The tax will be levied at a rate of .08 percent on real
property except rural land, which will continue to be taxed at various rates
per acre. Properties value at $50,000 and below will pay a flat tax of $10
per annum.

In 2013 the projected estimate from property taxes is $3.7 million using
the new valuation method- Market Value Method – with 41,000 properties
and 16,000 structures with an open market value of $9.046 billion. This
new system while bringing more tax payers on the roll will exempt or give
concessions to small property owners and other targeted groupings in
2013. With an expanded tax base and enhanced collection and
enforcement capacity there is high expectation that the property tax
system will yield more financial benefits and will be fairer on property
owners.
Foreign Ownership Of Land

In SVG all aliens holding land must receive a license from Government since 1926. In 1970 following political independence the Alien Landholding law was revised. Licenses are required for land purchases, leases and for owning shares in companies. Applications are made to the Prime Ministers Office.

Licenses are granted subject to conditions which may include:

1. To a plan or plans for the development of the land to which the license relates and any information relating to such development as may be called for by the Authority being submitted by the Licensee to the Planning Board as established by the Town and Country Planning Act, within six months of the date on which the license has been granted.

5. To the approval by the Planning Board of all plans submitted in accordance with the preceding sub-clause (1) with or without modifications such approval being stated to be for the purpose of this license.

6. To the execution of all works in accordance with the plan or plans as approved and in accordance with any conditions laid down by the Planning Board within eighteen (18) months of the approval referred to in the preceding sub-clause (2).

7. To the consideration for the conveyance of the land being payment for the sum. The said consideration being stated in the conveyance.
8. To the cost of the development being a sum not less than US$200,000 spent in St. Vincent.

9. This license should cease to have effect if the conveyance is not registered within six (6) months of the date of the license.

The application is reviewed by the Ministry of Finance, the Chief Surveyor and the Attorney General to assess, affordability and the integrity of the applicant, land value and the legal implications related to the applications. Following the assessment, the application is forwarded with recommendations for a decision by Cabinet.

The applicant will be informed of the decision and in the case of approval will proceed with implementation of the condition of approval by:

1. Making payment for securing the registration of the Aliens Land Holding License.

2. Presently the fees are calculated on the value. In the case of lease, 10 percent of the total value of the lease.

3. Completing the land sale by payment to the seller and registration of the deed.

4. Preparation of planning applications for presentation to the Planning Authority.

5. On receipt of planning application proceed with construction activity in keeping with the condition of planning approval.
Generally, the minor application licenses are given for the development of single family houses related to residential tourism. There is presently no restriction on the areas of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to which these types of applications will be permitted.

5.19 Major Application

Aliens wishing to submit major applications are required to submit much more detailed information. The applicant is required to submit a detailed development plan of the area. This development plan will provide details with respect to the layout of the proposed development, the architectural and infrastructural details of the plan as well as a detailed financial plan which will indicate the labour force to be employed by the proposed development. The review process by the Government will generally follow the same format as the major application. In approving major applications, the details related to the development plan are incorporated into the Aliens Land Holding License as performance clauses with which the applicant must comply.

Foreign ownership has been particular great and a major issue since 1960 with the thrust towards tourism. During the 1960-98 around 900 aliens landholding licenses were approved which affected 3500 acres of land. Most of these licenses (625) were for tourism purposes and covered around 2900 acres.
As can be seen from Table 10 Government makes significant amount of revenue from Alien Land holding Licenses.

**Table 11: No of Alien Land Holding Licenses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>No of Transaction</th>
<th>Value of Transaction</th>
<th>No of Aliens Licences Granted</th>
<th>Estimated Value from Aliens Property Transaction</th>
<th>Govt. Revenue from Aliens Land Holding License</th>
<th>Aliens Tourism Related Transaction</th>
<th>Total Tourism Related Transaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>26,924,114</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7,649,650</td>
<td>764,965</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>48,448,374</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2,226,240</td>
<td>222,624</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>47,805,337</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12,759,420</td>
<td>1,275,942</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>678</td>
<td>48,798,573</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13,784,300</td>
<td>1,378,438</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>726</td>
<td>59,411,844</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11,130,340</td>
<td>1,130,340</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>774</td>
<td>N.A</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>28,380,270</td>
<td>2,838,027</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total value of Aliens Land Transaction is assumed to be ten times the Aliens Land Holding License Value.

The Alien Land Holding License is calculated as 10% of the total value of the property purchased by an alien.

Note: License may be granted in a particular year, but the sale transaction may occur in the following year.
It should be noted that there are many instances in which aliens are permitted to own or lease land outside of this Aliens Land Holding application process. The Government for example has developed many special agreements with foreigners for the development of major tourism development on large parcels of state lands without following the Aliens Landholding licenses procedures.

The major Special Agreements related to tourism developments are
1. The Mustique Resort Development-1969
3. The Ottley Hall Marina Development-by Act 54 of 1992
4. The Ashton Marina Project by Act no 6 of 1994
5. The Buccament Bay Resort Development

The Mustique Resort Development by The Mustique Company
1969Ordinance provided for the development of the 2 sq mile island into a first class international resort of distinctive character over a twenty year period. This agreement was extended by the Mustique Company law no 62 of 1989.

The new legislation gives the Mustique company control over the Mustique Conservation area which includes the island of Mustique, the beaches, foreshore and internal waters 1000 yards from the land. This project had great economic positive impact as1100 workers are employed on the island mainly in the construction sector and the company is among the top five employer and accounts for 5% of National insurance payments. This project especially in its earlier stage created major social concerns including loss of access to beach poor working conditions for workers and severe hardships on the small local population which
prompted a former Prime Minister of SVG, James Mitchell to declare ‘Development is about people...When I look at the castles on the island of Mustique rising out of the exquisite development plans and compare them with the food on the plates of the original inhabitants nearby, I wonder what does progress means? Capital injections that returns us to the slave plantations constitute the path of despair. Had there been some sense of fair play or decency, some measure of parallel progress would have been possible. Not slums and castles.’ (Mitchell 1982)

The Canouan Resort Development, the Ottley Hall Marina Development and the Ashton Marina were all negotiated and facilitated by Prime Minister Mitchell and suffered from many of the problems experienced by the Mustique development. The Ottley Hall and Ashton Bay Marinas were abandoned by the developer before all the planned facilities were constructed. All these projects were characterized by long leases of 99 years of state land at minimal rates, exemption from planning permissions and other development related permits, custom duties, property taxes; state provision of necessary physical infra-structure (including airport in the case of Canouan) and special concessions. While these projects may have hastened economic growth and contributed to employment severe social and environmental problems have occurred. The problems include the alienation of vast areas of state property, loss of traditional rights of use to beach and coastal areas for fishing and recreational pursuits by locals, development of enclave tourism with hostility between tourists and locals, social inequality in benefits of the developments, coastal and marine degradation, great land shortages and high prices on the Grenadines islands, strong foreign influence and control on local communities and suppression of local culture.
With the move to greater economic union at the OECS and CARICOM levels there is some pressure to remove aliens land holding licences for OECS and CARICOM citizens. This may pose some problems given SVG current government’s position of not recognizing persons who acquired citizenship in member states through the ‘economic citizenship programmes’ which is in place in Dominica, St Kitts and Nevis and being contemplated by other states.
6.0 Cross Cutting Issues

Vulnerability

SVG is one of the world's most prone disasters areas. SVG is exposed to:

1. Hurricane and it associated phenomena such as storm surges and wave action;
2. Earthquakes and earthquake – generated ocean waves;
3. Volcanic eruptions;
4. Flooding
5. Landslides and rockslides;
6. Droughts.

The key attribute of the state’s vulnerability to natural hazards is its small size and its dependence on agriculture and tourism, for their social and economic development. Although these natural occurrences are occasional and short-term they do have negative impacts on the physical, ecological, economic and social environment of the area.

Hurricanes

The hurricane season extends from July to October. SVG is located on the fringe of the Hurricane Zone, and rarely experience the full force of hurricanes. However in October 2010, the area experienced Hurricane Tomas which caused considerable damage on St Vincent. Despite its location outside the main tracks of hurricanes, SVG has been impacted almost on an annual basis by the coastal flooding, high winds, storm waves, river flooding and landslides associated with tropical storms. The
impact of such occurrence is damage to property, loss of life and increase in down slope run-off especially over paved and denuded areas.

**Earthquake**

With the overlapping of the Atlantic and the Caribbean tectonic plates the island do experience occasional earthquakes with little effect.

SVG is susceptible to earthquakes. In late 2007 St Vincent and the Grenadines experienced a major earthquake of 5.2 on the Richter scale but there was little structural damage or loss of life.

**Volcanic Activity**

The La Soufriere volcano which is situated in the north of St Vincent erupted in 1902, 1972 and 1979. Volcanic activity caused significant death and property damage in 1902. The presence of this active volcano has been a major determinant of land use and seriously affected development activity in the north of St Vincent and is responsible for a great deal of the north to south migration on the island.

Lying between St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada is Kick ‘em Jenny an active submarine volcano. Its summit lies at a depth of about 160m below sea surface. This underwater volcano has potentials for causing tsunami which can have severe impacts on coastal areas.

It is critical that land use planning incorporates vulnerability concerns especially from the major natural hazards identified above. Several hazards maps have been prepared to guide developments but developments continue to occur on the ground otherwise than in keeping
with these hazard maps. Hazards maps of the main hazards are provided in Maps 8 and 9 below.

**Map 8: Showing land slide prone area**
Map 9: Showing Volcanic risk zones

Given the many cross cutting issues related to sustainable land development discussed above an attempt is made here to synthesise the issues in a Sustainable land development matrix under the following broad area or goals.

a. Enhancing the land information and management system
b. Enhancing the protection and conservation of land through better land use planning.

c. Improving the efficient, productive, use, management and
development of land to secure sustained growth and greater equity in the national development process

d. Improving the housing and living conditions of all sections of the population

e. Ensuring an adequate and reliable supply of quality water on a sustainable basis to the population

**Synthesis of Issues**

Although not part of the study Terms of Reference, it is considered necessary to provide in the draft information which will move the process beyond simple identification and elaboration of the issues. In this context, the approach adopted here is to provide the land issues and present some strategies which can form the basis for guiding discussions at the next stage when the proposed consultations will hopefully confirm and prioritize the issues and proposed actions for addressing the issues.
**SUSTAINABLE LAND DEVELOPMENT MATRIX**

**LIS/GIS**-

**GOAL 1**: To establish an effective network and land/geographic information management system as the basis for the planning, development, utilization and management and administration of land...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>ISSUES</th>
<th>POSSIBLE STRATEGIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. To develop a uniform, comprehensive integrated computerized GIS system to facilitate better policy formulation, planning, development, utilization, management and administration of land resources. | • Adhoc storage of land information, maps etc by major land administration and management agencies  
• Shortage of storage area and loss of valuable documents due to limited area for storage and poor storage methods  
• No standardized reference systems and map scales by data collectors and users  
• Limited interagency sharing of information  
• Shortage of trained manpower in the areas of geographic information systems and land information management systems. | • Establish a comprehensive, computerized, land information systems network linking all land related agencies.  
• Create national standards and protocols for geographic data collection, storage and exchange  
• Establish a national digital geographic information database comprising topographic, cadastral, land use, soil, environmental, natural resource, infrastructural and socio-economic components  
• Develop the legal and institutional framework to support the development of the LIS/GIS.  
• To develop the human resources required to manage and operate the LIS/GIS  
• Enhancing the human and technical capacity of agencies and civil society organisations |

**Land use Planning –**
### Goal 2: Protect, conserve, enhance and restore the land resources of SVG through enhanced land use planning to contribute to social and economic development.

| To manage and use in a sustainable manner the agricultural land resources to support sustainable livelihoods. | • Under-utilization of large areas of arable lands.  
• Speculative subdivision of agricultural lands.  
• Small, inefficient, and fragmented farms including many located on land of low capability.  
• Over-intensive cultivation and misuse of steep slopes  
• Accelerated erosion resulting from land degradation and abandonment of large tracts of farm lands.  
• Deforestation of many watersheds.  
• Planting of crops with little regard to ecological and environmental conditions.  
• Uneconomic farm size  
• Squatting on agricultural land  
• Absence of title |
| --- | --- |
|  | • develop national land use policies and land use zoning plans to preserve all arable lands, in particular Class I and II lands,  
• Develop agricultural land-use crop zoning maps to identify land capability and suitability for various types of crops;  
• Develop and promote conservation measures and better agricultural practices to reduce soil erosion, help to maintain soil fertility, and to increase productivity;  
• Develop a state land banking system to reduce the amount of under-utilized arable land;  
• Develop and declare agricultural zones for the preservation of the country’s agricultural lands from fragmentation and uneconomic use and for farm consolidation.  
• Encourage and support security of tenure for farms under the Possessory Title Act.  
• Enhance the capacity of the Land Management Unit to better manage leased, rented and other state lands.  
• Resettle farmers occupying critical watersheds and other areas unsuitable for farming  
• Develop programmes to rehabilitate critical deforested areas  
• Develop the agricultural land use crop use zoning capacity within the Ministry of Agriculture  
• Develop and enforce legislation to discourage underutilisation and non-use of agricultural lands  
• Enhancing the human and technical capacity of agencies and civil society organisations |
### Land Policy

**Goal 3:** To ensure the efficient, productive, use, management and development of land to secure sustained growth and greater equity in the national development process.

| To develop and implement a National Land Policy to ensure efficiency, equity, and sustainability in the land development and socio-economic development processes | • Fragmented documentation on land policies  
• Inconsistent and conflicting land policies  
• Outdated inefficient legal, management and administrative arrangements  
• The economic efficiency and productivity in the use of scarce land resources  
• the development of more dynamic land markets  
• security of tenure;  
• Increase the access of low income and disadvantaged groups to land and housing;  
• the availability of land and water resources for future generations  
• Sub-optimal utilization of resources  
• High foreign ownership and control of land  
• The allocation of land for various uses: residential tourism, industrial, quarrying, agriculture, parks and protected areas etc  
• Land degradation  
• Vulnerability  
• Climate change |
| --- | --- |
|  | • Prepare a comprehensive, transparent, modern efficient land policy for SVG.  
• Develop and implement realistic programmes and projects to facilitate the implementation of the land policies.  
• Incorporating and mainstreaming vulnerability and disaster reduction management into the national planning and development process.  
• Strengthening NEMO and promoting disaster risk reduction at community, schools and workplace levels  
• Enhancing the human and technical capacity of agencies and civil society organisations |
## 4. Housing – to improve the housing and living conditions of all sections of the population

<p>| To provide safe and affordable housing for the population | • scarcity of land for housing esp near urban centre where demand for housing greatest |
| | • High cost of serviced lots |
| | • Housing deficit |
| | • Old housing stock. |
| | • Poor condition of some housing |
| | • onerous procedures and conditions for accessing mortgages |
| | • high cost of mortgage financing |
| | • High cost of construction of housing |
| | • Low levels of housing affordability (70% households need subsidy to own home) |
| | • High rental costs |
| | • Outdated rent legislation |
| | • high preference for single family detached housing as against apartment blocks or high rise housing solutions. |
| | • High levels of informal housing /squatting |
| | • Develop a National Physical Plan which will allocate lands for housing based on effective demand |
| | • Develop a housing strategy/plan to provide better housing for all Vincentians, especially to fill the large gap between existing housing stock and projected needs and supply. |
| | • Develop a state managed land bank to ensure land availability for low income households |
| | • Provide incentives and support to the private sector and families to increase construction of housing units and for the repair, upgrading and retro fitting of existing housing stock for all income groups by 2021; |
| | • Adopt new construction technologies to reduce infrastructure and building construction costs. |
| | • Improve the terms and conditions for mortgage financing and increase the availability of housing mortgage financing |
| | • Ensure that all housing developments are properly infrastructure and developed to acceptable building and planning standards. |
| | • Develop a National Housing Trust (preferably the Jamaican model) which will require compulsory housing deductions from all workers (like the NIS) as a means of raising housing finance. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Poor quality housing in terms of building and planning standards/ high levels of vulnerability.</strong></th>
<th><strong>Regularise, upgrade designated squatter settlements and relocate settlements/households where necessary.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low levels of and under-insurance in housing</strong></td>
<td><strong>Develop an effective land management and delivery system for housing development in order to prevent planning related problems such as squatting.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hazardous location of housing</strong></td>
<td><strong>Provide legal and technical assistance to enable low income groupings to get title under the Possessory Titles Act.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Absence of land title – family land problem</strong></td>
<td><strong>Develop and implement public sector managed low income serviced lots and housing unit programmes which are cost effective, fully cost recoverable and sustainable.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Enhancing the human and technical capacity of agencies and civil society organisations</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**WATER**

**Goal 5: To ensure an adequate, safe, reliable and sustainable supply of water to satisfy the present and future needs of the population.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To ensure an adequate and reliable supply of quality water on a sustainable basis to the population</th>
<th>Carry out an assessment of the water quality and quantity available for the medium and long term needs of the population.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The need to assess the quantity and quality of water resources</td>
<td>Develop a water resources plan for SVG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water shortages in some areas</td>
<td>Develop appropriate institutional arrangements for the planning, use and management of water resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing demands for water for present and future needs</td>
<td>Develop and promote conservation measures and best water use practices to ensure optimal utilisation of the water resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destruction of watersheds</td>
<td>Discontinue squatting, farming and other human activity in and around major water catchments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destruction of aquifers and other sources of ground water</td>
<td>Curb the destruction of water sheds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The need to expand the existing water supply system and to develop new sources of supply especially in the Grenadines</td>
<td>permit development only in areas with adequate existing water supply infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited water available for irrigation</td>
<td>Develop systems to monitor and reduce pollution of streams and ground water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water use conflicts and competing demands among various groupings – electricity, commercial, recreational and settlement use.</td>
<td>Resettle farmers occupying critical watersheds and other areas unsuitable for farming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground and surface water pollution by siltation, saline intrusion, pesticides and chemical contamination by domestic agricultural and industrial waste.</td>
<td>Develop programmes to rehabilitate critical deforested areas</td>
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<td>Explore the feasibility of establishing a public water supply system using desalination plants or other systems in the Grenadines.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Inadequate institutional arrangements for the planning and development of appropriate policies and programmes for the water sector.</td>
<td>• Promote and encourage households to develop private water storage which would utilise water collected from rain and or public supplies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Increase the efficiency of the CWSA to better able to supply affordable reliable and adequate water supply to consumers.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>• Maximise the opportunities for the production of bottled water and supply of water to cruise ships</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Rehabilitation of old and the construction of new water supply schemes to meet existing and future demands</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Enhancing the human and technical capacity of agencies and civil society organisations</td>
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