

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

LIAT flies regional officials to Guadeloupe for Sports seminar

ST. JOHN'S, Antigua, June 07, 2010 – Regional airline LIAT has collaborated with the French Athletic Federation to facilitate the participation of three officials from the sporting fraternity in Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados and St. Vincent and the Grenadines in a recent international seminar on Athletics in the Caribbean.

LIAT provided air transportation for Senator Cecil McKie, the Junior Sports Minister in St. Vincent and the Grenadines; Anne Jonas, Coordinator Planning and Project Management in the Office of the Minister of State for Sports in Antigua and Barbuda; and Patrick Best, Board Member of the Barbados National Sports Council.

The aim of the seminar was to discuss the need for better sporting structures and to look at ways to facilitate closer collaboration between Athletic Federations throughout the Caribbean.

Speaking on behalf of the group, Senator McKie said that the initiative was both important and timely, noting that for too long now there has been a distinct separation between sporting activities in the French-speaking territories and those in the English-speaking Caribbean.

"About 20 years ago it was much closer, particularly in football where we would normally see a number of exchanges involving football teams from the French and English-speaking territories. If we can get back to encouraging these exchanges, and in this case track and field, then we will be well on our way to expand and through the various meets expose our track and field athletes to higher levels of competition," Senator McKie said.

"What we need to do now coming out of the seminar is to ensure that the relationship is concretized and that a clear line of communication is established as well as a plan to both stay in touch and to identify the various meets, relative to schedules on both sides, so that we can then move at an early stage towards having the athletes participate whether it's in the French or English territories. In that regard the OECS Sports Desk as well as the various Athletic Associations will need to play a vital role," he added.

Meantime, LIAT's Acting Chief Executive Officer Brian Challenger also welcomed the initiative.

Noting that LIAT currently operates daily flights to both Guadeloupe and Martinique, Mr. Challenger said that the carrier looks forward to mutually rewarding benefits as a partner with the athletic associations in this cooperative initiative.

The one-day seminar was attended by the popular French Athlete Marie-José Pérec as well as the woman seen as one of the most popular political personalities in the country, 32-year-old Rama Yade, Junior Minister for Youth and Sports.

Also in attendance were officials of the Jamaica Athletic Federation including Neville (Teddy) McCook and Howard Harris who shared the "Jamaican Model" of how the island developed its athletics programme from 1910 to today, producing the fastest man on the planet, Usain Bolt.

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About LIAT

LIAT is one of the leading Caribbean airlines. It is owned by regional shareholders, with the major shareholders being the Governments of Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. More information about LIAT may be found at www.liat.com.

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