



THE AGENCY FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION

P.O Box 608, Kingstown, St Vincent and The Grenadines

Tel: (784) 456-1600, Fax (784) 456-2430

Email: apisvg2014@gmail.com

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BNTF and CDB Launch 11TH Programme

More than 700 Vincentians are expected to benefit from improved road access and community infrastructure. The Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF) and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) announced this at the 11th programme launch.

The programme was officially launched at a ceremony held at the Holiday Inn Express on 13th October, 2026.

Speaking at the launch, Minister of Agriculture, the Honourable Israel Bruce, said the investment is expected to transform the lives of Vincentians, particularly those in communities where poor road access and inadequate footpaths have posed longstanding challenges.

The Minister noted that residents of communities such as Golden Vale and Acres Hill have endured significant difficulties due to the lack of proper access routes.

He outlined the challenges residents face and detailed the works planned to improve their living conditions.

“Residents speak with a frustration born of long endurance, of the danger of travelling that path when the rain comes again, and worse still, the danger of travelling it at night, in darkness, where

a single misstep could mean major injury. Here, too, shoes come off. Here, too, dignity is set aside at the mercy of the mud.

The people of Golden Vale and the people of Acres, to these people, I say today, those days are coming to an end. In Golden Vale, this programme will deliver approximately 1,660 linear feet of reinforced concrete, stairs, and footpaths, continuous curb and slipper drains along the alignment, several retaining walls to secure the slopes, 310 linear feet of a new 14-foot-wide concrete pathway, and a proper turning area. In Acres Hill, we will construct approximately 880 linear feet of reinforced concrete, stairs, and footpaths, with continuous drainage along its length and retaining walls.”

Minister Bruce said the programme’s reach will extend beyond Golden Vale and Acres Hill to other communities across mainland St. Vincent. He reaffirmed the Government’s commitment to improving infrastructure and living conditions in communities including Owia, Greggs, Arnos Vale, and the Bom Bom area.

“But our commitment to the poor and the underprivileged does not end at the borders of Golden Vale and Acres Hill. It extends to Owia, to Greggs, and other communities across St. Vincent and the Grenadines, including Arnos Vale and the Bom Bom area.”

The Minister also assured that the Grenadines would not be overlooked, highlighting plans to rehabilitate the Canouan Primary School.

The project will involve the construction of a new, two-storey reinforced concrete school building measuring approximately 5,880 square feet. The facility will include at least four classrooms, student and staff washrooms, a storage room, a sick bay, an outdoor play area, a reception area, rainwater harvesting and storage facilities, and the principal’s office.

The project will also include extensive refurbishment and upgrades to the existing 7,245-square-foot building, covering structural repairs, roofing, doors, windows, electrical and plumbing systems, ceilings, finishes, and painting.

Minister Bruce expressed gratitude to the Caribbean Development Bank and the Basic Needs Trust Fund for their continued partnership with the Government and people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Delivering the feature address, Acting Prime Minister, the Honourable Major St. Claire Leacock, described the launch as an important occasion that reinforces the country's commitment to community development, poverty reduction, resilience-building, and improved livelihoods. He commended the BNTF and the CDB for their efforts to create opportunities that strengthen the social and economic well-being of individuals and communities.

“Today's launch is more than the commencement of another programme. It represents a renewed commitment to ensuring development reaches our communities, creates meaningful opportunities for our people, and establishing a strong foundation for sustainable national progress that will sustain us.

Ladies and gentlemen, development must ultimately be measured by the difference it makes in people's lives. It is measured by the quality of the facilities available to our children, the opportunities afforded to our young people, the capacity of our farmers to sustain their livelihoods, and the ability of our communities to withstand and recover from adversity.”

The 2026 programme is supported by a financial commitment of \$13,356,999. Of that amount, the CDB will provide \$10,717,617 while the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines will contribute just over \$2.6 million. Approximately \$8 million is earmarked for infrastructure improvements, including roads, footpaths, drainage systems, and retaining walls.

The BNTF's 11th Programme Launch signals continued investment in communities across St. Vincent and the Grenadines to improve access, strengthen resilience, and enhance the quality of life for residents.

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