
“BELIEF IN SELF”
REMARKS AT GROUND BREAKING CEREMONY FOR TERMINAL BUILDING
ARGYLE AIRPORT SITE

By

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Argyle Airport Site

Introduction

Today is another historic day for our country, as we reach another significant milestone for the Argyle International Airport project.

Coalition of the willing

We've come this far, thanks to the tireless effort and full support of our dear Prime Minister, Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, and his government.

We must also say thanks for the assistance we have received from a diverse group of friendly countries we call the *Coalition of the willing!*

Who are these? They are:

Republic of China on Taiwan

Cuba

Venezuela

Trinidad and Tobago

Iran

Libya

Mexico

Austria

And a new organisation: Caricom Development Fund.

When we set off on this journey in August 2005, there were many who did not believe.

Today I see, as we get closer and closer to the finish line, we are being joined by those who were unbelievers and “faint of heart”.

But it is better late than never. I am happy that now they believe!

As a small nation, we can hardly accomplish anything meaningful if we are consumed by self-doubt, and lack self-confidence.

To achieve anything meaningful, we have to be *brave, bold and confident!*

Process of building a terminal:

So what are we building here at Argyle, and what is the process we went through to get to this stage?

Before we designed our terminal building, we set up a multidisciplinary *Planning Committee*, comprised of members from within IADC and from other government agencies.

We have taken the view that all stakeholders must be involved in decision making at Argyle. So, we had representation from the different agencies, including:

Ministry of Tourism

Invest SVG

E.T. Joshua airport

Maritime Agency

Energy Unit

Members of this Planning Committee then visited several airports around the world. The main objective of these visits was to learn from the experience of other airports, to avoid costly errors here at Argyle.

We visited airports in: Cuba, Bahamas, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Brazil, Mexico, Madeira-Portugal, and Atlanta-Georgia.

After these visits, our Planning Committee was able to prepare a Design Brief. This brief essentially tells the architects/designers how we want our Passenger Terminal Building, and all the other landside facilities to be designed and built.

The facilities that we have designed and would build here are:

Passenger terminal building

Cargo terminal building

Control tower

Fire fighting and rescue station
Electrical substation building
Equipment parking and maintenance building
Water storage system
Solid waste-incinerator, and
Sewage disposal system

Award of design contract

Once we had prepared the brief, we were able to put out a request for tenders for work of designing the buildings and supervising the construction of the facilities. This contract was won and awarded to a Taiwanese Firm, *CECI Engineering Consultants Inc.* (I know they are here with us today). The contract is valued at US\$3.9 million and covers the work of designing and supervising the Terminal Building and the other landside facilities.

During the period October 2009 and April 2010, we worked very closely with the design firm to ensure that the designs were consistent with what we wanted to build here at Argyle.

The result of this extensive collaboration is here for us to see. We believe that we have designed an attractive, functional, and modern Passenger Terminal that would be the pride, for many years to come, of all Vincentians.

Our Terminal Building has:

3 floors - total floor area: 171,100 sq ft (E.T. Joshua – 30,000 sq ft)

Peak passenger hour: 800 persons, - 400 in and 400 out!

Accommodate 1.5 million passengers per year. (This is more than 7 times the number of passengers currently passing through E. T. Joshua Airport in any one year.)

Departure lounge and concessions area (21,000 sq ft)

Roof top restaurant and waving gallery area (13,000 sq ft)

Conference centre facility, with roof top garden area 11,000 sq ft

Several car parks: Commercial car park (250 cars), 10 large buses, and ample space for taxis and rental cars.

We are building a truly first class facility that caters for future growth and development!

Award of contract to OECC

You would recall on July 12th, the contract for the construction of the Terminal Building and Electrical Substation was signed with the Taiwanese Company, Overseas Engineering and Construction Company (OECC). This contract is valued at US\$26.5 million. And OECC has a maximum of 28 months to complete the buildings before they are assessed a financial penalty for late completion. We confidently expect OECC to complete their work and to hand over the buildings to us on or before end of November 2013.

Contracts for the other buildings will be negotiated and awarded within the next 12 months or so. IADC will use its own resources to do all the site works, internal roads, drains, and parking areas.

Runway and Apron works

While we have been negotiating the contracts for the buildings, we have also been putting the various mechanisms in place to begin pavement works on the runway, taxiways and aprons.

We are on target with our earthworks, and we plan to complete the earth and pavement works before the end of 2013.

The airstrip is going to be 9,000 feet long, to allow for the landing and takeoff of planes as large as the Boeing 747-400 jets.

Apron sizes

We are also building a large apron, with 3 connecting aprons:

Commercial Apron = 383,560 feet² (8.8 acres)

(1 wide bodied jet, 1 narrow bodied jet, 6 Dash-8 type aircraft)

Master Plan - space has been earmarked for expansion of apron.

General Aviation Apron = 503,534 feet² (11.5 acres)

Several executive jets, twin otters and islanders. We have also catered for a number of aircraft hangers, and Fixed-based operators services in this area.

Cargo Apron = 85,255 feet² (2.0 acres)

Mainly 2 jets, of size of the Boeing 727 aircraft (like the Amerijet)

Compared all this with E.T. Joshua Apron: approx. 90,000 square feet (2.0 acres)

Other Facilities and attractions around the airport

IADC is also assisting with creating other facilities and attractions around the Argyle airport.

(a) IADC and the National Trust are working together to create an “Escape Heritage Park”, which will be built on 2.75 acres of land near the new Argyle Bridge. This land was recently acquired by Government. The park will feature a *restored functioning sugar mill* and is the site where the Yambou petroglyphs will be relocated.

(b) IADC, the National Trust and the Ministry of Culture will combine their resources to restore a Carib Village just above the Yambou river that was discovered by a team of archaeologist from Leiden University, Holland. The artefacts excavated from this site suggest that this is where the island’s Carib population lived during the European settlement period.

(c) IADC will also build a dual carriage way around the Southern and Eastern sides of airport to provide access to Rawacou, the Recreational Pond and the Carib Village.

We are working to have all of this in place by December 2013.

Arnos Vale Conversion

As we approach the completion of Argyle International Airport, we have to turn our attention to the next big project: Our new city at Arnos Vale!

I know we are all believers now!

I know after this Argyle Airport, no Vincentian would again wonder if we can accomplish big things in this small country.

So I want you to picture with me, on a 62 acre plot of land at Arnos Vale, a new city that we design to suit ourselves for now and for the future!

I want you to picture with me, perhaps:

A new hospital?

New hotels on the water front?

New sprawling malls?

New condominiums and villas?

New business centres?

And, a new access route to Kingstown – a tunnel under Cane Garden?

I want you to picture all this at Arnos Vale.

Concluding remarks

Looking at what we have accomplished here at Argyle, and riding on this swell of self believe and self confidence, I can see you are thinking that creating a new city at Arnos Vale is a *piece of cake*.

With God's help, we can accomplish anything, once we believe!

And I am a believer!

I have always believed we can accomplish big things in our small country.

I live by the inspirational words of R. Kelly, who says:

“If I can see it, then I can do it”

“If I just believe it, there's nothing to it”

That's why “I have always believed we can fly”.

May god bless us all.

Good evening!

August 7th 2011.