

St. Lucia to Reopen Borders Beginning June 4

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CASTRIES, St. Lucia, CMC – The St. Lucia government Saturday said it would begin the gradual re-opening of its borders on June 4, after indicating that the island had been able to curb the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) that had infected at least 18 persons here.

Prime Minister Allen Chastanet told the nation that “as of June 4th 2020 we will begin to gradually open our borders to regional and international travel’ after health authorities had on Friday shared “our strategic plan to reopen our economy and country in phases, after weeks of a partial shutdown due to COVID-19”.

Mr. Chastanet said that the five-phased strategic reopening focuses on health, safety and the general well-being of the public and has taken into account advice from public health experts and feedback from various stakeholders.

The strategies also provided the requirements for businesses and organisations across each sector to operate based on national COVID-19 protocols.

Mr. Chastanet said that he believes St. Lucia is in a “fairly good position to do so” based on a number of reasons including the fact that all “18 of our confirmed cases of COVID-19 have successfully recovered.

“We have made the required investment into our health infrastructure and system by opening the OKEU Hospital, commenced the conversion of Victoria Hospital into a dedicated Respiratory Hospital, established five Respiratory clinics across the island, “ he said.

He said that the St. Lucia had also been able to secure additional assistance for the medical personnel here by welcoming over 100 Cuban nurses, doctors and technicians to assist us in the COVID-19 battle, as well as securing sufficient Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and supplies to protect “frontline COVID-19 soldiers, significantly improved our testing capacity combined with several other vital interventions.

“Simply put, our health system is much better prepared than it was three months ago,” Mr. Chastanet said, adding that “I also believe that most St. Lucians are also now more familiar and comfortable with the COVID-19 protocols such as physical distancing, wearing a mask and are more aware of the best practices which will help keep themselves and their families safe”.

He said as St. Lucia re-opens its borders in the coming weeks, “we will be increasing the protocols for anyone who intends to visit our island.

“This would include all travellers having to undergo a COVID-19 test before departing their country for St. Lucia, the use of respiratory masks, undergoing frequent temperature checks, minimal physical contact with other persons, consistent sanitation and other improved COVID-19 protocols at ports of entry, hotels, in taxis and all other establishments”.