

NO: 615/19

## **FIRST ROUND OF BUILDING BLOCKS TRAINING COMPLETE**

Youth unemployment is a major cause for concern in Barbados.

This view was expressed by Minister of Youth and Community Empowerment, Adrian Forde, at the closing ceremony for the first round of training in the Building Blocks initiative last Friday, at the Parkinson Resource Centre, The Pine, St. Michael. Mr. Forde went on to explain that Barbados' unemployment rate was three times higher than the total global unemployment rate, which stands at 4.3 per cent.

Pointing to recent statistics the Youth Minister lamented: "Here in Barbados, the most recent statistics show a youth unemployment rate of 29.1 per cent, as compared to the total unemployment rate of 10 per cent."

Minister Forde revealed that "the Building Blocks project was developed within the context of these varied, deep-rooted and inter-connected challenges, and is intended to provide a response that is holistic, well-co-ordinated, innovative and inclusive. The major aim is to provide an intervention that is transformative and revolutionary, while creating an impact that would transform blocks from the currently perceived negative activities into exciting, viable community-driven small business centres."

He shared that the Building Blocks project was intended to provide financial and technical resources needed to transform the lives of young people, while at the same time catering to the creation of community based enterprises.

He revealed that participants would receive training in entrepreneurship and life skills development, which is expected to allow them to effectively manage and grow their businesses into viable and sustainable enterprises.

The Building Blocks project was started in the communities of Silver Hill, Bonnetts, Parkinson Field and The Ivy.

**ADD: FIRST ROUND OF BUILDING BLOCKS TRAINING COMPLETE - 1**

The Youth Minister promised that, once the approval process was finalised with the relevant regulatory agencies, Barbadians would see “community areas renowned for negative behaviours transformed into attractive areas of business managed by young people, making positive contributions to their personal, family and community development”. **(PHG/BGIS)**

NO: 616/19

**BARBADOS TO HOST 11<sup>TH</sup> ILO MEETING OF CARIBBEAN MINISTERS OF LABOUR**

Barbados will be the venue for the 11<sup>th</sup> International Labour Organization’s (ILO) Meeting of Caribbean Ministers of Labour, next week.

The two-day meeting, a collaborative effort of the Ministry of Labour and Social Partnership Relations and the ILO, will be held from Tuesday, May 14, to Wednesday, May 15, at the Accra Beach Hotel and Spa, Rockley, Christ Church.

Its theme is **Shaping A Brighter Future Of Work For The Caribbean.**

Some 70 delegates, representing 21 member states, are expected to attend the event, which will also have the presence of the ILO Director-General, Guy Reader, and several Ministers of Labour.

Minister of Labour and Social Partnership Relations, Colin Jordan, will deliver remarks at the official opening ceremony on Tuesday, May 14, beginning at 9:00 a.m. **(JG/BGIS)**

**ATTENTION NEWS EDITOR:**

**YOU ARE INVITED TO SEND A REPRESENTATIVE TO COVER THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 11<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION (ILO) MEETING OF CARIBBEAN MINISTERS OF LABOUR, ON TUESDAY, MAY 14, BEGINNING AT 9:00 A.M.**

**ATTENTION NEWS EDITOR**

**MINISTER OF ENERGY AND WATER RESOURCES, WILFRED ABRAHAMS, WILL DELIVER REMARKS AT THE COMMISSIONING OF A SOLAR PV SYSTEM AT THE ST. MARK'S RESOURCE CENTRE, BLADES HILL, ST. PHILIP, ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, BEGINNING AT 11:00 A.M.**

NO: 617/19

**PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS SCIENCE EXPO**

Students from various primary and secondary schools will vie for the coveted top prizes in the Electricity and Renewable Energy Science Exposition on Thursday, May 16. It will take place at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Institute of Technology, Wildey, St. Michael, from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon.

The annual Expo is hosted by the Media Resource Department of the Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training, in partnership with the Barbados Light & Power Company Limited.

Twenty-two projects will be judged from participating primary and secondary schools. Judging will take place from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon on Thursday.

Other schools and members of the public are invited to view the exhibits on Thursday, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., and again on Friday, May 17, from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon.

The top prizes for both primary and secondary schools are first place \$2,500; second place \$1,500, and third place \$1,000. **(MR/BGIS)**

**ATTENTION NEWS EDITOR:**

**THE MEDIA RESOURCE DEPARTMENT AND THE BARBADOS LIGHT & POWER COMPANY LIMITED'S ANNUAL ELECTRICITY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY SCIENCE EXPOSITION WILL TAKE PLACE ON THURSDAY, MAY 16, AT THE SAMUEL JACKMAN PRESCOD INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, WILDEY, ST. MICHAEL, FROM 9:00 A.M. TO 12 NOON.**

**YOU ARE INVITED TO SEND A REPRESENTATIVE TO COVER THIS EVENT.**

NO: 618/19

**GOVERNMENT COMMITTED TO FREEDOM OF INFORMATION**

Government is committed to freedom of information says Minister of Information, Broadcasting and Public Affairs, Senator Lucille Moe.

She emphasized government's commitment on Friday night, when she addressed a reception for local media, hosted by Ambassador of the Argentine Republic to Barbados, Gustavo Martinez Pandiani, to celebrate World Press Freedom Day on May 3.

Senator Moe told her audience: "We are committed to freedom of information. Why will we not be? Freedom of information is something that goes along with our lines of transparency, accountability and good governance.

"As you would know, Barbados is in a situation where there are many things that are a priority for the government, and we can't do everything overnight. Certainly, we will do what we can as we move along to improve Barbados for Barbadians. But certainly, information and the access to it is something we are clearly, clearly on board with.... We are 100 per cent behind journalists having access to information."

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**ADD: GOVERNMENT COMMITTED TO FREEDOM OF INFORMATION - 1**

The minister said she was in favor of social media, saying it had opened a whole different world for journalism, as persons were trying now to balance traditional methodologies of imparting information along with the new methods of not just informing, but receiving information.

She noted that after Dominica was affected by a tropical storm a few years ago, it was a video clip of the devastation, taken on a cell phone, which was shown by CNN, that allowed persons to see what had occurred there. "Social media is a great thing, and for me, I think it has changed the way in which all practitioners now have to look at what this world of information is all about," she suggested.

Senator Moe thanked the journalists for keeping the public informed, saying they were doing an excellent job. She also expressed appreciation to employees of the Barbados Government Information Service for always providing opportunities for journalists to get information from government, so the public could be kept informed.

She also lauded Ambassador Pandiani for hosting the event and his tireless efforts in promoting and strengthening relations between both countries.

Ambassador Pandiani told media workers that their roles were very important, especially if one wanted to build a democratic, open and free society. He proposed that World Press Freedom Day should be observed annually in Barbados, with some type of event. He also suggested that an awards programme with various categories should be developed to reward the media workers for their hard work. **(SA/BGIS)**

NO: 619/19

## **FAO DISCUSSES BARBADOS' AGRICULTURAL WORK PROGRAMMES**

Barbados' agricultural projects are of great interest to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations' new Sub-Regional Coordinator for the Caribbean, Dr. Renata Clarke.

This was disclosed today during a courtesy call with Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Indar Weir, at the ministry's headquarters, Graeme Hall, Christ Church.

The two officials discussed the continuous harmonious relationship between Barbados and FAO, and the continuity of funding and technical support from that organization.

Minister Weir expressed appreciation for the assistance and exchange of information over the years. Areas such as food sovereignty, chemical use within farming, the Parliamentary Fronts Against Hunger Programme, the farmers' empowerment and enfranchisement drive (FEED) programme, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, fish waste treatment programmes and the black belly sheep programme were discussed for further development.

Mr. Weir also stated that it is of great importance to him as Minister of Agriculture that "we wean off chemical use within agriculture and get back to the old modalities of farming in Barbados".

Dr. Clarke, who was previously Head of the Food Safety and Quality Unit, Office of Food Safety, FAO Rome, agreed with reducing the use of chemicals, and stressed that food safety was an area of great focus for the FAO, especially as it related to trade.

She was very keen on hearing more about the ministry's plans for developing root crops (cassava, sweet potato and yam), the school feeding programme, and how FEED will play a role in providing better nutrition for the island's schoolchildren.

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**ADD: FAO DISCUSSES BARBADOS' AGRICULTURAL WORK PROGRAMMES - 1**

Dr. Clarke said that many of the projects seem interesting and she was happy to know that “Barbados is so committed to the future of agriculture”.

She also shared that the FAO is in the process of doing an individual diet intake survey and with the data collected it would assist in forming policies for nutrition and identifying dietary patterns, which would help to assist how to go about integrating better nutrition around the world.

Other matters discussed included e-commerce, block chain technology, alternate means of feed for animals, Greenland's goat programme and the global action plan for the use of microbial data.

Dr. Clarke said that the FAO would be seeking to collect data on the use of microbes, and that she would like Barbados to be at the top of the class in submitting data, and be an example for the rest of the Caribbean. **(SF/BGIS)**

NO: 620/19

**BARBADOS FIRE SERVICE TO BE MODERNIZED**

The Barbados Fire Service (BFS) is set to get an overhaul, in relation to its legislation and the integration of technology within its operations.

Minister of Home Affairs, Edmund Hinkson, made this declaration today, as he addressed the opening ceremony of the Caribbean Association of Fire Chiefs' (CAFC) conference at the Accra Beach Resort & Spa, Rockley, Christ Church.

Minister Hinkson said to start the ball rolling would be the reform and revision of the island's 1961 Barbados Fire Service Act. “We are at the level in my ministry, with input from the management of the fire service and the association, are actively preparing a new legislative platform for the delivery of fire service in order to modernize and position our service in line with current practices in the profession,” he said.

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**ADD: BARBADOS FIRE SERVICE TO BE MODERNIZED - 1**

The minister said government needed to ensure that the island's legislation facilitated the transition of the service into a comprehensive fire management and rescue operation. That, he said, would allow it to ultimately be more responsive to the demands of the public in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Mr. Hinkson said the BFS now fell under a Protective Services Commission, which will allow for a more effective regime for the personal advancement and promotion of fire officers.

Despite this however, the Home Affairs Minister stressed that there was still a need to re-engineer the workflow processes of the service through the computerization of activities and the integration of technology.

He added that his ministry recognized the importance of embracing technology, and was "looking forward to assistance from the Ministry of Innovation and Smart Technology in that regard".

During his address, Mr. Hinkson left some words of advice with the fire chiefs. "You must endeavour to better yourselves as leaders because you cannot take people where you have never been; and you cannot impart that which you do not know," he said.

He also encouraged them to provide continuous training and development programmes for their staff, recognizing that they were critical to the sustainability and growth of their departments.

Mr. Hinkson further advised the association to seek partnerships and strategic alliances at a higher level, and become the voice of the industry in relation to natural and man-made disasters similar to that of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency.



**ADD: BARBADOS FIRE SERVICE TO BE MODERNIZED - 2**

“You may also consider having your association forge partnerships through the Caribbean Association of Fire Fighters to establish the Caribbean Rescue Unit, comprising officers and medical personnel who will be first on the ground to execute any rescue operations and increase chances of survival and mitigation losses for those who have suffered losses in the Caribbean,” the minister stated.

The opening ceremony also featured the passing of the baton to Barbados’ Fire Chief Errol Maynard, who will now head CAFC as President for the next four years.

The one-week conference, at which 15 Caribbean countries are participating, opened with a flag ceremony, and featured a cultural presentation from local gospel artiste, John Yarde.

It continues tomorrow with a series of meetings and presentations, including one with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency and the Pan-American Health Organization. There will also be a series of training sessions being conducted for participants in the area of Emergency Management Services, and an exhibition.

**(JRB/BGIS)**

**ATTENTION NEWS EDITOR:**

**FIRE CHIEFS FROM BARBADOS AND THE REGION WILL MEET FOR A PRESENTATION FROM OFFICIALS OF THE CARIBBEAN DISASTER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY, AS PART OF THE ONGOING CARIBBEAN ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS’ CONFERENCE, TOMORROW, TUESDAY, MAY 7.**

**THE PRESENTATION WILL TAKE PLACE AT THE ACCRA BEACH RESORT & SPA, ROCKLEY, CHRIST CHURCH, BEGINNING AT 9:00 A.M.**

**YOU ARE INVITED TO SEND A REPRESENTATIVE TO COVER THIS EVENT.**

NO: 621/19

### **ST. MICHAEL EAST DEO ELECTIONS**

The St. Michael East District Emergency Organization (DEO) is resuming its operations.

To facilitate this process, elections for an executive committee will be held on Wednesday, May 29, at the Ivy Community Centre, The Ivy, St. Michael, beginning at 7:00 p.m. All positions on the executive committee are currently vacant.

For more information regarding the upcoming elections, including the eligibility to vote and the roles and responsibilities of the executive committee, persons should contact Kirk Trotman at 851-4222, or Danielle Skeete at 438-7575. **(JRB/BGIS)**

NO: 622/19

### **FUN ACTIVITIES WILL BE A FEATURE OF THE SENIOR GAMES**

Races featuring Members of Parliament and local entertainers will be among the fun events at this year's National Senior Games.

In response to complaints that the games had become "too serious" over the years, resulting in a decline in interest by the general public, the organizing committee has this year gone all out to return fun activities to the event.

In addition to the celebrity races, there will also be the return of a crowd favourite called **Dem Say We Ain't Stan A Chance**, which caters to those who many would not normally expect to see on a track, but who are out to prove that they still have what it takes.

The National Senior Games Committee has also joined with the National Cultural Foundation to produce a cultural display featuring green monkeys, stilt walkers and tumblers. A host of activities for children are also on the cards.

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**ADD: FUN ACTIVITIES WILL BE A FEATURE OF THE SENIOR GAMES - 1**

At a press conference held today, a trio of Ministers, comprising Minister of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs, Cynthia Forde; Minister of Health and Wellness, Lt. Col. Jeffrey Bostic; and Minister of Creative Economy, Culture and Sports, John King, urged public support for the games, both by participants and spectators.

Minister Forde signalled government's intention to produce "a high quality suite of games". She encouraged support not only for the popular 5K walk and run and the track and field finale, but for all 13 disciplines in which seniors will compete.

"Support your relatives, friends and neighbours as the ministry endeavours to promote the concepts of fellowship, fair play, fun, family and fitness," she urged.

Minister Bostic stressed the importance of active ageing, noting that while Barbadians were living longer, they were often impacted by non-communicable diseases.

He said this was of concern to his ministry, and therefore there was much emphasis on wellness initiatives. In this regard, he added, he fully supported and endorsed the senior games, pledging to display this support in a practical way through his involvement in the table tennis competition.

Minister King also announced that he would be participating in the games. He said that while it was believed by many that sporting activities were only for the young, this was far from the case.

"The effort this year to rebrand the Senior Games must be seen as the beginning of a new culture which nurtures seniors not only physically, but also socially.

**ADD: FUN ACTIVITIES WILL BE A FEATURE OF THE SENIOR GAMES - 2**

“I commend all those involved in putting these games together for 2019, and I’m sure this will be a new jumping off point for the event,” the Minister with responsibility for Sports stated.

The disciplines featured at this year’s games are archery, basketball, chess, cycling, darts, dominoes, netball, squash, lawn tennis, road tennis, table tennis, the 5K walk and run, and track and field. **(JS/BGIS)**