



The Antigua and Barbuda High Commission



Official Newsletter - Issue 137 -- November/December 2009

Trinidad and Tobago hosts Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM)



Commonwealth Heads of Government (CHOGM) met in Trinidad and Tobago from 27 to 29 November 2009. Of the 49 countries that attended the Meeting, 34 were represented by their Heads of State or Government.

The Opening Ceremony of the Meeting included an address by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Head of the Commonwealth.

Heads of Government conveyed their sincere appreciation to the Government and people of

Trinidad and Tobago for the warm hospitality extended to them and the excellent arrangements made for the Meeting. They also congratulated Prime Minister Manning for his able stewardship of the Meeting.

Fundamental Values and Principles: The Modern Commonwealth

In the 60th anniversary of the Modern Commonwealth, Heads of Government adopted the Trinidad and Tobago Affirmation on Commonwealth Values and Principles.

Membership – Rwanda Heads of Government considered the application of the Republic of Rwanda for membership of the Commonwealth, in accordance with the criteria and procedures agreed at their last meeting in 2007. They warmly welcomed Rwanda into the Commonwealth family as its 54th member.

Source: www.thecommonwealth.org
Also see pages 3, 8, 17 and 18 for more on CHOGM

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HIGH COMMISSIONER'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE DECEMBER 2009



His Excellency and Mrs Roberts

The hours of daylight are getting shorter, the weather is colder and for some of us our thoughts are turning to warmer climates. We tell ourselves that another winter has crept up on us. For many others there is no prospect or dream of a sojourn to warmer areas of the world. The reality being faced is one of survival. The primary aim is to provide or prepare a meal for the day. We must, however, also consider preparing our hearts for the message of Christmas.

The presence of the cold winds of winter reminds us also of the period of Advent; that special time leading up to Christmas when we recall and celebrate the coming of the Messiah – Jesus Christ into this world. It is also a time to take stock and assess what we have done throughout the last twelve months. The Radio Bible Class (RBC) Ministries “Our Daily Bread” text for 13th December called for reflection or “A Time for Re-adjustment”. This caption set me thinking.

In my Christmas message for the December 2008 Newsletter (Issue #130), I pointed out the many behavioural traits and “accomplishments” which characterise societies of today. I ask myself, if our Lord Jesus were to visit this world today, would he not chide us as he did the Sadducees and Pharisees of his time. It is therefore truly a time to re-adjust --- to bring things back in line with the life style which our Saviour demands of us all.

We have only to examine what is happening in Copenhagen to realise how much we need to re-adjust the way we live; the way we treat the world that our God has created for us to live in. How are we failing to heed the call to assist the poor and needy in the world around us especially at this period of Advent?

We have seen an increase in fighting, floods, hurricanes, typhoons, tornadoes and many other forms of activities which bring devastation on mankind. The effects of the recent financial crises are still with us. The level of uncertainty is still forcing many governments, companies and families to cut spending in an effort to mitigate against further deterioration in the quality of living and distress.

We can boast of tremendous achievements and yet there are still too many persons living below the poverty line. The wealth of the world is being enjoyed by the “few” at the expense of the “many”. We are finding it difficult to re-adjust our lifestyles to spread the benefits of the resources of the world and the technological advances we have achieved. We talk of pledges and not of commitment. The Bible speaks of service with words (our lips) and not with action (our hearts).

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We struggle with a commitment to do what is right, willing only to do and justify action for what is expedient.

I hope the outcome of the Conference of Parties in Copenhagen is the beginning of the much needed re-adjustment and that the decisions taken will be binding on all countries. The time for action is now and not some other time in the future.

Let us therefore as stated in the Daily Watchwords of the Moravian Church ask our Lord to "bring sanity, justice and peace to [our] wayward world".
 "...Teach us to reverence the earth and to care for other people. May we not harm anything that [God] has made, either by neglect, deliberate fault or thoughtless greed. May our care for the world and for others reflect [Our God], the Creator, Sustainer, and Lover of all".

Finally, I take this opportunity on behalf of my family, the staff of the High Commission, the Government of Antigua and Barbuda and of my own behalf, to wish all the readers of this publication Seasons Greetings. May the Season of Christmas and the expectations of the New Year bring an upliftment of our spirits. May the God, we serve, bless and protect each and everyone of us now and throughout the New Year (2010).

HC Dr Carl Roberts
High Commissioner

Statement on Commonwealth Action to Combat Non-Communicable Diseases

1. We, the Heads of Government of the Commonwealth, representing one third of the world's population, affirm our commitment to addressing the burgeoning incidence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), and to increasing the ability of our countries to respond to this emerging health crisis.

2. We recognise that NCDs presently account for over half of all world deaths worldwide and that they significantly reduce life expectancy, quality of life and productivity. They place growing pressures on our economies, thereby posing a serious threat to sustainable development.

3. We further note that poverty and NCDs are linked and that it is the poorest people who are most vulnerable to the impacts of these diseases. In many instances the costs associated with treating NCDs and related complications can push entire households into poverty, severely limiting family members' prospects for the future, especially those of women and girls, on whose shoulders

traditionally rests the burden of caring for the sick.

4. Noting the Action Plan on Non-Communicable Diseases adopted by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) during their 2007 Summit in Non-Communicable Diseases, we will work towards reducing the incidence of NCDs by fostering multi-sectoral policies and community-based initiatives to discourage tobacco use and unhealthy diets and to promote physical activity.

5. We will also work to fully integrate NCD prevention and control into our national health systems. In this regard, we will strengthen primary care to address the needs of people who are already facing NCDs, and support the universal access of essential medicines for people living with NCDs.

6. We firmly believe that the incidence and burdens of NCDs can be reduced through comprehensive and integrated preventative and control strategies at the individual, family, community, national and regional levels and through collaborative programmes, partnerships and policies supported by governments, the private sector,

NGOs and our other social, regional and international partners. We therefore call for global engagement of the private sector, civil society and governments in efforts to combat these diseases.

7. Aware that surveillance is key to effectively combating NCDs, we commit to support initiatives to include the monitoring of NCDs and their risk factors in existing national health information systems.

8. Noting that international cooperation is critical in addressing the phenomenon of NCDs, we call for their inclusion in global discussions on development, such as those which will occur within the framework of the ECOSOC 2010 Coordination Segment. We similarly declare our support for the call to integrate indicators to monitor the magnitude, trend and socio-economic impact of NCDs into the core MDG monitoring and evaluation system during the MDG Review Summit in 2010.

9. We further call for a Summit on NCDs to be held in September 2011, under the auspices of the United Nations General Assembly, in order to develop strategic responses to these diseases and their repercussions.



Wishing you all the joy of a Merry Christmas and good luck in the New Year



Prime Minister W. Baldwin Spencer Receives Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree from St. Francis Xavier University

Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda the Honourable Winston Baldwin Spencer was honoured on December 5th in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, Canada when the St. Francis Xavier University during its Fall Convocation conferred on him the degree Doctor of Laws *honoris causa*.

Prime Minister Spencer is a graduate of the Coady International Institute of St. Francis Xavier University where he studied Social Leadership and Community Development.

In reacting to the news that he will be honoured by his alma mater, Prime Minister Spencer said that he is humbled and honoured to be the recipient of an Honorary Degree from such a prestigious school of learning and progressive educational institution.

“Conscious of the fact that education is about knowledge and our ability to acquire it at all times and use it in a manner that would better our lives, I am encouraged even more to continue on my drive to expose as many young Antiguan and Barbudans to achieve tertiary level education.

As a politician I am usually at the giving end of the spectrum ensuring that the people of Antigua and Barbuda and the region are taken care of and provided with the necessary

support to ensure the ongoing growth and development of our small island states. So I am very much humbled by the decision of St. Francis Xavier University to give me this honour.

I must wholeheartedly express my gratitude to an institution that has given me the foundation to execute leadership principles and manage a process of social and economic development for the residents of Antigua and Barbuda,” Prime Minister Spencer said.

Prime Minister Spencer was also asked by the University to address the Convocation Ceremony which awards approximately 175 degrees and diplomas to graduates in Arts, Science, Education and Business Administration. In addition, approximately 46 graduates from the Coady International Institute were awarded with Diplomas in Development Leadership.

Prime Minister Spencer’s address to the graduates focussed on people’s participation in shaping ‘good citizens’ and building national capacity, which he said is important to him because the story of his life as a leader within organizations, communities and nationally, exemplifies the importance of people involvement in decision making processes and nation building.

“My message to the graduating class of 2009 and the students of St. Francis Xavier University was to always seek to become ‘Conscious Citizens’ actively participating in the process of nation building and utilizing what they have learned to positively shape their communities.”

Prime Minister Spencer has always pointed out that it was at Coady International Institute within the confines of St. Francis Xavier University, that he discovered the value of humility, responsibility, inclusivity and communication; an experience that exposed him to the basic philosophy of social leadership and cooperation for the good of all. These principles, he said have stayed with him and fashioned his thinking and understanding of life.

Last month, the Cabinet of Antigua and Barbuda agreed to institute an annual scholarship for a suitable qualified citizen who has displayed tangible commitment to community development and a desire to study at the Coady International Institute of St. Francis Xavier University.



Prayer before Christmas Dinner

God of all gifts, we thank you for the many ways you have blessed us this day. We are grateful for each of those who are gathered around this table. We ask you to bless us and our food and to bless those we love who are not with us today. In our gratitude and love, we remember your humble birth into our lives and pray for those who are without enough to eat. We remember the stable in which you were born and pray for those who have no place to live. We remember your challenging message of caring and giving and we pray for peace in families and nations throughout the world. We bless you and give you thanks in your Spirit who brings our hearts to life today Christmas Day and forever. Amen.

Source: Google

**Prime Minister The Honourable W. Baldwin Spencer
Message on the Occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of all
forms of Violence against Women**

November 25, 2009

My fellow Antiguan and Barbudans:

Today, November 25, is being observed around the world as International Day for the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women.

Here in Antigua and Barbuda, the Directorate of Gender Affairs is launching a series of activities aimed at highlighting this troubling issue. The activities, being held with the guidance and leadership of Dr. the Honourable Jacqui Quinn Leandro, Minister of Education, Sports, Youth and Gender Affairs, are aimed at mobilizing all well-thinking persons to play our part in bringing an end to violence against women.

I urge all Antiguan and Barbudans to participate fully in these public awareness activities which continue to December 10.

Our women are the backbone of the society and economy of Antigua and Barbuda. They are a critical part of the labour force in nearly every sector of the economy. Many are breadwinners for their families and a precious national resource that we must nurture and protect.

Above all, they are our mothers, sisters, wives, aunts, cousins and friends.

It is a sad fact therefore that, as reported by the United Nations Population Fund, around the world, one in every three women has been the victim of physical, sexual or some other form of abuse.

Today, I lend my voice as Prime Minister, to the international campaign to end violence against women and to highlight the problem as one which constitutes a fundamental violation of human rights.

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda remains committed to gender equality and to the protection

and empowerment of our women. In this regard, we have adopted, ratified and implemented various international conventions, which we regard seriously.

Only recently the Government supported a bipartisan motion in Parliament aimed at condemning and finding solutions to the dastardly acts of rape of women in Antigua.

However, the Government is not only talking about the protection of our women and girls. The State has a duty to ensure their safety as part of our solemn responsibility for the security of all our citizens and visitors to our islands.

We continue to provide the police with equipment and training to solve these and other crimes. We have introduced the **Evidence Act 2009** which allows for DNA evidence, witness protection, and electronic surveillance to fight serious crime including rapes and physical abuse.

As an integral part of the Government's overall platform for justice, peace and public safety in Antigua and Barbuda, the administration that I lead remains committed to introducing a Victims of Crime Bill of Rights. This will mandate that a victim of crime has a right:

- To be treated with fairness, respect, and dignity, and to be free from intimidation, harassment, or abuse, throughout the criminal justice process;
- To be informed, upon request, when the accused or convicted person is released from custody or has escaped;
- And to receive prompt restitution from a Victims of Crimes Relief Fund or from the person or persons



**The Honourable W. Baldwin Spencer
Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda**

convicted of the criminal conduct that caused the victim loss or injury.

On this important day, my solemn pledge to the women of Antigua and Barbuda is to redouble my own efforts and the will and work of the Government, to do everything possible to ensure their safety, security and continued development.

I call on all Antiguan and Barbudans to join in this campaign to end all forms of violence against women. I urge all men to resist the temptation to engage in any form of violence against women. Raping or beating any woman or girl is reprehensible and shameful and will be met with the full force of the law. Such actions do not make you a man.

Let us eradicate this scourge of violence against women from the otherwise beautiful face of our fair Antigua and Barbuda.

May God continue to bless Antigua and Barbuda.

May God continue to bless each and everyone of us.



CABINET STATEMENT
On the Passing of Founder and Chairman of the Board of the
University of Health Sciences, Antigua School of Medicine
Dr. Yele Akande

Cabinet at its weekly session on Thursday 12 November, 2009 noted with sadness the passing of Founder and Chairman of the Board of the University of Health Sciences, Antigua School of Medicine Dr. Yele Akande.

Dr. Yele Akande passed away on 24th October in Puerto Rico after a short period of illness.

Cabinet noted his over 27 years service in building an outstanding and internationally recognized medical school in Antigua and Barbuda. Cabinet also acknowledged his contributions to the nation through his charitable donations to organizations and individuals to pursue higher education in a wide range of areas to include law and international relations.

“Dr. Yele Akande’s service to Antigua and Barbuda in the field of education is exemplary having pioneered one of the first offshore medical schools within the Caribbean. He will always remain on Antigua and Barbuda’s roll of honour for his sterling contributions.”

Cabinet decided that Antigua and Barbuda’s Ambassador to the United States Her Excellency Deborah-Mae Lovell represent the Government and People of Antigua and Barbuda at the funeral service of Dr. Akande which was held in Chicago USA, on Saturday, November 14.

Cabinet expressed its condolences to Dr. Akande’s wife Dr. Deborah Akande and other members of the Akande family. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

**Everyday Science at
Holy Trinity Primary
School Barbuda.
West Indies**

by
Dr Sue Dale Tunnicliffe

Holy Trinity School on Barbuda has a class of enthusiastic young scientist who notice the everyday phenomena. They notice biological, particularly botanical, specimens in the everyday world outside school and brought them to their enthusiastic teacher, Mrs Henry, shown here holding up two such sets of specimens brought into school by her pupils.

Mrs Henry weaves them into her lesson planning so they combine science studies with those of literacy, particularly oracy and writing, as well as developing the science method unitising what is often referred to as Science Inquiry. On a recent visit to the class pictured in national dress as they were coming to the end of their week long literacy festival organised by Mrs Edrys Joseph Education, Officer for Zone 4, they had been



presenting to the rest of the school their interpretation of a Caribbean folk story involving biological specimens. They showed me their latest study investigating seeds and gravity.

The question asked by them was, "Does a root always grow down? If it does, is this in response to gravity? The class had designed an interrogation, which is shown in another photograph. They had soaked bean seeds first and then laid them in see-through containers in different directions and were observing what happened to the root and shoot as they emerged. The investigation was in its early stages at my visit and I look

forward to hearing the results and the comments from the class.

I recently highlighted the work of this class in the Elizabeth Johnson Memorial lecture which I co-delivered with Dr Caroline Pontefract, Director at the Commonwealth Secretariat of Social Programme Transformations, where we were stressing the role of women particularly in helping young children learn science, especially that of the everyday world.



**Antigua and Barbuda Association
celebrates 28 years of
Independence at St Matthias
Church on 1st November 2009**

**Address by Mrs Althea
Vanderpoole Banahene, Minister
Counsellor at the Antigua and
Barbuda High Commission**

**Worshipful Mayor, Councillors,
Distinguished Guests, President
and Executive Members of the
Antigua and Barbuda Association,
colleagues and friends of Antigua
and Barbuda, absent family -
absent friends - absent colleagues**

On 1st November 1981, Antigua and Barbuda started a new chapter in its history when it gained full independence from the United Kingdom. This bold step meant that our people made a commitment and accepted their individual and collective role in creating a nation that we could all be proud of – a nation state which could hold its own on a regional and international stage – a legacy upon which future generations may make reality the vision of our forefathers.

In this 28th year of Antigua and Barbuda's anniversary of independence the need to create a viable and self sustaining nation is ever more pressing. It is no secret that our country like many others, is going through very difficult social and economic times. Now in these 'guava times' we see the yawning divide between the 'Haves' and the 'Have Nots' in our country and the sometimes adverse impact this has on aspects of our daily lives such as crime rates, grocery shopping, unemployment, the increasing numbers of persons facing hard times.

On the 25th Anniversary of Independence in 2006, Prime Minister the Honourable Baldwin Spencer said, "There could be no better way of laying the strong and lasting foundation upon which, all of Antigua and Barbuda's sons and daughters, those who live here, as well as those

who traverse the globe, can work together, in building a model nation that will be a caring mother to all her children". This message in the Prime Minister's speech delivered three years ago, continues to ring true and even more resonant today. In hard times it is even more important that we all pull together. We must commit to working together as one family, interdependent and supportive of one another.

On the home front we must uplift our spirits by celebrating our achievements - a tonic, if you like, to fortify us as we dig deep to ensure our island nation rides out the storm. It is critical that we reignite our sense of pride, patriotism and togetherness.

This year's independence theme could not be more fitting – *Antigua and Barbuda One Family Reviving Our National Pride*.

What if each one of us here today makes one small contribution? Remember the days of growing up when we depended on our families abroad to send home their contributions no matter how small or no matter what. It could be gifts in the way of clothes, school fees, money for school uniform, couple bags of rice, sugar, a barrel of food, or other household items. No matter what it was, it was a contribution greatly appreciated and it was a help to families – and on a macro level – a boost to a flagging economy.

Friends we are at that time again and my appeal to you is for us to rally around. For example, make use of the Dollar Barrel Scheme which is in its fourth year of existence and will start on 15th November 2009 and ends 15th January 2010. The Department of Customs and the Antigua and Barbuda Port Authority are currently in the process of finalising arrangements for the smooth implementation of the Dollar Barrel initiative. The list of goods to be allowed, in the Dollar Barrel, are foodstuffs, clothing, toilet paper, toothpaste, deodorant, soap and shampoo.

Some tough decisions have to be made to increase revenue, reduce

expenditure and improve Antigua and Barbuda's debt position but we also have to make that commitment to help. Our people have lost their jobs, investments have crumbled but all is not in vain. Coming on stream in the first week in November, is Sugar Ridge 'round' south near Jolly Harbour. Sugar Ridge is a luxury four star resort with sixty hillside rooms overlooking the beautiful blue Caribbean Seas. The rooms are tastefully furnished in modern style but retaining the elegance of the Caribbean and its colonial influences.

Then, on 1st December 2009, after a US\$28 million transformation, is the new Jumby Bay Resort with a spa, open-air and bistro style restaurants, estate homes, suites and fully enhanced accommodations.

The stellar personal achievements of Antiguan and Barbudan nationals help to positively promote our country. Friends, bathe in their light, let their motivation and success inspire us. In celebrating them we celebrate much of what is good in our twin island state.

Imagine in our history we have a Daniel Bailey 100 metres sprinter, placing fourth in the World Athletic Championships this year. Antigua Dance Academy, a group of extremely talented young people, who were invited in August to tour Europe.

We need to support our local industries like Susie's Hotsauce owned by Mrs Rosie MacMaster, whom some of you would already know was recently awarded an MBE by Her Majesty The Queen. BUY LOCAL!! Purchase that guava cheese, pineapple jams, Brownie Bread, currant slice from Silver Street Bakery. Yumm... and don't think about the calories!! After all it's for a good cause – a way to preserve (literally and figuratively) our heritage and culture through food! Our forefathers fought for this land and we must preserve it for ourselves and our children. They fought for voting rights for all and the right for our people to earn a living wage. Our national flag is symbolic of this achievement and the standard which we must follow as we look to the future – building on the achievements of our forefathers.

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'Investing in young people' A Declaration on young people by Commonwealth Heads of Government

We, the Commonwealth Heads of Government welcome the emphasis on young people in this, the sixtieth year since the foundation of the modern Commonwealth, with its theme of thecommonwealth@60: 'serving a new generation'. We acknowledge with gratitude the role and active contributions of young people in promoting development, peace, democracy, and in protecting and promoting other Commonwealth values such as tolerance and understanding, including respect for other cultures. We recognise that the future successes of the Commonwealth rest with the continued commitments and contributions in these ways of our young people.

We appreciate the views and outcomes of young people that have been conveyed to us from the Commonwealth Youth Forum. We note young people's calls to be involved as agents of peace-building, and as agents for awareness of - and response to - climate change. We also hear young people's call to be facilitated as drivers of economic development, as young entrepreneurs.

We note the principles of youth development endorsed by Commonwealth Youth Ministers, and affirm our own support for the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment.

We endorse coherence in the national, regional and global dimensions of advancing supportive policies towards youth. We also recognise the benefits of engaging youth at all levels of policy dialogue and curriculum development.

In this respect, we reaffirm our support for promoting 'youth mainstreaming', and recognise in particular the benefits of sharing best practice and knowledge of mainstreaming, to assist ministries and stakeholders in building comprehensive and coherent youth-related policies for national needs.

We endorse the project by the Commonwealth Secretariat to develop a comprehensive and replenished resource bank on youth affairs, consisting of data, best practices and thinking in this field, as a reference tool for the development of ambitious and coherent national policies by member states.

We commend the Commonwealth Secretariat on its work to date in supporting the establishment of national youth plans and national youth councils in member countries.

We note with concern that unemployment affects young people more than any other social group. We acknowledge the work of the pilot Commonwealth Youth Credit Initiative, and encourage initiatives to expand the scheme, and to support comprehensive skills development for youth in partnership with civil society and business.

We seek to enhance the CYCI, by turning it into an integrated and holistic enterprise development programme, which is built

around comprehensive and mutually reinforcing skills development, funding, and mentorship. We pledge to support the new initiative, which should engage a considerably wider range of funders and partners, including our own Ministries of Youth, international finance institutions, regional organisations, banks, and businesses. We welcome initial and generous donations that have been made by Asian and African Banks to support further growth in this area.

We also appeal for voluntary contributions for special youth initiatives including the Commonwealth Young Professionals Programme, and the network of Centres of Excellence based in the four CYP Regional Centres.

We recommend that greater partnerships with national and international actors, including inter-generational alliances, be engendered towards the fulfilment of the youth development vision of the Commonwealth.

We recognise the opportunities for young people provided by the Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships Programme (CSFP), celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2009.

We express our appreciation for initial commitments of £1.6 million to date made towards the CSFP Anniversary Endowment Fund, and anticipate the Fund receiving further political and financial support.

**Port of Spain
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
29 November 2009**

CDB Board approves US\$30 million loan for Antigua and Barbuda

The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) has approved the US\$30 million loan request by the government to assist in implementing its fiscal consolidation programme.

Finance and Economy Minister Harold Lovell made the revelation in Parliament recently, noting that approval was given by the board of the CDB last week.

Minister Lovell said the exact programme promoted in the budget presentation and during the recent public consultations was the same

presented to the CDB, which ultimately proved favourable. "I think the fact that this money was approved, demonstrates the confidence the Caribbean Development Bank has, with regard to the plan that we put forward, which we consider to be realistic," the Finance Minister indicated.

The loan is one of several being sought after by the government to effect the National Economic and Social Transformation Plan (NEST). Discussions are also ongoing with other organisations, including the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

The Finance Minister stated that the very plan presented to the CDB is the one that will be used in continued

discussions with the IMF in January 2010. Minister Lovell pointed out that they expect to finalise arrangements with the international lending organisation early next year.

"We are showing them we're going to be serious and disciplined. We do not need anyone from outside to tell us if we operate outside the parameters we'll get into trouble," Mr Lovell noted.

He revealed that a major condition of the IMF is that every aspect of the country's debt structure must be current. Such discipline, he said, is needed in the country in going forward, so that a new approach can be developed in dealing with development challenges.

Source: www.antiguasunonline.com

Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority awards Top Producers

The Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority acknowledged and awarded a select group of tourism partners for their contributions to tourism in Antigua and Barbuda, at their annual Appreciation Party, on board the luxurious MV Silver Sturgeon in London on November 6.

The Authority organized the awards ceremony to recognize the destination's top UK producers.

"We are delighted to present these awards to those partners, whose work has been instrumental in helping us to reposition the destination", said UK



Hilary Modeste (centre) - UK Director of Tourism, Sir Vivian Richards (left) and Richie Richardson (GCM) greeting Tourism Partners



Cherrie Osborne - UK Office - Administration and Marketing Manager with Tourism partners

Director of Tourism, P. Hilary Modeste.

The award for Travel Journalist of the Year, was presented to Fiona Sims for her article "Finding a Foodie Paradise in Antigua" that appeared in The Times.

The article, provided a mouth watering insight into the food and recipes of

Antigua, and highlighted the skills on an exceptional chef, located at Hermitage Bay, one of Antigua's most beautiful properties. It also drew attention to some of Antigua's most popular and noteworthy restaurants.

UK Tour Operator, Thomas Cook received the award for "Tour Operator with the Largest Increase for 2009" while the "Top Selling Tour Operator



Joel Henry (left) Marketing and Business Development Executive and Maria Blackman (right) - Marketing and Communications Executive, both at the UK-Tourist Office

for the Year" award was presented to Virgin Atlantic.

Special guests at the event included, Sir Vivian Richards and Richie Richardson (GCM) as well as Managing Director of Susie's Hot Sauce, Rosie Mc Master (MBE).

**by
Maria Blackman
Marketing and Communications
Executive
Antigua and Barbuda Tourism
Authority - UK Tourist Office**

Antigua and Barbuda means business at World Travel Market

Antigua and Barbuda made its presence felt in London at World Travel Market(WTM), the premier global event for the travel industry which ran this year, from November 9 – 12.

Antigua and Barbuda's Minister of Tourism John Maginley, CEO of the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority Colin C. James, UK Director of Tourism Hilary Modeste, and Marketing Manager, Cherrie Osborne held meetings with key tourism stakeholders in the UK.

Earlier in the week, meetings were held with senior representatives from Virgin Holidays, British Airways and a number of major tour operators.

Tourism Minister John Maginley said that "WTM is proving to be a great opportunity to meet with our top producing tour operators and our airline partners. "We are receiving excellent feedback from our partners, and are being told that with our recent marketing initiatives that Antigua and



Pictured above, left to right:- Dan McCauley of Sugar Ridge, Sir Vivian Richards, Tourism Minister Hon. John Maginley, Richie Richardson and Aiden McCauley, owner of Sugar Ridge

A number of specific joint marketing activities, to begin in the coming year, have been agreed with Antigua and Barbuda's partners in the UK.

With these plans in the pipeline, as well as promotions initiated by the UK office such as the "Kids Fly Free" offer

stronger arrival figures from the UK market for 2010.

Meetings were also held with tour operators and by the end of the WTM activities, the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority and Ministry of Tourism met over forty partners in the travel and tourism industry.

Also in London, conducting meetings at World Travel Market, were Neil Forrester of the Antigua Hotel and Tourist Association, along with representatives from Blue Waters Hotel, Jolly Beach Resort and Spa, Carlisle Bay, Hermitage Bay, Royal Antiguan Beach and Tennis Resort, Sugar Ridge, JHR Caribbean Real Estate, Jumby Bay Resort, National Tours and FBO 2000.

The Antigua and Barbuda stand was abuzz with activity for the week, with Sugar Ridge, Antigua and Barbuda's newest resort officially introducing itself to press gathered at WTM. The 2009/2010 Antigua and Barbuda Travel Guides, The Antiguan, Beautiful Barbuda and The Treasure Island Guides were also launched at the stand.



Tourism Minister John Maginley in conversation with tourism partners

Barbuda is regaining market share. This is great news for us."

which began recently, the office is confident that Antigua and Barbuda is now better positioned to receive

Well-known Antigua and Barbuda former West Indies Cricketers Sir Vivian Richards and Richie



High Commissioner Dr Carl Roberts and Mr Lesroy Browne of LIAT having talks at World Travel Market held in London November 9 - 12.

Richardson, also spent the last two the Antigua and Barbuda stand, cricket bats, and participating in a days creating additional excitement at meeting with fans, signing miniature series of media interviews.



(left) Sir Viv and Richie admiring cricket hat to be auctioned for charity



Article by Maria Blackman Marketing and Communications Executive Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority

Ambassador Lovell pays tribute to the work of Sir Clare Roberts at the OAS

At a Special meeting of the Permanent Council of the Organization of the American States, called to mark the anniversary of the three Human Rights institutions of the OAS on Wednesday 11 November, 2009, Ambassador Deborah-Mae Lovell, Antigua and Barbuda's Permanent Representative to the OAS, paid tribute to the stellar work rendered to the hemisphere by prominent jurist of Antigua and Barbuda, Sir Clare Roberts.

Sir Clare, who was in attendance at the meeting, was bringing to an end a successful eight year tenure on the Commission of Human Rights where he was highly respected by his peers. He served not only as Second Vice President and First Vice President respectively but also secured the position of the Presidency when he was re-elected to the Commission by

a landslide victory at the OAS General Assembly, held in Fort Lauderdale, Florida in 2005.

During his tenure, Commissioner Roberts chalked up many accomplishments. Most notably, he was the Rapporteur for both Haiti and for the Afro-Descendants in the hemisphere. In this latter role, he worked to shine a light on the conditions of life for that demographic that is often invisible and often marginalized in Latin America.

In her presentation, Ambassador Lovell praised Sir Clare's razor-sharp intellect, his love of the law and his passion for justice and said that he had brought considerable heft to the work of the Commission. She added that his brothers and sisters in Antigua and Barbuda all hail his remarkable achievement.



Ambassador Deborah-Mae Lovell and Sir Clare Roberts

This Special Meeting of the Permanent Council was called to commemorate the anniversaries of the following Human Rights institutions of the Inter-American System: The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Commission of Human Rights; the Fortieth Anniversary of the Convention of Human Rights and the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Court of Human Rights.

OSFI conducts Training at Financial Services Regulatory Commission

The Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions (OSFI) of Canada, as part of its technical assistance to Antigua and Barbuda's Financial Services Regulatory Commission the FSRC, completed a four day in-house training session on insurance regulation last week. The facilitators were Messrs Jean Sarazin and Bruce Thompson, senior officers of OSFI, an institution widely regarded as one of the leading financial regulatory agencies in the world.

This is the fourth time in less than two years that the FSRC has teamed up with OSFI to conduct training for its staff. During the four-day exercise, the instructors introduced participants to various techniques essential for the effective supervision of a modern insurance industry. Some of the key areas covered included: (1) capital adequacy, (2)

re-insurance arrangements, (3) loss claim reserves and (4) solvency requirements.

The training exercise forms part of an ongoing initiative by the Board of Directors of the FSRC to strengthen its overall supervisory and regulatory oversight and to improve its human resource capacity by obtaining training from reputable international institutions. The training came as an implementation strategy by the Board in conjunction with new legislative and regulatory changes that will reshape the insurance industry. Assistance has also been received from other agencies to include (CARTAC), The Caribbean Regional Technical Assistance Centre.

The Chairman of the Board, Miss Althea Crick on behalf of the FSRC and the people of Antigua & Barbuda expressed the Board's appreciation and thanks to OSFI for providing the technical assistance at this critical juncture in the re-structuring of the FSRC and its new responsibility for the insurance sector. Previously, the

FSRC's mandate extended only to international insurance companies.

Meanwhile, On November 5th, 2009, the Commission met with key stakeholders of the industry at the Ministry of Finance Headquarters in an effort to dialogue and consult with them and to sensitize them about issues relevant to their sector. The FSRC will institute measures to obtain full compliance with the new Insurance Act, which came into effect on April 15, 2009.

On January 1, 2009 The Financial Services Regulatory Commission assumed supervisory oversight of the domestic insurance sector as mandated under the International Business Corporation Act amendment of 2002.



Antigua and Barbuda holds Successful Meeting with European Community

Antigua and Barbuda is set to receive further technical and financial assistance from the European Union following high level talks in Brussels by a team from St. John's.

Making the disclosure, National Authorizing Officer for the European Development Fund, Ambassador Dr. Clarence Henry, back from a series of talks with the European Commission services explained that the talks primarily focused on possible areas of engagement, cooperation and the acquisition of assistance to further strengthen the capacity of the Financial Services Regulatory Commission (FSRC).

The Antigua and Barbuda delegation also included Ms. Althea Crick - Chairman of the FSRC and Board Member, Ms. Donna Chaia.

According to Ambassador Henry, throughout the talks they underscored the fact that Antigua and Barbuda is committed to the principles of transparency and recognizes its obligations under international law and will continue to comply with commitments under the tax information exchange agreements concluded on the basis of OECD internationally agreed standards.

The mission followed negotiations leading to the conclusion of the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) Country Support Paper (CSP) between the European Commission (EC) and Antigua and Barbuda, the impact of the Allen Stanford debacle and the global financial and economic



The Brussels Team

crisis on the economy; increasing pressure of the international community to seek renewed commitment from developing countries with perceived tax havens to honour obligations and Prime Minister Spencer's request for technical assistance at the CARIFORUM-European Commission dialogue on Regional Cooperation and Integration in Antigua on 18 July 2009.

Describing the Mission as "very successful" Ambassador Henry indicated that, among other things, the Commission expressed commitment to increasing the 10th EDF allocation of Euro 3.4 million, the dispatch of technical experts to assist the FSRC, and support for the convening of an international meeting in Antigua in 2010 on financial services attracting representatives from EU Member States, other donor agencies and CARIFORUM Member States.

Head of the EC Directorate for Development, John Caloghirou, described the mission as "a break

through trip" having "greatly changed perceptions about Antigua and Barbuda" and should be regarded as an "investment that will later bring benefits".

Similarly, Mr. Philip Kermode, Head of the Directorate General for Taxation and Custom Union, wrote confirming the commitment of technical assistance to "help Antigua and Barbuda to implement the principles of good governance in the tax area". According to Kermode, the "Directorate General Development, Directorate general EuropeAid and EC delegation are currently working on how the practical aspects of such technical assistance could be provided".

Meanwhile, during the recent OECS 50th meeting of the Authority in Anguilla, 18-20 November 2009, Antigua and Barbuda updated and received the support of the Sub-Region on the engagement with the EC, and also disclosed Europe's willingness to commence similar dialogue with the rest of other OECS Member States.

The High Commissioner and Staff would like to take this opportunity to wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year

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How fitting is the motto of our nation "Each Endeavouring All Achieving"? In the words of its composer, James H Carrott MBE, "the concept was created to provide inspiration to each Antiguan and Barbudan to recognize that the development of the whole country would be a benefit to all, but, that development, required the **effort of each individual**".

We all have a personal responsibility to help make this nation thrive. On two occasions I have spoken about our principles and values and our responsibilities to our children and to our country.

The Golden Sun of the flag represents the dawn of a new era. This 28th year of Independence has to be the dawn of a new era, new ideals and new commitments to improve tourism figures to our islands. It is worth noting that the recent drive with Virgin Atlantic, hotels and tour operators in the UK has meant that tourism figures are set to increase even more than expected and it is anticipated that increased number of visitors will visit our shores in 2010. With more visitors to our country we need to be ready to take advantage of this opportunity. Let's ensure that we are READY.

As nationals we are troubled by the increasing incidents of crime and the number of settlers in our country. Our Government, spearheaded by the Ministry of National Security and Labour has outlined plans for handling and reviewing our current immigration policies. Since July there has been a national consultation on immigration both in Antigua and also in Barbuda. The objective is to look at the issues raised relating to the current immigration policy which is outdated and is not reflective of the labour challenges facing the country, work permit schemes, citizenship, voting

rights of temporary residents etc and then devise a policy which best fulfils the needs of the country. Immigration Officers will also be retrained.

On the matter of crime, our Government has engaged, in a joint venture, the expertise of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office through an Agency called the National Policing Improvement Agency which looks at delivering specialised training to Senior Officers on forensics, analysis of crime including rape and sexual assaults, intelligence gathering, technology for crime detection and finger printing. There are currently ten Senior Officers undergoing this training along with fellow colleagues from Montserrat, Anguilla and Bermuda. There is also talk of developing a Special Type of Constabulary of trained volunteers who provide a link between the police and the community. Thus such a force would provide a heavier presence in communities with high crime rates and it is hoped that these initiatives would go a long way into addressing crime in the area.

Freedom and independence come with responsibility and accountability. It is our land, it is home and it is our children's future. We need to give ourselves freely to the service of our country and not wait solely on others. To improve the quality of our lives within our own families and communities we need to develop a more caring society.

Charity begins at home. So perhaps one area we could look at, is how we can provide access to, and deliver high standard outreach services to our elderly, in particular, those who are still in their homes, so that they can remain as independent for as long as possible and retain their dignity.. Can we help in some small way? When we help our people and our community we help our country.

The Red in the flag represents the dynamism of our people. We are a strong people with deep founded roots. So let us live up to that after all "a Antigua me come from - me come from Barbuda". This expression brings a strong sense of ownership, it is said with such depth of meaning that it is as if it were the panacea, the "cure all" for whatever may ail us or challenge us. It is home.

Blue and White are the emblems of our tourism and the industry that brings revenue to our shores and creates jobs for our people. Therefore we must do everything in our power to safeguard that industry in spite of the current challenges we are facing with climate change, the increase in airport departure duty (APD) and swine flu.

Let us make a personal pledge: Support the hawksbill turtle conservation project on Jumby Bay Long Island. When we go the beach do not leave our rubbish behind, take rubbish bags pick up any rubbish around; preserve the environment. After all "the beach is just the beginning".

To conclude, forgive me - I have exercised some artistic license in choosing some salient themes from our National Anthem. Let us be directed by some of these phrases which give true meaning to who we are, where we are and where we should be going:

*"God of Nations let Thy Blessing fall upon this land of ours,
We commit ourselves to building a true nation brave and free,
Answer now to duty's call to the service of our country,
Sparing Nothing Giving All."*

One Nation One Family!

Thank you and Happy Independence



Merry Christmas

And Best Wishes for the New Year



**GOVERNMENTS OF THE
EASTERN CARIBBEAN
CURRENCY UNION (ECCU)
AGREE ON STRATEGY FOR
BRANCHES OF BRITISH
AMERICAN INSURANCE
COMPANY IN
THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN**

Introduction

For several months, the Governments of the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union (ECCU) have carefully monitored growing public concern about the financial situation of British American Insurance Company Limited (BAICO) and other subsidiaries of its Trinidadian parent company, C L Financial. BAICO itself is a private, limited liability company incorporated in the Bahamas. Nevertheless, the sheer size of BAICO and the significant exposure of the Eastern Caribbean have made it imperative for the ECCU Governments to adopt a proactive and collective approach to this challenge.

At the end of July/early August of this year, regulators in the ECCU and The Bahamas intervened in the operations of BAICO and applied to Courts in the several jurisdictions to appoint Judicial Managers. Consequently, Judicial Managers were appointed in all ECCU countries with branches of BAICO except Dominica. Since Dominica's law does not provide for the appointment of a Judicial Manager, the Judicial Manager for BAICO (The Bahamas) appointed an agent to take control of the affairs of the branch in Dominica.

To facilitate cooperation, expedition and reduce costs, these "ECCU" Judicial Managers were all appointed from among professionals of a single group, namely the highly respected firms of chartered accountants known as "KPMG". Except for Dominica, the full reports of these Judicial Managers were filed with the respective Courts last Friday, October 30, 2009. Dominica's report will be filed soon.

Key Findings of Judicial Managers

The reports of the Judicial Managers reveal that:

· **The liabilities of the BAICO branches in the Eastern Caribbean total EC\$1.05 billion.** Of this sum, EC\$842.4 million are annuities or investment contracts.

· There are branches in Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, Dominica, Montserrat, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

· **British American Insurance Company Limited, a Bahamian company operated out of Trinidad, with branches throughout the Eastern Caribbean is insolvent. As of June 30, 2009 (unaudited financial statements), the deficiency was EC\$775 million.** This deficiency may increase as there are significant concerns regarding the values attributed to some of BAICO's intra-group assets, for example a loan note due from CL Financial and its US property investments.

· **The branches of BAICO in the Eastern Caribbean are not stand-alone legal entities.** As a result, the liabilities of these branches are the liabilities of BAICO and the assets of these branches are the assets of BAICO unless such assets have been legitimately set aside for the benefit of local policyholders.

· **There is only approximately EC\$30 million of assets set aside (pledged) in the Eastern Caribbean.**

· **An amount of EC\$301 million was taken from the branches in the Eastern Caribbean to fund certain inter-company transactions including the purchase of property in Florida, United States of America. The Judicial Managers have filed a petition in US Court to be recognized in bankruptcy proceedings started by BAICO to obtain relief under Chapter 15 of the US Bankruptcy Code.** This relief, if granted, will stay all actions against BAICO in the US and will allow the Judicial Managers to have a voice in any decisions regarding the distribution of the US assets.

· **In the event of a liquidation of BAICO, policyholders will not be paid in full.** Indeed, it is probable that if BAICO was liquidated, policyholders will only get 10 cents on their dollar. This means if you have an annuity of \$1000, you would only receive \$100.

The facts revealed in the Judicial Managers reports are troubling to say the least.

However, they are not entirely unanticipated, for over the past few months many of the grim facts concerning BAICO's financial status have become public knowledge. Moreover, the Governments of the ECCU have actively sought to obtain a better understanding of the situation with a view to becoming part of the solution. After considerable discussion and planning, a new entity was proposed to salvage the ailing ECCU operations of BAICO and we have worked for several months to make this a reality.

Mindful of the grave consequences if British American is liquidated, and having consulted with ECCU Governments, the Judicial Managers' Reports have now endorsed this approach for the creation of a new entity and we are optimistic that their recommendations will be accepted by the Court. In that event, the ECCU governments stand ready to participate in the proposed new entity with a view to protecting the interests of regional policyholders and annuitants.

It is clear from the Judicial Managers' Reports that BAICO is insolvent and that without a substantial capital injection, policyholders and investors would suffer tremendous losses. **It is with this in mind that the ECCU governments are pleased to announce that we have agreed upon a strategy to assist the Judicial Managers in the structuring and funding of the proposed new entity to take over certain of the assets and liabilities of BAICO in the Eastern Caribbean.**

While the details of this strategy will require a great deal more work, both in collaboration with the Judicial Managers of the region and in collaboration with potential strategic partners, it is a real opportunity, perhaps the only real opportunity, to avoid some of the inevitable losses associated with liquidation and to offer policyholders and investors the potential for recovery of a greater portion of their assets and investments.

The Resolution Strategy (The Plan)

The Plan is predicated on four guiding principles, which were endorsed by the Monetary Council at its meeting in Dominica on July 10, 2009. They are:

- (i) To ensure that British American does not become a systemic risk to the financial system;
- (ii) To protect, as far as practicable, the interests of depositors and investors;
- (iii) To keep British American as a "going concern" in a form to be determined; and
- (iv) To craft a solution that is regional in nature.

The Council also approved the appointment of a Ministerial Sub-Committee on Insurance to provide oversight on this important matter. The Sub-Committee comprises: Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves of St. Vincent and the Grenadines (Chairman), Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerit of Dominica, Minister Nazim Burke of Grenada and Minister Timothy Harris of St. Kitts and Nevis. This Committee is supported by a

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Core Technical Team and a Committee of Regulators. All have been working diligently on this matter for several months.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW INSURANCE COMPANY

The proposed new company would have its headquarters in the Eastern Caribbean and would assume the traditional life insurance, medical insurance and annuity business of British American branches in the Eastern Caribbean.

The challenge posed by BAICO's insolvency is not only a concern for the Eastern Caribbean, it is a regional problem. BAICO, though incorporated in the Bahamas has its operational headquarters in Trinidad and Tobago through its parent company. Questions relating to corporate governance and management by the CL Financial Group certainly arise, especially in view of the apparent use of monies from BAICO policy holders in the Eastern Caribbean to fund risky real estate investments in Florida and elsewhere. Indeed, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago intervened into the operations of CL Financial earlier this year and entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with that company in an attempt to address some of these issues.

Consistent with the principle of crafting a solution which is regional in nature, the new company will be capitalized by ECCU Governments, the Government of Trinidad & Tobago, the Government of Barbados, and one or more strategic investors. Policyholders may also have an opportunity to obtain equity in the new company.

Of course, it is evident from the extent of BAICO's deficits that some losses will be inevitable. Policyholders should not expect the new company to cover all the benefits and interest to which they may be entitled from BAICO. Intrinsic in the high returns offered by BAICO is a certain level of risk for which policyholders must accept some responsibility. The capital injection required to preserve even the principal amounts invested by policyholders is daunting. Thus the goal in funding the new company will be primarily to cover as far as possible the principal amounts invested by ECCU policyholders and annuitants.

The process of forming and funding the proposed new company is one that will take some time. Indeed even after the company is established, it will take time before there is sufficient liquidity to allow for payouts to any policyholders. Policyholders and annuitants should

therefore not expect to have immediate access even to those funds which may ultimately be recoverable.

The Court may ultimately find that it is in the best interests of policyholders to approve a plan which proposes a reduction in future interest rates as well as a reduction in accrued interest. Annuitants may be required to continue to invest their funds for a prescribed time and/or may have options to acquire equity in the new entity. These details are still being worked out. The Governments of the ECCU are committed to preserving the principal investments of its citizens and residents in BAICO as far as practicable. However, British American policyholders need to be realistic about what they are likely to recover. Every policyholder and annuitant of BAICO will have a critical role to play in ensuring the success of the proposed recovery plan.

At this juncture, it important to reiterate two things: if British American is liquidated, policyholders are likely to get 10 cents on the dollar. If the Court approves this plan, policyholders will recover some funds and may have an opportunity to participate in mechanisms for an even more substantial recovery over time.

Much work remains to be done but the ECCU Governments wish to see the new company set up within six (6) months of Court approval of the plan.

ESTABLISHMENT OF A MEDICAL CLAIMS SUPPORT FUND

The Governments of the ECCU are keenly aware of persons who are awaiting funds from British American to settle their medical insurance claims. It is understood that there may be as many as 7,700 medical insurance policyholders in the Eastern Caribbean.

Governments are especially concerned about such persons and recognize the fundamental importance of health care for the well-being of our people and the development of our region. As a consequence, and for a limited period pending the establishment of the new company, the ECCU Governments have agreed to establish a Medical Claims Support Fund. The resources for this Fund will come from the Liquidity Support Fund that was established earlier this year.

The intention here is that the Governments will provide resources to assist, within certain parameters, those ECCU policy holders who would otherwise have been entitled to receive payments of claims under BAICO medical policies. It should be noted that this fund will be an independent, governmental fund rather than a part of the

existing BAICO operations. However, the establishment of this fund will require some collaboration with the Judicial Managers and will ultimately need to be incorporated into the proposed new company. Thus, it too will likely require court approval before full implementation. It should be noted that this Fund will not apply to holders of annuities who are seeking funds to pay medical needs. Annuitants can expect some recovery only after the establishment of the proposed new company.

TRANSFER OF THE PROPERTY INSURANCE PORTFOLIO

The ECCU Governments further endorse the recommendation of the Judicial Managers to transfer BAICO's property insurance portfolio within the ECCU to an existing insurer, rather than including it in the assets of the proposed new company.

The reasons for this decision are several, however among the most compelling is the fact that BAICO's reinsurers have cancelled reinsurance contracts with British American due to its insolvency. Given the size of the ECCU property insurance portfolio (3500 policyholders), the cost of such reinsurance is prohibitive at this time.

The Governments of the ECCU are of the view that ECCU property insurance policyholders would be best served by the proposed transfer to ensure that all property claims can properly be met. Once again, it must be noted that this proposed transfer is subject to Court approval.

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS ON CLICO

CLICO Holdings Barbados Ltd is another subsidiary of the Trinidadian company C. L. Financial Limited. The Governments of the ECCU are aware that some CLICO companies in the Eastern Caribbean have recently been slow in paying claims.

Once again it should be noted that this is a private company. Nevertheless, in the interest of the public, the Governments of the ECCU and Barbados are in an ongoing dialogue on the status of CLICO Holdings (Barbados) which is the parent company for all CLICO branches in the Eastern Caribbean. The Government of Barbados has informed that two CLICO subsidiary companies, CLICO Mortgage Finance Company and CLICO General Insurance, have already been sold and discussions underway for the sale of CLICO International Life Insurance. It is the understanding of ECCU Governments that the completion of these sales will provide CLICO Holdings (Barbados) with resources to meet its obligations to all of its

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Civil Society Findings Presented to Commonwealth Foreign Ministers

A Voice for Change.

As Heads of State gathered in Trinidad and Tobago for the 2009 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, civil society organisations sent a clear message that they are core to the very being of the Commonwealth.

They presented a statement addressing the CHOGM theme to Commonwealth Foreign Ministers on Wednesday 25 November, which focused on the need for concerted action to address the economic downturn and climate change. It also made reference to the need to uphold universal human rights across the 53 member states.

It was developed by citizen's organisations, faith groups, artists groups, trade unions and professional associations from more than 50 countries. They met ahead of CHOGM at the Commonwealth People's Forum (CPF) to debate issues on the Commonwealth's agenda.

Speaking at the CPF closing session, the Minister for Social Development in Trinidad and Tobago, Dr Amery Browne said;

"Solutions lie not just at the level of the Heads and Parliaments but at constructive gatherings of the peoples of the Commonwealth."

He went on to say; "Solutions require the inputs of those most involved. You have given the nearly two billion people of the Commonwealth an avenue to air their concerns and by extension enable their participation in the decision making process."

Commonwealth Foundation Director, Dr Mark Collins said the civil society statement was;

"a reflection of the concerns and aspirations of the Commonwealth people and that it must be used by civil society as their guide over the next two years to achieve great things."

Dr Collins also pledged to use the statement to form and influence the work of the Commonwealth Foundation, organisers of the CPF. He talked about the pride that civil society has in the statement they produced and he thanked the Minister

for making it clear that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and those of the wider Commonwealth will stand together with civil society as they work towards partnering for a more equitable and sustainable future. Chair of the CPF Steering Committee, Ms Beverly Beckles quoted opening plenary speaker Angela Cropper when she talked about civil society being the "make happeners" of change. Ms Beckles commended the National Secretariat and the Commonwealth Foundation for their organisation of an event that enables civil society to convene and dialogue and present to their governments solutions for change.

Note:

The Commonwealth Foundation is an intergovernmental organisation established in 1965, resourced by and reporting to Commonwealth governments, and guided by Commonwealth values and priorities. Its aims are to strengthen civil society in the achievement of Commonwealth priorities - democracy and good governance, respect for human rights and gender equality, poverty eradication and sustainable, people-centred development, and to promote arts and culture.

Taxation necessary for fiscal balance

"In order to deal with the fiscal imbalance of this country, we need to look at the fiscal equation of revenue and expenditure," were the sentiments echoed by leader of government business in the Upper House Senator Errol Cort while delivering his remarks on the 2010 Budget.

Dr. Cort said that to begin to close the fiscal gap, the government has to begin to look at ways to increase its revenue, despite complaints from all walks of society.

"A measure of the tax burden in any country could be grasped by taking your tax to GDP ratio and looking at that, your tax revenues as a percentage of the total value of goods and services produced and see where we are with that and that statistic is one that is being used widely to give a sense of the tax burden of the country".

Dr. Cort said that prior to 2004 the tax burden on the people of this country was in the region of about 17 per cent and when compared to the tax burden in the other OECS countries this ranges between 25 -31 per cent which clearly indicates that there is still room from Antigua and Barbuda to increase revenue via taxation.

"This is not based on jamming any one from any particular sector of society but just on the facts of the matter," he said.

Dr Cort indicated that his government was able to overhaul the taxation system in 2004 when they took office first with the Personal Income Tax (PIT).

He continued that in the absence of the PIT there were major loop holes as individuals were able to set up companies and channel all their profits to themselves.



Senator The Honourable Dr Errol Cort

Source: antiguasunonline.com

Port of Spain Climate Change Consensus: The Commonwealth Climate Change Declaration

The Challenge of Our Time

1. Climate change is the predominant global challenge. We convened a Special Session on Climate Change in Port of Spain to discuss our profound concern about the undisputed threat that climate change poses to the security, prosperity, economic and social development of our people. For many it is deepening poverty and affecting the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. For some of us, it is an existential threat.

2. We reaffirm our commitment to the Lake Victoria Commonwealth Climate Change Action Plan and its further implementation, in particular by contributing to the efforts of member states in transforming their economies and strengthening the capacity and voice of vulnerable groups.

3. We recognise the unprecedented opportunity of our meeting just ahead of the 15th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen. We approach Copenhagen with ambition, optimism and determination. We welcome the attendance of leaders at the Copenhagen conference. The needs of the most vulnerable must be addressed. Their voice must be heard and capacity to engage strengthened. Many of us from small island states, low-lying coastal states and least developed countries face the greatest challenges, yet have contributed least to the problem of climate change.

4. In keeping with the spirit of the theme of CHOGM 2009, 'Partnering for a more equitable and sustainable future', we warmly welcomed the United Nations Secretary-General, the Prime Minister of Denmark and the President of France.

5. We represent a third of the world's population in all continents and oceans, and more than one quarter of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. We have the global reach and diversity to help forge the inclusive global solutions needed to combat climate change.

6. Science, and our own experience, tells us that we only have a few short years to address this threat. The average global temperature has risen because of the

increase in carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions. The latest scientific evidence indicates that in order to avoid dangerous climate change that is likely to have catastrophic impacts we must find solutions using all available avenues. We must act now.

7. We believe an internationally legally binding agreement is essential. We pledge our continued support to the leaders-driven process guided by the Danish Prime Minister and his efforts to deliver a comprehensive, substantial and operationally binding agreement in Copenhagen leading towards a full legally binding outcome no later than 2010. In Copenhagen we commit to focus our efforts on achieving the strongest possible outcome.

Copenhagen and Beyond

8. A global climate change solution is central to the survival of peoples, the promotion of development and facilitation of a global transition to a low emission development path. The agreement in Copenhagen must address the urgent needs of developing countries by providing financing, support for adaptation, technology transfer, capacity-building, approaches and incentives for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and for afforestation and sustainable management of forests.

9. In addition, we will strive to significantly increase technological and technology support to developing countries to facilitate the deployment and diffusion of clean technologies through a range of mechanisms. We will work to facilitate and enable the transition to low emission economies, climate resilience, and in particular, support, including through capacitybuilding, for increasing the climate resilience of vulnerable economies. We will also aim to develop cleaner, more affordable and renewable energy sources. We must explore global mechanisms through which those identified technologies can be disseminated as rapidly as possible.

10. Ensuring the viability of states should underpin a shared vision for long-term co-operative action and a long-term global goal for emission reductions. In building towards an international agreement, all countries will need to play their part, in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

11. We need an ambitious mitigation outcome at Copenhagen to reduce the risks of dangerous climate change without compromising the legitimate development aspirations of developing countries. We stress our common conviction that urgent

and substantial action to reduce global emissions is needed and have a range of views as to whether average global temperature increase should be constrained to below 1.5 degrees or to no more than 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. We also recognise the need for an early peaking year for global emissions. Developed countries should continue to lead on cutting their emissions, and developing countries, in line with their national circumstances, should also take action to achieve a substantial deviation from business-as-usual emissions including with financial and technical support, and also supported by technology and capacity-building.

12. Progress towards predictable and adequate finance for adaptation and mitigation measures must be achieved in any new multilateral approach. Public and private financial resources for developing countries will need to be scaled up urgently and substantially by 2020. We recognise that adaptation finance in particular should be targeted towards the poorest and most vulnerable countries. The provision of finance should be additional to existing official development assistance commitments. In this respect, we acknowledge the potential role of the private sector and carbon markets.

13. In addition, we recognise the need for an early start to the provision for financial resources. Fast start funding, constituting grant funding, should provide substantial support for adaptation, REDD plus1 and clean technology. We welcomed the initiative to establish, as part of a comprehensive agreement, a Copenhagen Launch Fund starting in 2010 and building to a level of resources of \$10 billion annually by 2012. Fast start funding for adaptation should be focused on the most vulnerable countries. We also welcomed a proposal to provide immediate, fast disbursing assistance with a dedicated stream for small island states, and associated low-lying coastal states of AOSIS2 of at least 10 per cent of the fund. We also recognise the need for further, specified and comparable funding streams, to assist the poorest and most vulnerable countries, to cope with, and adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change. We recognise that funding will be scaled up beyond 2012.

14. We agree that an equitable governance structure to manage the financial and technological support must be put in place. We agree that a future governance structure should provide for states to monitor and comply with arrangements entered under a new Copenhagen agreement.

Antiguans and Barbudans celebrate 28 years of Independence

The Diaspora in the United Kingdom continued to celebrate Antigua and Barbuda's 28th Anniversary of Independence on the 7th November with a dinner and dance held at the Holiday Inn Kensington Forum, organised by the Antigua and Barbuda Association, London.

The Leicester and other communities joined with the London community for a really great evening.

Mr Brillheart James and others were on hand as usual to record Christmas greetings and messages from the Diaspora to their families back home in Antigua and Barbuda. Mr James, the Chairman of the Barbuda Association in Leicester has been providing this service for years and should be highly commended for this act of community spirit he has provided for so many



Some of the guests at the Independence celebration



Miss Peryfene Thomas chats with The Honourable Minister of Tourism, John Maginley

years. A DVD is being produced showcasing the event.

The Honourable John Maginley, Minister of Tourism, our Sports Ambassadors Sir Vivian Richards and Richie Richardson and Althea Vanderpoole Banahene - Minister-Counsellor at the Antigua and Barbuda High Commission in London also attended the function.

Credits: Mr Brillheart James and Miss Percyfene Thomas, Leicester

TIEA Agreements signed by the Government of Antigua and Barbuda

On the 7th December 2009, the High Commissioner for Antigua and Barbuda signed the Tax Information Exchange Agreement (TIEA) on behalf of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda. The Government of Belgium was represented by Mr. T. Brent Symonette, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

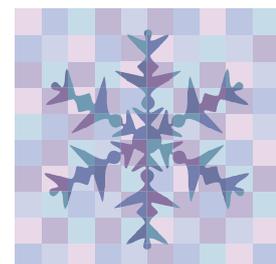
The purpose of the Agreement is to promote international co-operation in tax matters through exchange of

information. It was developed by the OECD Global Forum Working Group on Effective Exchange of Information. The Working Group consisted of representatives from OECD Member countries as well as delegates from Aruba, Bermuda, Bahrain, Cayman Islands, Cyprus, Isle of Man, Malta, Mauritius, the Netherlands Antilles, the Seychelles and San Marino.

On the 15th December 2009, the High Commissioner also signed the Tax Information Exchange Agreement (TIEA) on behalf of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda with the Government of Ireland at the Irish Embassy in London, represented by Ambassador Bobby McDonagh.



High Commissioner Dr Carl Roberts signing the Agreement with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, for Belgium



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investors and policyholders, including those in the Eastern Caribbean countries. The ECCU governments will continue the dialogue with the Government of Barbados to monitor this situation to the fullest extent possible.

More Patience and Further Consultation is Required

The resolution of issues surrounding the insolvency of BAICO is a complex undertaking. However, the ECCU Governments believe that the proposed plan, subject of course to judicial approval, can work. The alternative of immediate liquidation is, in our view, unacceptable.

The ECCU Governments understand the concern and anxiety of policyholders and have crafted this plan with them in mind; however, the policyholders of British American will need to continue to be patient and realistic.

At this juncture and quite understandably, policyholders and investors have many questions.

The ECCU Governments are asking the Judicial Managers to make appropriate arrangements to receive feedback from policyholders and the public on the plan and to provide available information to policyholders.

Furthermore, over the next few weeks, our Governments will be arranging meetings with staff and policyholders and investors to explain the proposed plan and to receive their views and suggestions.

The Governments of the ECCU are also aware that many individuals rely upon

British American Life Insurance policies as collateral for loans and will be consulting with Banks in the region in an effort to address their concerns in this regard.

Why did this happen and how can it be avoided?

In as much as BAICO is a private, limited liability company, matters related to internal corporate governance and management are most properly addressed by its shareholders and its creditors.

Even so, to the extent that the failure of a company like BAICO can have such wide reaching socio-economic effects across the region, the ECCU governments must next ask some salient questions: "Who is responsible for this difficult situation in which we find ourselves?" and "How can this be avoided in the future?"

These are important questions which must be addressed. However, the ECCU governments' first priority in this regard has been and continues to be to craft a viable and sustainable solution for its affected citizens and residents. No doubt, as the smoke clears, further investigations into the underlying reasons for the collapse of BAICO will likely be an important next step and once again regional cooperation will be critical.

Yet, even before we know the exact actions which precipitated this crisis, we can begin to grow from the lessons of this experience, both as individuals and as nations. The legal and supervisory frameworks within which insurance companies are regulated require re-examination and to some extent, that review has already begun across the region. As individuals too we can learn from this process the importance of

investment diversification, "not putting all one's eggs in one basket", as well as the need to understand the nature of the investments we make and the risks attached to them.

Conclusion

A difficult challenge is on our hands. However, a strategy for recovery has been prepared by the ECCU Governments, and the Judicial Managers have made recommendations that are consistent with that strategy. Further, the plan is subject to Court approval. This judicial safeguard will ensure that the interests of all affected parties will be comprehensively considered before any implementation begins.

The ECCU Governments firmly support this approach and believe that it is a much superior alternative to liquidation.

The choice is clear:

Liquidation: policyholders get 10 cents on their dollar.

Proposed New Plan: policyholders have an opportunity for greater recovery over time.

At this juncture, we are reminded of the old adage: "we do it best when put to the test". This situation is indeed testing but out of this difficult chapter will emerge a stronger insurance industry and a stronger regional economy.

**Issued by Governments of the ECCU
November 02, 2009**

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| <p>Antigua and Barbuda High Commission 2nd Floor, 45 Crawford Place LONDON W1H 4LP Telephone: 020 7258 0070 Facsimile 020 7258 7486</p> <p>OPENING TIMES DURING CHRISTMAS 2009 AND NEW YEAR 2010</p> <p>The High Commission will open normal hours 9.30am to 5.00pm up to Friday 18th December 2009</p> <p>Monday 21st December 2009 CLOSE 3.00pm</p> <p>Tuesday 22nd December 2009 CLOSE 3.00pm</p> | <p>Wednesday 23rd December 2009 CLOSE 3.00pm</p> | <p>Thursday 31st December 2009 CLOSE 1.00pm (New Year's Eve)</p> |
| | <p>Thursday 24th December 2009 CLOSE 1.00pm (Christmas Eve)</p> | <p>Friday 1st January 2010 CLOSED (New Year's Day)</p> |
| | <p>Friday 25th December 2009 CLOSED (Christmas Day)</p> | <p>Monday 4th January 2010 NORMAL HOURS (9.30am to 5.00pm)</p> |
| | <p>Monday 28th December 2009 CLOSED (Boxing Day holiday in lieu of Saturday 26th December)</p> | |
| | <p>Tuesday 29th December 2009 CLOSE 3.00pm</p> | |
| | <p>Wednesday 30th December 2009 CLOSE 3.00pm</p> | |

