

28 November 2008

Issue 77

Dialogue on Social Partnership Engages Jamaican Government, Opposition and Stakeholders

To assist in the development of a dialogue on options for social partnership in Jamaica and a related study by the Caribbean Policy Research Institute (CaPRI), the Caribbean Council sponsored a former senior Irish official, Paul Haran, to visit Jamaica from 14-20 November and participate in a number of informal meetings and discussions.



During his week long programme, Mr Haran met with the Prime Minister, Cabinet Ministers, the Leader of the Opposition, senior representatives from the public and private sector, trade unions and civil society. In addition to the programme of high level meetings, Mr Haran took part in a series television and radio interviews arising from the interest in the visit and delivered a public lecture.

CaPRI, with support from the Caribbean Council, is currently undertaking a project analysing Social Partnership models in different countries to help find out how a consensus might be built in Jamaica that would enable government, the private sector and civil society to work together to help create economic growth.



During the visit, Mr Haran met with a wide cross section of Jamaican society. He participated in consultation meetings, a business round table with the board of Jamaica Trade and Invest, and a public seminar held at the University of the West Indies Mona Campus. The programme ended with a small working dinner attended by the Prime Minister, members of Cabinet, and some of the leading members of the Jamaican private sector. CBBC member and business partners of the programme, Barry Humphreys of Virgin Atlantic (CBBC Chairman) and John Black of De La Rue Currency also attended the dinner, having flown in specially to attend this important event.

Mr Haran is one of the individuals credited with developing and implementing the social partnership programme in Ireland that led to the increased economic growth that earned it the international title 'Celtic Tiger' in his role as then-Secretary General of the Department of Enterprise, Government of Ireland (a position equivalent to Permanent Secretary). His visit to Jamaica enabled him to answer questions and share his and Ireland's experience where relevant to Jamaica.

The Republic of Ireland is perhaps the best known example of a successful Social Partnership, but in Ireland social partnership was the product, rather than the goal, of the countries desire to address its own problems.

During his visit to Jamaica there was particular interest in Mr Haran's remarks about Ireland's creation of a National Economic Social Council, a permanent body conducting analysis to inform stakeholders that preceded the social partnership agreements in Ireland. This was, Mr Haran said, an essential part of the process and was important in generating the consensus and understanding about Ireland's problems that enabled the Government, Trade Unions and Private Sector to reach agreements.



Prior to the visit, and as part of the project, CaPRI had produced a scoping document outlining different examples of social partnership and how they related to Jamaica's own experience. This is available for download from the Caribbean Council web site.

Going forward, CaPRI will now produce a final study that includes the findings of the week's consultations, along with analysis of partnership models elsewhere, that will be presented to the Government and Opposition in Jamaica.

The visit was supported by the UK Department for International Development, the Jamaica Tourist Board, De La Rue and Virgin Atlantic.

(Pictured: Top, Paul Haran; Centre, Anthony Hylton, Opposition Spokesman on Foreign Affairs; Final, Senator Dwight Nelson, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and public Service – all taken at public seminar)

Events Diary

2 December, 2008
Bolivarian Alternative Lecture, IISC, London

8-12 December, 2008
CDM - A Catalyst for Change:
Caribbean Conference on
Comprehensive Disaster
Management, Barbados

18-20 January, 2009
Caribbean Marketplace, St Lucia

29-30 January, 2009
Caribbean Energy Conference:
Mitigating Fuel Prices, Santo
Domingo, Dominican Republic

9-13 February, 2009
International E-Commerce
Workshop, Havana, Cuba

9-13 February, 2009
Informatica 2009, Havana, Cuba

21 April, 2009 Reception, House of
Lords, London

For information on any of the above
events please contact
admin@caribbean-council.org

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In 2008, Virgin Atlantic celebrates 10 years of flying to the Caribbean. In this time it has become the largest scheduled airline between Europe and the Caribbean, carrying 735,000 passengers on its ten Caribbean routes last year. Virgin Atlantic's initial services to Barbados, St Lucia and Antigua have been supplemented by Grenada, Tobago, Havana, Montego Bay and Kingston flights from London Gatwick, and by Barbados and St Lucia flights from Manchester.

For more details and to make bookings, please visit www.virgin.com



Cuba Initiative Announces New Cuban Co-Chairman

The Cuban Minister for Foreign Trade, Raul De La Nuez (*Pictured*), has formally accepted the Chairmanship of the Cuban side of the Cuba Initiative.

The post was previously held by Ricardo Cabrisas who has recently been become a Vice-President of the Council of State. Mr Cabrisas, who together with Ian Taylor (when a minister in the last British Conservative Government) was responsible for setting up the Cuba Initiative in 1992 and has always been a strong supporter of it, will remain engaged with the work of the Initiative due to his overarching ministerial responsibility for foreign trade and investment activity.

Mr De La Nuez as Minister for Foreign Trade has frequently met with members of the Initiative and is deeply familiar with the trade and investment relationship between the UK and Cuba.

Ian Taylor MP during his recent visit to Havana as the new UK Chairman of the Initiative met with his new Cuban counterpart and congratulated him on his appointment. The two Chairmen have agreed a programme of work for the coming months which will focus on areas for collaboration including tourism, biotechnology, renewable technologies and energy.

Save the Date: Caribbean Council Annual Reception at the House of Lords: 21 April, 2009

The Caribbean Council will once again be hosting its annual reception at the House of Lords for members, friends and distinguished guests. The event will take place on 21 April at the House of Lords, London. The 2008 reception, the largest to date, attracted over 200 guests, who heard from guest speakers Douglas Alexander MP and Floella Benjamin. Next year's event will again be supported by sponsors and include a free prize draw.

More information will be circulated in January 2009; however anyone who would like information about the business partnership and exhibition opportunities available in relation to the event should contact Stephanie Whittle Stephanie.whittle@caribbean-council.org



Virgin Holidays Calls for Urgent Review of APD Changes

Following the pre budget announcement about a rise in Air Passenger Duty in the UK (*Caribbean Insight, 24 November*), there has been marked concern in the Caribbean Tourism Industry about the impact that the increase will have. Virgin Holidays, a leading UK operator in the region, is amongst the critics of the new policy.

Increasing APD will be a "betrayal of trust" for Caribbean communities that have welcomed UK travellers, according to Virgin Holidays.

The tour operator said many communities have changed their infrastructures and their own policies to accommodate the travel industry and its customers". "It's disheartening that the announcement leaves both the environment vulnerable and those communities in destinations that have benefitted so greatly from tourism both economically and socially", said managing director Amanda Wills (*pictured*).

"The most obvious impact of the ruling will be on flights to the Caribbean, a region whose islands are extremely dependent on tourism and the UK travel market specifically".

"We have worked closely with our Caribbean industry friends for over 22 years, and as such are acutely aware of the inevitable negative impact to livelihoods and quality of life that the charges scheduled for 2010 threatens".

"It is extremely disappointing to see the lack of Government commitment to the environment and overseas business communities that depend on the UK traveller, illustrated by the APD ruling. It is vital that the travel industry be heard and that this position reviewed urgently," she said.

Entry to the USA under the Visa Waiver Programme

A new mandatory process for people entering the USA on the Visa Waiver Programme (VWP) will take effect on 12 January 2009, which replaces the green coloured I-94W form.

There are benefits for visitors in that once ESTA is fully implemented who will no longer have to fill in an I-94 form every time they enter the US (Green coloured card, usually completed whilst on the aircraft). It also means that travellers will know before they leave their country of origin / arrival in the US, that they should be OK for entry (but not guaranteed).

Caribbean Energy Conference: Mitigating Fuel Prices 29-30 January, 2009, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

This conference will focus on fuel options, renewable alternatives, hedging, finance and policies. There will be a discussion and analysis of country strategies to deal with the fuel price crisis along with a review of how to attract investment and determine the right funding mix to meet lender requirements.

For more information visit www.platts.com

Meeting of the Cuba Initiative Business Executive Committee

The Cuba Initiative UK Chairman, Ian Taylor MP, met with members of the Initiative's Business Executive Committee in Parliament to discuss his recent visit to Havana and brief them on the detailed outcomes.

Members of the Business Executive Committee who were unable to attend the meeting but would like more information, should please contact Chris Bennett chris.bennett@caribbean-council.org



CDM - A Catalyst for Change: Caribbean Conference on Comprehensive Disaster Management

8-12 December, 2008, Barbados

The Third Annual Caribbean Conference on Comprehensive Disaster Management is being hosted by the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA). The Conference will be held in Barbados from December 8-12, 2008.

The plenary sessions will focus on the progress of the Comprehensive Disaster Management agenda and the ongoing dialogue on humanitarian reform and the implications for regional and national disaster response.

Other key activities at the conference will include Professional Development Sessions, showcasing of research, tools and best practices in disaster management. The Conference will also host an event for schools and an exhibition hall which will display the latest disaster management /business continuity management products and services.

The Conference will be addressed by several high level speakers and experts in the field of disaster management making it a unique opportunity for the networking of disaster management practitioners, donors, NGOs, Public and private sectors, researchers and civil society. *For more information please visit <http://cdm.cdera.org/cccdm/2008/>*



New Technologies: Development and Sovereignty

9-13 February, 2009, Havana, Cuba

From February 9 through 13, Havana will host the 13th International Convention and Fair, which will take place at the Palace of Conventions and PABEXPO fairgrounds, with the slogan "New Technologies: development and sovereignty". The objective of the fair is to promote the scientific advances, new technologies and new features of the sector. This is an opportunity to acquire knowledge, to interchange experiences and to strengthen the friendship between the peoples. *For more information visit <http://www.informaticahabana.com>*



West Indies – England Cricket Fixtures 2009

- 1st Test: 4-8 February 2009 – Sabina Park, Jamaica
- 2nd Test: 13-17 February – Sir Vivian Richards Stadium, Antigua
- 3rd Test: 26 Feb – 2 March – Kensington Oval, Barbados (*Pictured*)
- 4th Test: 6-10 March – Queens Park Oval, Trinidad
- 1st ODI: 20 March – Providence Stadium, Guyana
- 2nd ODI: 22 March – Providence Stadium, Guyana
- 3rd ODI: 27 March – Kensington Oval, Barbados
- 4th ODI: 29 March – Kensington Oval, Barbados

