

# Caribbean Council Newsletter

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Issue 84



*your window to the Caribbean*

## Conference on EPA Implementation: Save the Date

The Caribbean Council, in partnership with the Caribbean Association of Industry and Commerce and others will be holding a one day regional conference on implementing the Economic Partnership Agreement in Kingston, Jamaica on 21 May 2009. Invitations have not yet been sent out but anyone wishing to register their interest should email Stephanie Whittle [stephanie.whittle@caribbean-council.org](mailto:stephanie.whittle@caribbean-council.org).

Stephanie Whittle will be in Kingston from 6-9 April for conference planning meetings. Anyone who would like to schedule a meeting while Stephanie is in Jamaica should email [stephanie.whittle@caribbean-council.org](mailto:stephanie.whittle@caribbean-council.org).



## Barbados Prime Minister in London

The Prime Minister of Barbados, the Hon David Thompson MP (pictured), will be in the UK in the week of April 6 for a brief visit during which time he will be meeting with UK businesses and investors as well as having bilateral meetings with the UK Government and others on issues of regional concern.

During his visit, the Caribbean-Britain Business Council will be holding a major event, in collaboration with Canning House, at which the Prime Minister will speak about the Caribbean and the Global Economic Crisis and how he believes Barbados, together with its Caribbean partners, needs to respond in order to guide the region through the uncharted waters ahead.

The event, sponsored by Invest Barbados and De La Rue, is now fully subscribed but a summary note of the meeting will be available after the meeting for members. If you would like a copy of this summary, please contact Chris Bennett [chris.bennett@caribbean-council.org](mailto:chris.bennett@caribbean-council.org)

The Caribbean Council is in addition organising a private dinner for Premier members and guests with an investment interest in Barbados.

This event has been made possible with the kind support of:



## UK Air Passenger Duty set to rise by up to £100 per person on Caribbean flights

Governments of the Caribbean have united in protest at the British government's plans to charge a higher airport departure tax on visitors to the Caribbean than the tax paid by British visitors to some other major destinations.

In November 2009 the airport departure tax on flights to the Caribbean is due to increase by between 25 per cent and 87 per cent, depending upon the class of travel. In November 2010 those increases will reach as high as 94 per cent. This means that anyone travelling to the Caribbean from the UK will pay at least £50 Air Passenger Duty for their flight.

Recognising the potentially negative impact that this will have on tourist arrivals that are already suffering as a result of the global financial crisis, a number of Caribbean governments have written to the British government to protest about the tax increase. In addition to the risk that increasingly price sensitive customers will not choose the Caribbean for their vacations, proposed changes to the structure of the APD taxation mean that the duty on flights to the Caribbean will be more than those to the USA, regardless of miles travelled.

The new structure will come in to effect in November 2009.

The Association of British Travel Agents and the industry trade paper Travel Trade Gazette have launched an online petition on the Downing Street website and almost 400 protests have already been registered. The deadline for anyone wishing to sign the petition is 19 April <http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/APDtax/>.

## Events Diary

7 April, 2009  
Talk by the Prime Minister of Barbados, London

7 April, 2009  
CBBC Dinner with Prime Minister of Barbados, London

14-16 April, 2009  
Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Investment Conference, Bermuda

17-18 April, 2009  
Fifth Summit of the Americas

21 April, 2009  
Reception, House of Lords, London

22 April, 2009  
The Caribbean EU EPA: A Model Agreement? London

21 May, 2009  
Implementing the EPA, Kingston

19 June, 2009  
Canada and the Cuban Revolution, London

*For information on any of the above events please contact [admin@caribbean-council.org](mailto:admin@caribbean-council.org)*

This newsletter is sponsored by:



In 2009, Virgin Atlantic celebrates 25 years of flying. In this time it has become the largest scheduled airline between Europe and the Caribbean, carrying 825,000 passengers on its ten Caribbean routes last year.

Virgin Atlantic flies to Antigua, Barbados, Grenada, Havana, Kingston, Montego Bay, St Lucia and Tobago from London Gatwick and to Barbados and St Lucia from Manchester.

For more details and to make bookings, please visit [www.virgin-atlantic.com](http://www.virgin-atlantic.com).



## Caribbean Council Annual Reception at House of Lords on target to be a huge success 21 April, 2009, House of Lords, London

The Caribbean Council Annual Reception has developed a reputation in recent years for being one of the most well attended events in the parliamentary calendar. Regular guests at the reception not only recognise the value of the reception as a networking opportunity – whether to catch up with old contacts or to develop new ones - but also the fact that it is an unusually enjoyable event.

In addition to the networking, the reception provides the opportunity for guests to hear from Ministers in the UK and the Caribbean. This year the host and President of the CBBC, Lord Foulkes will welcome as guest speakers Gillian Merron MP (pictured), UK Minister in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office with responsibility for relations with the Caribbean and Edmund Bartlett MP, Minister of Tourism for Jamaica.

With attendance from Ministers, MP's, Peers, High Commissioners, Ambassadors, the business community and others, the reception offers an unusual opportunity for those with an interest in the Caribbean to connect.

The reception is for members of the CBBC, Cuba Initiative and Anglo Dominican Trade Council along with selected invited guests. There are a limited number of tickets available at a cost of £100, but any non members who wish to join receive a free ticket and all of the other associated benefits of membership, including subscription to our publications. For more information about membership please contact Stephanie Whittle [stephanie.whittle@caribbean-council.org](mailto:stephanie.whittle@caribbean-council.org).

As always the event will have a strong Caribbean flavour offering a rum punch, music provided by a Caribbean steel pan trio and small booths from companies offering Caribbean related services. There will be a prize draw for a holiday in Cuba and one to Jamaica.

### Caribbean Council Annual Reception Business Partners:

**ECIC HOLDINGS LIMITED**  
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### Supporting Sponsors:



### Prize Donors:



### **Cuba Initiative Seminar: The Economic and Financial Situation in Cuba**

At an event exclusively for members of the Cuba Initiative, William White, Representative at the Havana Office of Republic Bank, led a seminar discussion about the current performance of the Cuban economy and the impact of the financial and economic global crisis to date.

Whilst the impact of the current crisis has been limited for Cuba to date, discussion focussed on a number of challenges ahead for Cuba including the difficulty in accessing credit globally, the need for the country to start cutting back its imports to ensure a healthier trade balance, and the ways in which the country's economy will be affected by possible moves by the US administration towards the normalisation of relations.

The Seminar was chaired by David Ridgway, former British Ambassador to Cuba and was sponsored by Republic Bank and Havana Club.

### **Cuba Initiative: Meeting with Ms Dianna Melrose, HM Ambassador to Cuba**

The Business Executive Committee of the Cuba Initiative met with the British Ambassador to Cuba, HE. Ms Dianna Melrose in the House of Commons for a roundtable discussion chaired by the Initiative's Chairman, Ian Taylor MP.

Executive Committee members who were not able to attend and who would like a summary of the main points discussed in the meeting should please contact Chris Bennett [Chris.Bennett@caribbean-council.org](mailto:Chris.Bennett@caribbean-council.org)

## **Would you like to receive briefings and market intelligence on the Caribbean?**

The publications division of the Caribbean Council publishes a weekly news briefing on the Caribbean Region, including Cuba and the Dominican Republic, called Caribbean Insight. Members of the Caribbean-Britain Business Council all receive the publication as part of their membership subscription (membership starts from £110.00 plus Vat per annum) but the publication also has a global subscriber base of organisations with business and other interest in the region. Caribbean Insight provides an objective review of economic, social and political news from the past week in a concise, easy to read format that is ideal for those wishing to maintain their knowledge of the region.

A separate publication on Cuba, 'Cuba Briefing', provides a more in depth analysis of news coming out of Cuba, including sections on the US and regional news that relates to Cuba. Cuba is available either through membership of the Cuba Initiative or on a subscription only basis.

For further details about subscriptions and membership please contact Stephanie Whittle [Stephanie.whittle@caribbean-council.org](mailto:Stephanie.whittle@caribbean-council.org)

## **Executive Director speaks at Brookings**

The Executive Director of the Caribbean Council was one of the speakers at the prestigious Brookings Institute in Washington DC at a recent seminar on US policy towards the Caribbean. The event considered the development of US policy in relation to the Anglophone Caribbean and focussed on themes including the Caribbean Single Market and Economy; security; climate change; and Cuba and the Caribbean. The event which was sponsored by the Organisation of American States, the Woodrow Wilson Institute, Manchester Associates and Brookings was aimed at creating greater awareness in the US Administration about policy options for the Caribbean in the run up to the Summit of the Americas to be held in Trinidad in mid April.

## **Internships**

As an organisation with developmental and charitable goals, the Caribbean Council offers work experience to young people with an interest in the Caribbean or from the region. The organisation has a rolling programme of internships for graduates and undergraduates and has welcomed students from the Caribbean, the USA, continental Europe and the UK, with interest in international trade, business, as well as events management and Diaspora issues. Anyone interested in applying for an internship, or any institutions that wish to find out more about involving the Caribbean Council in their internship programme should contact Chris Bennett [chris.bennett@caribbean-council.org](mailto:chris.bennett@caribbean-council.org)

