

# OECS leaders discuss economic impact of virus

ST GEORGE'S

LEADERS of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) have met to discuss the socio-economic impact of new coronavirus COVID-19 on their respective economies, and are urging commercial banks to consider a moratorium on interest rates; relax regulations by financial institutions; and consider the reduction or elimination of certain fees and charges.

The leaders, under the chairmanship of Grenada Prime Minister Dr Keith Mitchell, met by video conference on Monday and, according to a communique released here, said they had also discussed ways to prevent the proliferation of "fake news" on social media platforms.

The meeting was also attended by OECS Director General Dr Didacus Jules, Governor of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) Timothy Antoine, and OECS General Counsel Dwight Lay.

"The meeting agreed on the absolute importance of having a documented OECS strategy for the dissemination of information. Heads mandated that the OECS Commission work with the ministers of Health, their CMOs and CARPHA/PAHO on this matter," according to the communique.

It noted that in the area of macro-economic impact, the OECS leaders received projection reports on major economic sectors, such as tourism, trade and agriculture, and also considered three containment scenarios as presented by Antoine.

## All travellers entering Jamaica from COVID-19 countries must self-quarantine

KINGSTON

THE Jamaica government says effective yesterday, all travellers from countries where there is local transmission of new coronavirus COVID-19 will be required to self-quarantine for up to 14 days.

The announcement comes as the island recorded its 13th case of the virus.

Jamaica has the highest number of cases in the Caribbean Community (Caricom) with all of the cases being classified as "imported", given that they came into the country as a result of travellers from overseas.

Health and Wellness Minister Dr Christopher Tufton said this self-quarantine is one of the most effective methods of reducing the spread of the virus.

"For all persons entering from a country where there is internal spread of the virus [as well as] the containment and restriction of movement, if you have to move, then you [should] manage your movement in a way to reduce the possibility of you transmitting the virus to someone else, should you have the virus," Tufton said.

### Maintaining travel restrictions

The government has already imposed travel restrictions on several countries as a result of COVID-19: Iran, China, South Korea, Italy, Singapore, Germany, Spain, France and the United Kingdom. "We still maintain [those] restrictions... but for all other persons travelling, once they come from a country where there is internal spread, they will be required to be quarantined," Tufton said.

Under the restrictions, all Jamaicans who have travelled to any of these countries within the last 14 days will have landing privileges in accordance with the law, but will be subjected to health assessments and quarantines once they have landed.

Tufton also stated visitors in hotels are required to adhere to the quarantine rules.

"They will be able to leave the island at their scheduled departure date or before if they so desire, but once they come in, they will be subjected to that quarantine period," he said. —CMC

"Under the best-case scenario (containment by the end of June 2020), real GDP growth for the ECCU for 2020 will slow to 2.1 per cent—down from an initial estimate of 3.3 per cent," said the communique, which explained that under a moderate case scenario, ECCU real GDP growth is projected to decelerate to 1.5 per cent.

"In the worst-case scenario (global recession), a contraction of 1.9 per cent is projected. In respect to tourism, a decline of 20 per cent is currently projected, but this could be worse with an unprecedented shutdown," said the communique, noting the leaders expressed concern funds in

circulation may be gravely affected by the projected economic situation.

As a result, the leaders directed the ECCB to invite the commercial banks to consider a moratorium on interest rates; relax regulations by financial institutions; and consider the reduction or elimination of certain fees and charges.

### Removing fake news

The communique also noted that the removal of fake news about COVID-19 on social media is one of the objectives of a proposed memorandum of understanding between the St Lucia-based OECS Commis-

sion, the ministries of health in the sub-region and the Trinidad-based Caribbean Public Health Agency, and Facebook.

The MOU is yet to be made public, but according to the communique the arrangement with Facebook was discussed.

It said the leaders "noted with satisfaction the MOU between the commission and Facebook and received a report on the proposed collaboration between the commission, ministries of Health, Carpha and Facebook that will result in massive exposure of official releases; the removal of fake news and unscientific prescriptions; and help to replace fear with knowledge," the communique noted. —CMC



## LAW ASSOCIATION OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

### NOTICE OF POSTPONEMENT OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE LAW ASSOCIATION OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

TAKE NOTICE that the THIRTY-FOURTH (34<sup>th</sup>) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago scheduled for Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 at 3:00pm at the following locations:

- a. Convocation Hall, Hall of Justice, Knox Street, Port-of-Spain;
- b. Offices of Dipnarine Rampersad & Co., Nos. 8-10 Gordon Street, San Fernando;
- c. Scarborough Library, Nos. 11-13 Greenside Street, Scarborough, Tobago

has been has been postponed by the Council of the Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago until further Notice.

This has become necessary due to the threat posed by the COVID-19. The Council shall communicate with the membership on a new date for the Annual General Meeting.

The Council apologizes for any inconvenience caused.

Dated this 18<sup>th</sup> day of March 2020

By Order of Council

Shankar Bidaisee

Secretary of the Law Association of Trinidad & Tobago