



CAWI NEWSLETTER

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Women's History Month

I welcome this opportunity to join the membership of the Caribbean Association of the World Bank Group and International Monetary Fund (CAWI) in observing Women's History Month.

As we reflect on the theme selected for International Women's Day 2024, "*Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress*", we celebrate the progress highlighted in the 2017 International Labor Organization (ILO) Report, "*Women in Business and Management Gaining Momentum in Latin America and the Caribbean*". That Report pinpointed two CARICOM Member States, Antigua and Barbuda and Guyana, where women represent more than 70% of all tertiary graduates. It was also noted that there were more women tertiary graduates in all Caribbean and Latin American countries for which data were available.

The Caribbean was noted as a world leader in the prevalence of women managers, with eight of eleven countries reporting that 40% or more of all managers were women. Jamaica recorded the highest proportion of women managers in the world, at 59%.

Despite women's higher educational achievement, globally, they are still in the minority in executive positions and there is a persistent wage gap in favor of men. While we acknowledge that progress has been made towards gender equality, we understand that there is still much more work to be done to ensure women enjoy the full complement of their human rights.

In the Caribbean, countries are introducing gender-responsive budgeting, reforming legislation and policies, and making guidelines, tools, and protocols available to support gender mainstreaming and monitoring. We must continue to build on these and other gains, and empower women to apply their talents and expertise to entrepreneurial pursuits. Their input is critical to stimulate economic growth, support economic recovery, and propel the advancement and well-being of families, communities and countries.

The signal achievements of women and girls at home, and in the diaspora, demonstrate that although we are from a small Region we have substantial global impact in many arenas, including international organizations, academia, the public sector, private corporations and civil society.

I encourage you to continue to represent the Caribbean proudly and with distinction, and look forward to your continued commitment to the Region.

Dr. Carla N. Barnett, Secretary-General, Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 01 Women's History Month
- 02 Taste of Caribbean
- 06 Development News from across the Caribbean
- 11 Announcements

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TASTE OF CARIBBEAN

To celebrate Women's History Month, Taste of Caribbean will focus on some female Caribbean Designers who are making waves in the fashion industry with their personal brands or by collaborating with renowned brands and other designers. Fashion can be a bold way to express our identity and culture either through daily wear, events costumes, shoes, fragrance, jewelry, handbags, and other accessories. We want to highlight these talents for the way they infuse their roots into their craft. As usual, we invite our members to join this effort not only by sending us feedback but also by sharing suggestions via email to cawi@worldbank.org.

CARIBBEAN DESIGNERS MAKING WAVES IN THE FASHION INDUSTRY

Bahamas



Back in 2013, at only twenty-four years old, [Phylicia Ellis](#), a Bahamas native, had already interned in New York City with Victor de Souza and Mandy Coon, shown collections at Caribbean Fashion Week and Island of the World Fashion Week.

She completed her tertiary studies at Albright College in Reading, PA, where she obtained a BA in Fashion Design in 2010. She participated in Islands of the World Fashion Week in 2009 as a NextGen designer (up and coming) and was also a featured designer at Caribbean Fashion Week in Kingston, Jamaica. In 2012, she also launched her ready-to-wear children's line, **Piper & Evali**. The line boasts signature details, with vibrant colors, inspired for the fun and functionality for today's little girls. Her adult brand focuses on custom designed ready-to-wear, evening wear in her **'Weddings by Phylicia Ellis'** line. She has been featured in magazines such as e-Life, Nu Woman and Profiles 98.

Barbados



[Carla Gittens](#), born in Barbados, is a dynamic entrepreneur and accomplished fashion designer. She pursued her education at the University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica, earning a Bachelor's of Science in Marketing Management.

Carla's journey in the fashion industry gained momentum when she participated in Mission Catwalk Season 4 & 5, where she captivated audiences and secured a fan favorite status. This exposure opened doors for her to dress notable personalities such as Denyque, Nailah Blackman, and Shenseea.

Driven by a passion for distinctive style, Carla is currently immersed in the launch of her retail brand, **Killuh Pieces**. This ready-to-wear venture is set to redefine Caribbean fashion, offering unisex designs tailored for individuals who embrace the epitome of chic swag. Carla Gittens continues to leave an indelible mark on the fashion landscape with her creativity and dedication. Read more on her journey from an [interview](#) she gave to Island Origins Mag back in June 2023.

Grenada



[Felisha Noel](#) is a womenswear designer from Brooklyn, NY with a passion for travel, a love of vibrant colors, and a penchant for bold prints. She entered the industry at 19, opening a brick and mortar boutique for vintage lovers and trendsetters in Brooklyn. That boutique served as a catalyst for today's namesake clothing and lifestyle womenswear brand **'Fe Noel'** and further stimulated her desire to help women embrace their femininity.

Fe is heavily influenced by her Caribbean heritage and large, close-knit family. She especially holds her mother and grandmother in high regard, crediting them for showing what drive, determination and humble hearts will earn you. Aside from designing, she enjoys helping other young women start their own businesses, which she is able to accomplish through the Fe Noel Foundation, a program for young girls who are passionate about entrepreneurship.



Guyana



Michelle Cole Wagner is an international designer and corporate executive of her brand **COLEFACTS** and co-founder of Co-Labs. Michelle's foray into designing with the Miss Guyana Universe and Miss World Guyana / Guyana World pageants among other shows was met with instant success and her popularity escalated. She soon earned recognition as Guyana's leading fashion designer being known for the elegance and style of her pieces, her facility with haute couture, choice of fabrics, use of earth tones, and originality in design.

Now a seasoned international designer, Michelle took North America and the Caribbean by storm with her presentations in cutting-edge fashion shows Bikini Under the Bridge (New York), Moda Manhattan (New York), Fashion Week of the Americas (Miami), Fashion Has No Borders (Canada), Barbados Fashion Week, Fashion Week of the Caribbean (Jamaica), St Kitts Fashion Week, and CARIFESTA (Trinidad). Michelle's work in fashion has garnered her several accolades and awards, including, Caribbean Designer of the Year - "Best Country Designer Award for Guyana" (2008), Karib Nation's Award for "Excellence & Remarkable Contribution to the Caribbean Fashion Industry" (2012) and Young, Gifted, & Black™ (YGB) "Designer of the Year Award" (2014).

Michelle has expanded her innovative approach to fashion and business in co-founding CoLabs™, a collaborative workspace in Georgetown Guyana, catering extensively to fashion and the arts.

Guyana



Keisha Edwards is the owner and Creative Director of **Shasha Designs**. She launched her career in fashion by participating in the Guyana Fashion Week in 2008, where her designs received rave reviews, motivating her to launch her first fashion show in 2010 under the name Fierce Expressions.

Keisha has showcased collections in Guyana, Haiti, Curaçao, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, and in Washington DC and Maryland in the USA. Her designs have also been featured in Shabeau Magazine, Lady, Posh 592, She Caribbean Magazine and LIAT ZiNG in flight magazine. Keisha is a recipient of the 'Award of Excellence - Fashion Innovation' at the 2016 Caribbean Style and Culture Awards in Maryland, USA. Recently, she participated in the first ever Commonwealth Fashion Exchange, where she designed a sustainable gown, which debuted at Buckingham Palace in February, 2018.

Keisha holds a Bachelor's Degree in Fashion and Designs from the Caribbean Academy of Fashion and Design as well as a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology from the University of Guyana and has completed a certificate program in Fabric Selection and Design Style at The New School - Parsons School of Designs in the USA. She is also a member of the Guyana Fashion Council.

Guyana



Andrea Brathwaite has been creating clothes for fashion conscious men and women at the local, regional and international levels for over 20 years. Her range of formal and casual outfits has captured the imagination of a loyal clientele, who over the years have come to appreciate the elegance and style that have set her creations apart from the ordinary.

Sophisticated, innovative and incorporating unusual hand-painted motifs, her '**Timeless Treasures**' line has been well received at shows in Guyana, the Caribbean, and North America, and have been sought after by patrons attending these shows. Catering extensively, but not exclusively, for the fuller figure (men and women), Andrea's one-of-a-kind designs appeal to persons of discriminating taste who eschew mass produced items and who recognize that with her creations they do not have to sacrifice chic and style for comfort. Andrea can be reached at timelessb2017@gmail.com.



Haiti



[Dayanne Danier](#) is the fashion designer behind the women's contemporary ready to wear brand called [Bien Abyé](#) (means Well Dressed). The collection is a combination of French style that is sophisticated and chic with a Creole influence. Danier has presented the Bien Abyé collection in fashion shows in numerous cities throughout the United States (Boston, New York, Washington DC, Atlanta, Miami), and in Haiti. It's distributed nationwide in retail stores in New York, Boston, Pittsburgh, and Dallas and online through the company website.

Danier grew up in Massachusetts and attended Massachusetts College of Art where she obtained a Bachelor Degree in Fine Arts with a concentration in Fashion Design. Upon graduating she remained in Boston working for Blauer Manufacturing where she was first exposed to manufacturing garments in the United States. In 2002, Danier moved to Miami to work for Perry Ellis International as a designer for the Latin brand, Cubavera. In late 2004, Danier moved back to the northeast and settled in New York where she worked as a menswear knit designer for Phillips-Van Heusen (PVH). She also contributes in Haiti by teaching artisan members of sewing cooperatives about pattern drafting, construction, and quality control. Danier is a recipient of the Mayor of New York Immigrant Women Leaders Fellowship 2015.

Haiti



Born and raised in Haiti before migrating to Dorchester in Boston, Massachusetts, a young [Valérie Blaise](#) was not quite sure of her place in an American society. She knew she wanted to do something in the design world but did not have a certain calling. Until she purchased a vintage handbag online and realized she wanted to learn all about becoming a leather artisan and create her own bags.

Blaise made a move to New York and, after purchasing a sewing machine, taught herself to sew and work with leather. After making her first bag, she launched her own leather accessories brand called [Vavvouné](#), in 2015. The name, Vavvouné, finds its roots in a cherished nickname from Valerie's upbringing in Haiti. Refusing to let this beloved name fade into memory, its essence is reborn in each of her creation. The brand is now stocked at Shopbop.com following Blaise's move into wholesale retail and joining the Connect marketplace.

Haiti



Born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, [Phelicia Dell](#) is the daughter of a dressmaker and an experienced textile factory supervisor. Her mom and acquaintances from an early age easily recognized Phelicia's artistic skills. In 2004, after the assassination of her business partner and baby's father in Haiti, she gained a creative global meaningful inspiration that will later become her VèVè signature style and trademark. Exclusive and graceful characteristics are key trends in Phelicia's clothes and assortment of accessories. Haiti's music and dance, notably sacred rhythms, and VèVè schematics have inspired the designer's creative creations throughout her career. **VèVè Collections** debuted in 2006 with 25 beaded cocktail gowns. Today, it represents one of the strongest and sustainable business ventures in Haiti.

Phelicia highlights the vibrant and colorful side of the Caribbean as well as blends ethnic flair and influences in her work. She was also rewarded by "Island of the World" for Fashion and Culture Design in 2010 and named one of 150 world-shakers by the Daily Beast that same year. She has done countless shows and presentations in several places like Martinique, Argentina, Guadeloupe, Bahamas, New York, Paris, Washington, Connecticut, Dominican Republic, Miami Fashion Week, Caribbean Fashion Week, Island of the World Fashion Week, London Fashion Week, and Black Expo Design in Montreal Canada.

Jamaica



[Simone "Tasha" Gordon](#) was born in the beautiful rural parish of St. Mary, and grew up in the Sunshine City of Portmore, St. Catherine in Jamaica. She gains her inspiration by embracing the cultural beauty of her beloved island, transforming it into beautiful and flattering feminine designs. Simone (Tasha) signature is a combination of fabric and colors she carefully shades imperceptibly into each other to produce bold and beautiful clothing.

Simone is a self-taught designer from long line of predecessors in her family. Her mother, grandfather, and grandmother, designing runs deep into her veins which enables her to transform just a plain piece of cloth into sheer masterpiece. Her work is not limited to clothing, she also masterfully designs jewelry and other accessories such as handbags/purse, scarf, and bracelets. Read more about Simone and her brand "**Tasha & Tianne Fashions**" [here](#).



Jamaica



[Lisa 'Neahlis' McIntosh-Aris](#) is a Jamaican fashion designer and celebrity hairstylist known for her unique designs that showcase the rich cultural heritage of Jamaica. She pursued an education in Business and Fashion Art at Boston University, then moved on to cosmetology at the Sheridan Vocational School in Florida. She has also participated in hands-on workshops hosted in Jamaica and New York, trained with the UK's award-winning hairdresser, Desmond Murray.

Lisa founded the fashion brand **Neahlis** in 2015 and has since gained recognition for her vibrant collections that feature bold prints, colorful fabrics, and intricate beadwork. Lisa draws inspiration from the natural beauty and diverse cultural influences of Jamaica, and her designs celebrate the country's music, dance, and art. Her collections have been showcased at major fashion events in the Caribbean, including Caribbean Fashion Week or other events in Jamaica. According to Caribbean Entertainment Magazine, [Lisa 'Neahlis' McIntosh-Aris](#) is regarded as one of the most talented and innovative fashion designers in Jamaica, and her brand has become a symbol of Jamaican pride and creativity.

Trinidad & Tobago



[Anya Ayoung Chee](#) is a fashion designer, entrepreneur, activist, and winner of Project Runway Season 9. In 2008 she competed at the Miss Universe pageant in Vietnam for her native Trinidad and Tobago, during which she had the opportunity to design some of her wardrobe. In 2009 she launched her first collection Pilar, named after her younger brother. Several years later, Anya inspired millions when she won the 9th season of the popular US television series, Project Runway. She then launched her eponymous womenswear line geared toward the resort wear market.

In recent years Anya retreated from designing her own clothing line in order to open and manage a co-working space, a boutique, and cafe in Trinidad. The **Anya Ayoung Chee - Limited Edition brand**, marks her return to designing a line of her own.

Trinidad & Tobago



[Shoma Persad](#)'s roots lie in Trinidad and Tobago, the majestic twin-island Republic located in the southern end of the Caribbean Island chain. After having successfully graduated from a Marketing and Business Development program at the tertiary-level in Canada, her creative talents led her to join the fashion industry in 2014. Although the ambitious graduate has never been formally educated in the sector, her unmistakable passion and unyielding dedication to excellence guided her professional pursuits to co-establish a women's resort fashion label in the Caribbean.

The regional brand, which was well-received and amassed overwhelming support, was recognized in several features in various staple Caribbean publications. In recognition of the brand's success, the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry & Commerce acknowledged the fashion label through its "Champions of Business" Awards. The nomination in the prestigious "Start Up Award" for the brands outstanding achievements has been a most notable accomplishment in Shoma's career.

Trinidad & Tobago



[Melissa Simon-Hartman](#) is a London born artist who specializes in custom hand-crafted fashion and costume pieces. Drawing heavily from her Trinidadian and Ghanaian heritage, Melissa's designs are flavored with both West Indian and West African Influences whilst also maintaining her unique signature style. Her brand, **Simon-Hartman London**, launched in 2009, has evolved from its initial footwear concept to the distinctive label that today proudly specializes in wearable art. With vast experience as an artist and theatrical costume designer, Melissa has successfully translated that visual style of storytelling into the world of fashion, crafting statement pieces that have featured at international festivals and music videos. The inaugural appearance of Simon-Hartman London footwear in 2013 at Mercedes Benz Fashion Week Berlin has propelled the brand to new heights with acclamation from renowned fashion connoisseurs.

Melissa Simon-Hartman's contributions have been showcased across a wide array of publications, events, and productions, spanning Universal Pictures, Netflix, Disney+, The BBC, X-Factor, Harper's Bazar, Vogue, GQ, Mercedes Benz Fashion Week Berlin, London Fashion Week, Parkwood Entertainment, Samsung, and Teen Vogue.



Developments News from across the Caribbean

ECCB TO ESTABLISH REGIONAL STANDARDS SETTING BODY FOR NON-BANK FINANCIAL SECTOR

The Eastern Caribbean Central Bank is taking steps to introduce a Regional Standards Setting Body to regulate non-bank financial institutions within the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union (ECCU). This is in keeping with the ECCB's mandate to ensure integrity within the banking system.

The Chief Director (Policy) at the ECCB, D Tracy Polius, says that a standards setting body is an institution that is established to set guidelines to regulate a particular industry or market. She adds that non-bank financial institutions include credit unions, insurance companies and development banks, which are included in this reform. Polius points out that the ECCB is also a regional standards setting body, as it functions as the regulatory body for commercial banks and licensed financial institutions within the ECCU. [Learn more.](#)



GOVERNMENTS OF SAINT LUCIA, FRANCE STRENGTHEN COOPERATION

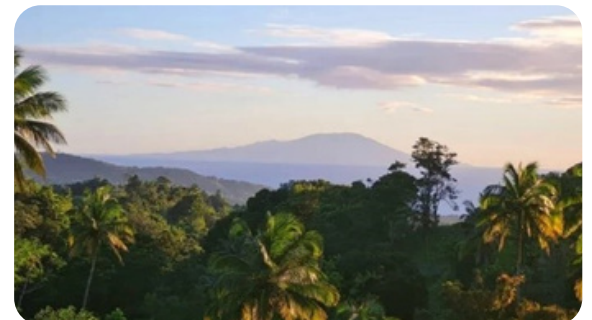


On March 15, 2024 St Lucia's Prime Minister, Hon. Philip J. Pierre, welcomed Mr. Gérald Darmanin, Minister for the Interior and Overseas Territories of the Republic of France, and his delegation which included President Serge Letchimy and the Prefect of Martinique, Mr. Jean Christophe Bouvier to Saint Lucia for discussions aimed at enhancing bilateral cooperation between the two countries in key areas of security, health, and education.

Serge Letchimy, President of the Executive Council of Martinique, highlighted progress in OECS and CARICOM integration. He emphasized territorial diplomacy and proposes enhanced health collaboration, expanded education initiatives, and cultural preservation efforts. Letchimy calls for intensified cooperation in agriculture, research, and security, emphasizing the importance of addressing insecurity for a shared future. Furthermore, he strongly suggested the need for more frequent meetings and an international one on security with agreements to further collaboration and synergies in those areas to the benefit of St Lucia's population. [Read more.](#)

EMPOWERING YOUNG WOMEN IN SAINT LUCIA'S ENERGY SECTOR

The energy sector remains one of the least gender-diverse sectors, and the Caribbean is no exception. According to the International Renewable Energy Agency, globally, women only account for 22% of oil and gas workforce and about 32% in the renewable energy sector. The numbers for management levels are even lower. The World Bank is giving special attention to this issue through its analytical work and projects in the Caribbean. The Renewable Energy Sector Development Project (RESDP) - launched last year in Saint Lucia - is one example.



The project is focused on helping the country facilitate the transition to clean energy by exploring geothermal energy potential in Saint Lucia. Understanding that it will be important to have a gender-diverse talent pool in the energy sector going forward, the project will also focus on narrowing the gender gap in female employment for technical jobs; seeking to move from 15 to 30 percent. To do so, RESDP offers an annual scholarship program for women to pursue electrical or mechanical engineering degrees and enhances an existing apprenticeship program by offering extended 3 to 9-month apprenticeships for women enrolled in the electrical and mechanical engineering programs. [Read more.](#)



CARICOM SEEKS CLOSER COOPERATION WITH SWEDEN IN EDUCATION AND ICT

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is eager to deepen its cooperation with the Kingdom of Sweden in education and ICT. CARICOM Secretary-General, Dr. Carla Barnett underscored this interest while accrediting a new envoy from the Nordic country, His Excellency Andres Bengtcén. The new Ambassador presented his letters of credence to Dr. Barnett at the Community's headquarters in Georgetown, Guyana on March 19, 2024.



The Secretary-General referenced the 2016 CARICOM-Nordic Memorandum of Understanding which prioritised information and communication technology (ICT), and education as the main areas for CARICOM-Sweden cooperation. In this context, she said CARICOM is "eager to delve deeper into these possibilities" given the Kingdom's position as a world leader in innovation, and its strong focus on technology and sustainability. [Read more.](#)

A NEW CHAPTER FOR DEVELOPMENT: NEW IDB OFFICES IN BELIZE

The Government of Belize is pleased to announce a significant milestone in their partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) for the nation's sustainable development and economic growth. The IDB is set to establish brand new offices in Belize City. This development underscores the IDB's deep commitment to Belize and marks a crucial step in the joint efforts to foster economic growth and multisectoral development. The new site, strategically located to optimize collaboration and resource allocation, will accommodate a growing team dedicated to expanding projects across various sectors. [Read more.](#)

NEW WORLD BANK STUDY IDENTIFIES REFORMS TO IMPROVE PUBLIC SPENDING IN BELIZE



Belize could reduce government debt to below 50 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by undertaking reforms in targeted areas, according to the World Bank's Public Expenditure Review, launched today. The report shows that for Belize to maintain the current positive trend in the quality of its fiscal policies, the country needs to increase its ability to respond to external shocks, improve value for money in key social and investment programs, manage growth in public sector wages, and optimize spending related to climate change.

"The compounding challenges of high debt, global financial conditions, and low growth rates intensify the strain on public budgets. This review takes a close look at the core of Belize's fiscal challenges and identifies steps toward establishing a sustainable fiscal framework for public expenditure in Belize and maximizing value for money in important sectors such as health and education," said Lilia Burunciuc, World Bank Country Director for the Caribbean. [Read more.](#)

TOWARDS SPENDING MORE EFFECTIVELY: LESSONS LEARNED FROM BELIZE'S EDUCATION SECTOR

In an opinion piece, Lilia Burunciuc, the World Bank Country Director for the Caribbean, highlighted the importance of education for Belize's future. Despite significant investments, Belize's education system faces challenges in quality and access. The Public Expenditure Review conducted by the World Bank reveals that while education spending is high, enrollment rates have declined, and student performance remains inadequate. The review suggests enhancing accountability, updating assessments, and implementing best practices to improve education outcomes. Burunciuc emphasized the need for sustained efforts to prepare Belizean children for the future, advocating for a collaborative approach involving stakeholders across the education sector. [Learn more.](#)



WORLD BANK STRENGTHENS SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR THE VULNERABLE IN JAMAICA

On March 14, 2024, the World Bank's Board of Directors approved an investment project to expand coverage and improve the delivery of Jamaica's social protection system, which is expected to benefit more than 290,000 people.

"We are committed to supporting Jamaica's efforts to strengthen its social protection system. This new project will provide vital assistance to vulnerable workers and households in Jamaica, while also laying a foundation for a stronger, more effective, and shock-responsive social protection system for the future", said Lilia Burunciuc, World Bank Country Director for the Caribbean. [Read more.](#)

JAMAICA TO LAUNCH BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS, BOOSTING COMMERCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE



During a recent meeting of the Standing Finance Committee of the House of Representatives, Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke, Minister of Finance and the Public Service, announced plans for groundbreaking legislation aimed at establishing business improvement districts in Jamaica. This initiative, developed in collaboration with the World Bank, seeks to bolster private sector involvement in the maintenance of commercial areas, showcasing a proactive approach to enhancing the country's infrastructure and economic landscape. [Read more.](#)

JAMAICA: GOVERNMENT PLANS TO INTRODUCE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Unemployment insurance will become a reality for Jamaica. This was announced by Finance Minister Dr. Nigel Clarke, who said before the end of June this year, a US\$20 million agreement will be signed with the World Bank towards implementing unemployment insurance on the island.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Security will spearhead the process with technical support from the World Bank according to Dr. Clarke: "The World Bank will assist us with many things, including the legislative architecture, the institutional mechanisms, administrative arrangements for unemployment insurance. And Minister Parnell Charles will have charge of this leg".

Dr. Clarke said a feasibility study was conducted which indicates that workers would need to contribute as little as 0.8% of salary, or as much as 1.5% of salary, with capital contribution from the government of a few billion dollars for the benefit to be provided. [Learn more.](#)



GUYANA: GOVERNMENT TO SPEND \$13M TO DO SOIL TEST FOR SCHOOL



The government through the Ministry of Education will be spending \$13 million to conduct geotechnical investigation and topographical survey on the site for the New Christiansburg Multilateral School in Region 10.

In a public advertisement previously, the Education Ministry stated that Guyana has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the 'Guyana Strengthening Human Capital through Education Project.' The agency intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments for the construction of the new school building. Already the ministry has tender to pre-qualify contractors to build the school, at which 10 contractors have applied. [Read more.](#)



WORLD BANK VP PRAISES SURINAME'S REFORMS, ANNOUNCES AID & IDA ACCESS



World Bank Regional Vice President, Carlos Felipe Jaramillo, on Monday March 18, paid a working visit to President Chandrikapersad Santokhi, the first time the senior vice president for Latin America and the Caribbean has visited the Dutch-speaking Caribbean Community (CARICOM) country.

"We are impressed with how Suriname is gradually emerging from the debt crisis. Many good decisions have been made. Difficult decisions, sometimes painful, but necessary to bring the situation under control and stabilise the economy," said Jaramillo.

The World Bank has announced more aid for Suriname, while also providing access to funds from the International Development Association (IDA). If the process to become a member of IDA is completed successfully, the country can count on a long-term soft loan of US\$22.5 million.

"My visit is also to take the World Bank's support to Suriname to the 'next level' That's why the most important announcement today is, we are pleased that Suriname is being granted access to the concessional arm of the World Bank, the IDA," Jaramillo said. [Read more.](#)

THE BLUE ECONOMY: AN OCEAN OF OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN

Although female tertiary school enrollment is twice that of the male level in most Eastern Caribbean countries, [the high human capital of Caribbean women has not translated into competitive opportunities in the labor market where they remain largely relegated to low-level, low-wage work, primarily in hospitality and tourism.](#)

The [Unleashing the Blue Economy of the Caribbean Project \(UBEC\)](#) is working to change that. A 15-year, \$90 million initiative funded by the World Bank and the multi-donor ocean trust fund PROBLUE, UBEC is designed to accelerate the Blue Economy by increasing targeted investments in the fisheries, tourism, and waste management sectors in the Eastern Caribbean, strengthening the enabling environment for a diversified economy, and creating pathways to more 'blue' employment opportunities for women. [Learn more.](#)



PRESERVING PARADISE - LOCAL SOLUTIONS FOR CARIBBEAN BIODIVERSITY



The Caribbean stands out as a globally renowned biodiversity hotspot, with its coral reefs, seagrass beds, mangroves, tropical rainforests and unique fauna. These ecosystems not only protect Caribbean coastlines from tropical storms and erosion but also serve as a critical source of food and jobs for local communities. Sadly, the Caribbean, much like many other parts of the world, faces an immediate and severe threat to these precious ecosystems. Interconnected crises, ranging from the unsustainable use of land to the impacts of climate change are rapidly accelerating the loss of biodiversity in the region.

Local organizations also have a longstanding and enduring presence in the region, with some having actively contributed to environmental causes for 30-40 years. Their enduring commitment provides a stabilizing force, ensuring continuity in efforts even amid political changes and shifts in government priorities. Among such local leaders are the recipients of grants from the Caribbean Hotspot Project, a World Bank initiative aimed at supporting civil society organizations actively working in biodiversity conservation. [Learn more.](#)



ADDRESSING INCLUSION IN PUBLIC BUDGETS FOR GREATER GENDER EQUALITY



A gender-responsive budget is one that recognizes the differential impacts of public entities' expenditure and revenue policies on women and men, and leverages this approach to help create more inclusive societies. As indicated in a report prepared by the World Bank, several countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have made significant progress in integrating gender considerations into public budget planning.

The gender-responsive budgeting approach is particularly important for Caribbean countries, as they are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. "It is imperative to budget for equity and equality in natural disaster risk management, as natural disasters have been shown to disproportionately impact women, children, persons with disabilities, ethnic and racial minorities, Indigenous peoples, and other marginalized communities," adds Urska Zrinski, Senior Public Sector Specialist at the World Bank and an expert in gender-responsive budgeting.

In this regard, the World Bank is also providing support to Caribbean states for the development of gender-responsive budgeting with a broad-based approach, including the aspect of gender-responsive public procurement. [Read the full article here.](#) [The "Financing for Gender Equality in Latin America and the Caribbean" report is available here.](#)

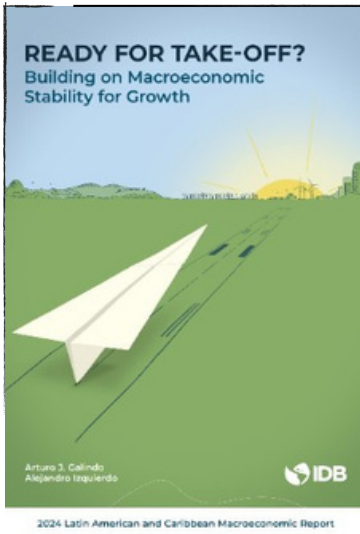
INFOGRAPHIC: STACY DECIDES TO BECOME A SCIENTIST

Gender equality remains a challenge in the Caribbean, despite notable progress in recent years. Several challenges still prevent women from equal opportunities and participation. However, with girls like Stacy, and the new generation of women leaders, things are changing! The World Bank is helping to make this change happen. [Download the infographic here.](#)





IDB: A NEW REPORT STRESSES REFORMS TO BOOST PRODUCTIVITY AND SEIZE MARKETS IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD



Latin American and Caribbean institutions moved forcefully to head off dangers in 2023. Central banks swiftly raised interest rates in the face of inflation, and governments imposed well-considered fiscal policies that brought average primary balances to a level superior to that before the COVID-19 pandemic. Along with strong financial regulation and supervision and resilient financial markets, these robust responses led the region's economies to outperform expectations, with GDP growth reaching 2.1% in 2023, a full percentage point above early 2023 predictions.

Challenges now loom in the near and medium term. Global growth is expected to slow in 2024 and market analysts predict growth in the region will ease to 1.6%, returning to the long-term average of 2% in 2025. This is inadequate to meet the rising aspirations of the region's burgeoning population.

The IDB's recently released [2024 Latin American and the Caribbean Macroeconomic Report](#) addresses these challenges. It analyzes reforms needed to cement macroeconomic stability and catalyze the much-needed productivity growth through an in-depth look at the monetary, fiscal, labor market and financial arenas. [Learn more.](#) Download the 2024 Latin American and the Caribbean Macroeconomic Report "Ready for Take Off? Building on Macroeconomic Stability for Growth" [here](#).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OAS AND INCIBE OPEN CALL FOR PARTICIPATION IN CYBERSECURITY SUMMER BOOTCAMP 2024

The Organization of American States (OAS) and the Spanish National Cybersecurity Institute (INCIBE) has opened the call for applications to participate as students in the ninth edition of the Cybersecurity Summer BootCamp, to be held in July in Spain.

This specialized cybersecurity training program aims to provide participants with intensive, hands-on training in relevant topics on the latest techniques for combating cybercrime, cybersecurity incident management and the legislative aspects to be considered in all of them.

This latest edition of #CyberSBC2024 will take place from July 8-18, 2024 in the city of León, Spain. It will feature a series of practical workshops, keynotes and tracks given by leading international cybersecurity experts, designed to provide participants with an enriching and unique learning experience in Spanish, English and French, as well as role-plays, guided tours of the city of León and visits to its most emblematic monuments. [Learn more.](#)

To formalize the application, those interested should follow the [instructions published](#) on the initiative's website.

Registration will be open for all interested applicants until April 18, 2024 [here](#).



SAVE THE DATE: CAWI CARIBBEAN LEADERS' OPEN DIALOGUE



SPRING MEETINGS
2024 | WASHINGTON DC
INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND
WORLD BANK GROUP

CAWI's Caribbean Leaders' Open Dialogue

MOVING INTO THE FUTURE: TRANSFORMING INTER-REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION IN THE CARIBBEAN

Transportation plays a key role in driving transformative economic and social development in Caribbean countries. In addition to serving as a source of job creation, the reliable transportation of people and products affects all aspects of Caribbean economies, from agriculture and food security to tourism.

During this Caribbean Leaders' Open Dialogue (CLOD), policymakers, investors, and transport professionals will take a deep dive into the urgent need for financially sustainable models for inter-regional transportation; explore the correlation between transportation investments, climate change, and economic growth; and highlight the role that all stakeholders play in mobilizing resources for safer, more resilient, and more inclusive transportation across the Caribbean.

WED, APRIL 17, 2024
12:30PM - 2:00PM EDT

WORLD BANK HQ
ROOM MC 13-400

REGISTER NOW

GIVEN SECURITY MEASURES DURING THE SPRING MEETINGS, ONLY WBG/IMF STAFF AND PEOPLE FORMALLY REGISTERED FOR THE SPRING MEETINGS WILL BE ABLE TO ATTEND IN PERSON.

THE EVENT WILL BE LIVE-STREAMED AND A WEBEX LINK WILL BE PROVIDED FOR ATTENDEES PARTICIPATING VIRTUALLY.

LUNCH WILL BE SERVED AT 12:00PM EDT FOR IN-PERSON ATTENDEES. SESSION WILL START AT 12:30PM EDT.

Organized by the Caribbean Association of World Bank and International Monetary Fund Staff (CAWI), in collaboration with the WBG's Executive Director's Office for Canada, Ireland, and the Caribbean.

CALLING FOR VOLUNTEERS

WE ARE LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS TO HELP WITH THE LOGISTICS OF THE NEXT CARIBBEAN LEADERS OPEN DIALOGUE EVENT ON APRIL 17, 2024 AND OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS.

FOR ANYONE WILLING TO HELP, PLEASE SEND AN EMAIL TO CAWI@WORLD BANK.ORG.



JOB OPENING: SLASHROOTS FOUNDATION RECRUITING OPERATIONS MANAGER AND POLICY LEAD

The [SlashRoots Foundation](#) is a social impact organisation that uses the principles and practices of the digital age to create a more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable Caribbean society. We work with governments, development organizations, and civil society to improve the design and delivery of social services and development programmes, while helping them be more responsive to the communities they serve.

Operations Manager: The SlashRoots Foundation is seeking an experienced and creative problem-solver to lead our organisation through its next stage of development. The ideal candidate has experience working with nonprofits or early-stage organisations and helping them grow. The Operations Manager will lead the review, assessment and improvement of people development, employee benefits, and financial management.

Policy Lead: SlashRoots is looking for a Policy Lead to champion our contributions to the policy and regulatory debates that shape the services affecting the everyday lives of Jamaicans and people across the Caribbean region. You'll bring deep and demonstrated interest in Jamaica's policy development and implementation process. Prior experience working on policy areas such as digital government, access to information, digital identity, privacy, and data protection are especially welcome. Internally you'll work with members of the SlashRoots team to advise on policy developments and contribute to the multi-disciplinary analysis of development challenges. Externally, the Policy Lead will work with a broad range of policymakers, academics, community partners, and third-party experts to advance human-centred policy positions that produce a more inclusive and equitable society.

Prospective candidates should review the [2024 Year Ahead](#) publication to learn more about what SlashRoots aims to accomplish this year. Visit their career page to apply [here](#).

JOB OPENINGS AT UNICEF

Please see below two job openings from UNICEF in Jamaica and Guyana:

Communication Officer - Digital Media: In this position, the Communication Officer -Digital Media will assist in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating a digital media strategy that contributes to the achievement of UNICEF Jamaica's broader communication and advocacy strategy. Under the guidance of the Deputy Representative, assists in developing and implementing RapidPro solutions to support. Position is open to Nationals only. To apply, click [here](#).

Individual Consultant: This consultancy is to support Guyana's study of out of school children within the Global Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI). This requires strong technical expertise in data and policy analysis with regards to out-of-school children, as well as project implementation skills to ensure completion of the analysis. The position is open to Nationals/Internationals. To apply, click [here](#).