



INSIDE TVET

TVET Council: 15 years and moving on

THE Technical and Vocational Education and Training Council (TVETC) recently concluded a week of celebrations to mark its 15th anniversary.

With the theme **TVET: Enabling And Supporting The Development Of A Competent And Competitive Workforce**, the week of activities ran from September 20 to 26, 2009. The main events included a National Skills Day Showcase, a stakeholders' review meeting to examine the local **Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)** system, and an anniversary dinner.

Acting Prime Minister Freundel Stuart delivered the feature address at the anniversary dinner which was held on Saturday, September 26, at the Crane Resort, St Philip. While congratulating the **TVET Council** on reaching its 15th anniversary, he noted that 15 was the age at which teenagers began to transition to young adulthood.

"Symbolically then, this means that the **TVET Council** is moving from the stage of existence in which a firm foundation was being laid by you, its management, staff and key stakeholders, to the next stage in which you will take charge of your destiny, thus ensuring that your contributions help to mould and strongly impact the society in which we live."

He added: "I expect this to be achieved as you lead the charge in moving Barbados' traditional education and training system to one that is more progressive, results-oriented and firmly rooted in the concept of competence based education and training (CBET)."

Speaking on the current global recession, the acting Prime Minister, quoting International Labour Organisation (ILO) senior specialist, skills and employability, Dr Hassan B. Ndahi, noted that since the Great Depression of the late 1920s, the world economy had experienced recession about every decade or two.

He said: "While the temptation to downsize and limit investment in education and training is great because of declining revenue and production, visionary leaders will understand that recessions are shown to be followed by steady growth; growth driven mostly by the many ensuing innovations, and this recession is likely to follow that pattern."

The week of celebrations began with a church service at the Mount of Praise Wesleyan Holiness Church, Tudor Bridge, St Michael. The **TVET Council's** staff, Council members and major stakeholders were joined by Minister of State, Ministry of Labour and Immigration, Senator Arni Walters and other ministry officials to give thanks and praise for 15 years of achievement.

In his brief remarks Walters congratulated the council on reaching the 15-year milestone, noting that its role of coordinating and managing the technical and



ACTING PRIME MINISTER Freundel Stuart (right) presenting an award of appreciation for 15 years of dedicated service to the TVET Council to Rudolph Gibbons, executive trustee of BIMAP. Gibbons served as deputy chairman and chairman, respectively, of the Council from 1994-2008. (GP)

vocational education and training system was especially important, given the current economic circumstances and the even greater need for workforce training and certification.

Senior pastor of the Mount of Praise Church, Rev. McAthin Hinds, who delivered the sermon, urged the congregation to seek their Kingdom of God assignment on earth rather than wait for the afterlife to fulfil God's purpose for them. He also urged Barbados' workforce to bring a Kingdom of God perspective to their work lives and anything else in which they engaged.

At the **National Skills Day Showcase**, which took place on Wednesday, September 23, at the **Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre (LESC)**, Walters, who delivered the feature address at the opening ceremony, reiterated his call to employers and the wider workforce to support the **TVET Council's** mandate of developing a competent and competitive workforce. He said: "A successful **TVET** system will help to ensure that Barbados' workforce and the economy is in a position to bounce back when the current global economic recession ends."

He added: "The availability of NVQs (National Vocational

Qualifications) and CVQs (Caribbean Vocational Qualifications) to the workforce would assist in producing trained and certified workers who have the skills and experience to qualify them to fill jobs here and so lessen the dependence on external labour.

"I therefore encourage the students who will be present here today to utilise training and certification opportunities to equip them to not only work for someone else but to become self-employed or small business owners. It is accepted that one of the ways for an economy to grow is for a country to develop small and medium-sized enterprises."

Chairman of the **TVET Council**, Dr Hensley Sobers, in his welcome address noted that successful workforce training and assessment should result in competence-based certification such as NVQs and CVQs.

He added: "Private and public sector organisations, through their management employees and non-management-employees, need to utilise as their strategic emphasis for improved productivity and sustainable growth, the competence-based education and training model being



MINISTER OF STATE, Ministry of Labour and Immigration, Senator Arni Walters (right) presenting Geoffrey Yearwood, Manager of the Council's Employment and Training Fund, with his 15-year award. (GP)



MINISTER OF STATE, Labour and Immigration, Senator Arni Walters (right) presenting Gloria Jones, administrative officer, with a special award for outstanding service to the TVET Council throughout her 14 years of employment. (GP)

spearheaded by the **TVET Council.**"

While delivering the chairperson's opening remarks at the TVET Review Meeting 2009 on Thursday, September 24, also at the **LESC**, executive director of the **TVET Council**, Trevor King, said that it was timely that **TVETC**, as the agency mandated to coordinate and manage Barbados' **TVET** system, joined together with its main stakeholders in workforce development to examine the strengths and weaknesses as well and the opportunities and challenges to this system.

"This is to enable the development of a productive, inclusive and quality-driven **TVET** system for Barbados," he stressed.

Deputy general secretary of the Barbados Workers' Union (BWU), Robert "Bobby" Morris, who delivered remarks on behalf of the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados (CTUSAB), stressed the importance of core skills and higher level **TVET** to the workforce.

"We need to continue to improve on the delivery of core skills, including literacy, numeracy, IT applications, communication, team work, problem-solving and other

basics but even more so we need to concentrate on higher-level professional, technical and other skills if we are to continue generating the entrepreneurial leadership necessary to take our country forward," he said.

Ben Arindell, who spoke on behalf of the Barbados Private Sector Association, stressed that it was important to increase efforts to equip Barbados' workforce with the skills required to survive and compete effectively in a rapidly changing and uncertain global trading environment. He noted tourism and international business, in particular, were two sectors where an efficient and productive workforce was a critical element.

"A good case in point is the possible opportunities that may be available in the European Union (EU) following the signing of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). However, in order to take advantage of these opportunities, we need to provide our exporters, of both services and goods, with the necessary support to enable them to meet the standards that are required in order for them to be able to operate and compete in various countries in the EU," he said.