

Foreign Exchange Summary

as at January 2, 2021

Member State	USD	CAD	GBP	Euro
Bahamas (BSD)	1.00	0.79	1.37	1.22
Barbados (BBD)	2.03	1.59	2.78	2.51
Belize (BZD)	2.02	1.60	2.77	2.49
Guyana (GYD)	218.00	165.16	287.17	258.46
Haiti (HTG)	73.77	57.74	99.81	90.59
Jamaica * (JMD)	142.71	111.41	193.67	176.83
OECS (XCD)	2.71	2.13	3.67	3.30
Suriname (SRD)	14.29	11.12	19.44	17.55
T&T (TTD)	6.80	5.61	9.71	9.38

*Rates applicable for Customs & GCT purposes

Business News In Brief

SVG's 2020 revenues higher than 2019 — Finance Minister

In a break with tradition, the government of St Vincent and The Grenadines, in the absence of a budget for 2021, received approval from Parliament to borrow EC\$125 million for capital expenditure for next year. Public Sector Investment Loan No. 2 Act 2020, presented by Minister of Finance, Camillo Gonsalves, authorises the government to raise funds to assist the government in financing the public sector investment programme (PSIP). However, the Minister was quick to assure Parliament that “in fact, our revenues increased slightly over our 2019 numbers” noting that the country’s economic decline was minimised. ([IWNSVG](#))

Jamaica's tourism sector loses \$76 Billion in 2020

Jamaica’s Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett says that the sector ended 2020 with an estimated loss of \$76 billion given the COVID-19 pandemic. Bartlett linked his prediction to the fact that the country welcomed just over 1.1 million visitors over the first 10 months of 2020, a 67.6% decline relative to the 3.4 million visitors over the same period in 2019. The Minister noted that following a record-breaking year in 2019, tourism receipts for January and February indicated that the sector was growing at a rate of 5.2% at the start of 2020. He lamented that “If that trend had held, we would have welcomed more than 5 million visitors and earned a historic US\$5 billion by year-end.” ([JO](#))

Jamaican economy declines by 10.7% in third quarter

The Jamaican economy declined by 10.7% in the third quarter of 2020 relative to the similar quarter of 2019. This decline reported by the Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN) is lower than the Planning Institute of Jamaica's estimate in November of a 11.3% contraction. STATIN said the downturn was due to declines of 13.1% in the Services industry and 3.5% in the Goods Producing industry. According to STATIN, the economy was impacted by the continued spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures implemented to limit its spread. It said all industries within the Services Industries declined, except for the Producers of Government Services which grew by 0.1%. The negative impact of COVID-19 was felt more severely in the Hotels and Restaurants, Transport, Storage and Communication and Other Services industries. There was an 81.8% decline in stopover arrivals to the island and there were no cruise passenger arrivals for the period under review. ([RJR](#))

Corporate Movements

⇒ The Trinidad and Tobago Unit Trust Corporation has announced that both Judith Sobion, Vice President, Corporate Services and Warren Sookdar, Chief Information Officer demitted office as at December 31.

Trinidad keeps inflation in check, imposes cement quota

The Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago has reported that food inflation was 5.1% as it decided to keep its repo rate at 3.5%. The Bank said overall headline inflation remained contained, measuring 0.9% in the 12 months to November 2020. The Central Bank said the domestic economy remained “subdued” during the third quarter of 2020, but there were signs of resurgence in construction—notably public works and home repairs—as well as manufacturing. In the meantime, the TT Government has advised of the introduction of a Quota, Import Licensing Regime and Registration System for Cement (Building Cement – Grey and Other Hydraulic Cements) effective 01 January 2021. From 01 January 2021 and continuing for an initial period of 3 years, an annual Quota Ceiling will apply to the importation of the following types of cement: Building cement (grey) – HS 2523.29.10; Other hydraulic cements – HS 2523.90.00. The initial maximum quota ceiling allowed for importation for both types of cement is 75,000 tonnes (inclusive) for 2021 and will be applicable to all Importers and Distributors. ([TE](#)) ([GovTT](#))

Stock Market Summary

as at January 2, 2021

Jamaica Stock Exchange

Overall Market activity resulted from trading in 47 stocks of which 22 advanced, 19 declined and 6 traded firm. Market volume amounted to 39,603,360 units valued at over J\$1,040,427,383.49. TransJamaican Highway Limited was volume leader with 10,197,113 units. Index advanced by 2,013.69 points to close at 395,614.93.

Jamaica Junior Stock Exchange

Overall market activity resulted from trading in 40 stocks of which 28 advanced, 10 declined and 2 traded firm. Market volume amounted to 5,626,924 units valued at over J\$14,533,347.46. Index closed at 2,643.38.

Barbados Stock Exchange

I security advanced and 1 traded firm as 4,526 shares traded with a total value of \$7,232.00. FirstCaribbean International Bank was the volume leader trading 3,526 shares. Index closed at 2,598.39.

Trinidad & Tobago Stock Exchange

Overall Market activity resulted from trading in 13 securities of which 5 advanced, 3 declined and 5 traded firm. Trading activity on the First Tier Market registered a volume of 124,906 shares crossing the floor of the Exchange valued at TT\$2,473,703.42. NCB Financial Group Ltd was volume leader with 51,024 shares changing hands for a value of TT\$414,825.12. The All T&T Index advanced by 6.37 points to close at 1772.61 and the Composite Index advanced by 1.51 points to close at 1323.11.

Guyana Stock Exchange

1 stock advanced and 3 declined as 3,662,850 units crossed the floor. Banks DIH (DIH) was volume leader with 3,180,223 shares traded. The LSI closed at 691.87.

Eastern Caribbean Securities Exchange (ECSE)

100 shares traded with East Caribbean Financial Holding Company Ltd being the sole trader. Index closed at 147.02.

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Business News In Brief

The Bahamas removed from FATF gray list

The Bahamas has been removed from the Financial Action Task Force's (FATF's) gray list of jurisdictions considered to have strategic deficiencies in their anti-money laundering/countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) regimes. According to the FATF, "The Bahamas has strengthened the effectiveness of its AML/CFT system and addressed related technical deficiencies to meet the commitments in its action plan and remedy the strategic deficiencies identified by the FATF in October 2018." According to the Regulator, "The FATF now delists The Bahamas from the list of jurisdictions under increased monitoring. The Bahamas is therefore no longer subject to the FATF's increased monitoring process. The Bahamas will continue to work with CFATF to improve further its AML/CFT regime." ([NG](#))

News Highlights

- [Pivotal Moment for Guyana: Realising the Opportunities](#)
- [What is Really New in Fintech](#)

Suriname's cash reserve ratio now 39%

Effective December 30, 2020, the Central Bank of Suriname (CBvS) has increased the cash reserve ratio from 35 to 39%. According to the CBvS, the need for the monetary policy adjustment is attributable to the excess liquidity in the economy which is a potential source of pressure on the exchange rate and thus also on the prices of goods and services. An increase in the cash reserve percentage is usually accompanied by a slight increase in the interest rates that the banks charge on loans. However, the interest income that the banks will generate on the (short) term investments should mitigate the negative interest rate impact. In an effort to minimize a possible negative impact of the higher cash reserve requirement on the interest rates, CBvS, will seek to remove the remaining excess liquidity by offering (short) term investments to the banks ([CBvS](#))

International Oil Prices as at January 2, 2021

Futures	Price	US\$ Change	Change %
WTI Crude	US\$48.42	+0.12	+0.25
Brent Crude	US\$51.72	+0.33	+0.64
OPEC Basket	US\$50.78	+0.66	+1.32
Natural Gas	US\$2.55	+0.12	+4.94