

Foreign Exchange Summary

as at October 9, 2020

| Member State | USD | CAD | GBP | Euro |
|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Bahamas (BSD) | 1.00 | 0.76 | 1.31 | 1.18 |
| Barbados (BBD) | 2.03 | 1.54 | 2.64 | 2.40 |
| Belize (BZD) | 2.02 | 1.54 | 2.63 | 2.40 |
| Guyana (GYD) | 218.00 | 159.73 | 272.54 | 248.50 |
| Haiti (HTG) | 63.12 | 48.17 | 82.70 | 74.74 |
| Jamaica * (JMD) | 147.20 | 113.39 | 189.70 | 175.24 |
| OECS (XCD) | 2.71 | 2.04 | 3.50 | 3.18 |
| Suriname (SRD) | 14.29 | 10.79 | 18.49 | 16.86 |
| T&T (TTD) | 6.80 | 5.41 | 9.30 | 8.41 |

*Rates applicable for Customs & GCT purposes

Business News In Brief

Commonwealth finance ministers plea for financial support

Commonwealth Finance Ministers have called on the G20, Paris Club, World Bank and IMF to extend financial support to vulnerable nations given the significant economic impact of COVID-19. In a joint statement, the 54-member countries of the Commonwealth urged the G20 to extend its Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) beyond 2020; the Paris Club to lead on innovative debt instruments to facilitate additional liquidity to vulnerable states; and greater flexibility from the multilateral development banks in their treatment of the impact of COVID-19 to enhance access to financing. [\(JO\)](#)

LIAT to resume operations in November?

LIAT, the cash-strapped sub-regional airline, is tipped to return to the skies in November. That's the word from Antigua's Information Minister Melford Nicholas who declined to provide a specific date for relaunch. "There are still operational issues... but from the report that was shared with us by the Prime Minister the conditions are going to be in place for LIAT to take to the skies in the new month," said Nicholas. Earlier this year, Antigua unveiled a new plan for the airline proposing re-investment of EC\$108 million and indicating that under the new plan the island was prepared to underwrite up to 50% of the required capitalisation. LIAT halted all commercial flights on April 4, 2020 in the wake of the border closures occasioned by COVID-19. [\(NN\)](#) [\(AN\)](#)

Jamaica lowers primary surplus target

Jamaica is further revising down Jamaica's primary surplus target to 3.1% among other measures, to cover almost \$17 billion in additional expenditure for the current fiscal year. According to Finance Minister Nigel Clarke preliminary numbers for the 6 months ending September 30, show that overall revenues were \$8 billion or 3% than budgeted but 18.8% lower than the corresponding 6 months of 2019. Corporate taxation and Pay As You Earn (PAYE) performed ahead of budget by 16% and 8%, respectively. However, General Consumption Tax (GCT) receipts on local activity were 3% lower than budgeted and 16% less than April – September 2019. Revenue from International Trade taxes was lower than budgeted by 3% and lower than last year by 32% over the comparable period. Consistent with the fall in trade volumes, customs duty, stamp duty and GCT on imports were, respectively, 7%, 28% and 1% lower than budgeted and 21%, 40% and 27% lower than last year. In addition, travel tax receipts were down by \$9.5 billion or 80% on last year. [\(JIS\)](#) [\(NNN\)](#)

Corporate Movements

- ⇒ Lasco Financial Services Ltd has appointed Norris Clarke as Group Financial Controller effective October 1, 2020 ;
- ⇒ Caribbean Assurance Brokers Ltd has appointed Tania Waldron-Gooden as Deputy Chief Executive Officer effective October 1, 2020

Merchandise imports in Cayman plummet by 32%

The total value of merchandise imports in the Cayman Islands fell by almost one-third in the second quarter, compared to the same period in 2019, reflecting the slump in economic activity due to COVID-19. The total value of \$186.97 million of imported goods during the quarter represented a 32.1% decline over the year before. Non-petroleum imports dropped by 28% and petroleum-related imports by 59.1%. Especially large declines were recorded in imports of food and live animals such as fruits and vegetables, meat, and fish, which slumped by 46.6%, and miscellaneous manufactured articles such as footwear and clothing, which declined by 59.7%. In the first six months of this year, about 85.3% of imported goods in terms of value came from the US, followed by Jamaica with 3.28%, and the UK with 1.79%. Last year, the Cayman Islands imported a record \$1.18 billion worth of goods, representing a 13.5% increase compared to 2018. [\(CC\)](#)

Stock Market Summary

as at October 9, 2020

Jamaica Stock Exchange

Overall Market activity resulted from trading in 41 stocks of which 16 advanced, 18 declined and 7 traded firm. Market volume amounted to 9,609,776 units valued at over J\$53,167,158.46. Wigton Windfarm Ltd Ordinary Shares was the volume leader with 2,517,243 units (26.2%). Index declined by 674.19 points (0.18 %) to close at 371,394.93.

Jamaica Junior Stock Exchange

Overall market activity resulted from trading in 35 stocks of which 14 advanced, 12 declined and 9 traded firm. Market volume amounted to 10,543,614 units valued at over J\$37,132,663.78 . Index closed at 2,502.49.

Barbados Stock Exchange

1 security declined & 1 traded firm as 1,500 shares traded with a total value of \$17,500. FirstCaribbean Intl. Bank was volume leader - 1,000 shares. Index closed at 2,655.47.

Trinidad & Tobago Stock Exchange

Overall Market activity resulted from trading in 15 securities of which 6 advanced, 7 declined and 2 traded firm. Trading activity on the First Tier Market registered a volume of 256,924 shares crossing the floor of the Exchange valued at TT\$2,657,500.17. JMMB Group Limited was volume leader with 200,000 shares changing hands for a value of TT\$360,000.00. The All T&T Index declined by 10.77 points to close at 1,775.37. The Composite Index declined by 2.70 points to close at 1,316.05 and the Cross Listed Index advanced by 0.75 points to close at 115.77.

Guyana Stock Exchange

2 stock declined & 3 traded firm as 151,501 units traded. Demerara Distillers Ltd (DDL) was volume leader with 112,000 shares traded. The LSI closed at 641.39.

Eastern Caribbean Securities Exchange (ECSE)

450 Bank of St Vincent and the Grenadines Ltd shares traded at \$6.75 . Index closed at 160.78.

CARICOM Business is a weekly newsletter produced by the Directorate of Trade & Economic Integration.

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Business News In Brief

Consultations begin on PFM reform in The Bahamas

Consultations have begun in The Bahamas on 2 Bills that are geared towards enhancing governance, accountability and transparency in the management of public finances and national debt. In this regard, feedback is being sought on both the Public Debt Management Bill and Public Finance Management Bill by November 17. The reforms are slated to address "gaps and inconsistencies with international best practices" in the current fiscal stewardship framework. The Public Debt Management Bill, will legally codify the requirement for the Government to prepare and implement a debt management plan, along with a borrowing strategy. Whereas, the Public Finance Management Bill also brings state-owned enterprises under its oversight. ([Tribune242](#))

News Highlights

- [Trinidad and Tobago National Budget Review 2020/2021](#)
- [World Bank: The Cost of Staying Healthy](#)
- [The Great Lockdown, Dissecting the Economic Impact](#)

T&T 2020 Financial System Stability Assessment completed

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has concluded the Financial System Stability Assessment (FSAP) with Trinidad and Tobago. According to the FSSA the banking system was well capitalized and liquid but exposed to sovereign risk and potential liquidity risks stemming from non-bank financial entities in the group. While recognizing the progress made by the authorities, including to significantly enhance the AM-L/CFT framework, the FSSA recommended they accelerate efforts to strengthen the regulatory framework. Measures should include strengthening the independence, governance, and resources of financial supervisors; implementing the new banking regulations and modern, risk-based insurance supervision; and introducing system-wide regulation for investment funds while adopting a carefully sequenced transition to floating value investments. ([IMF](#))

International Oil Prices as at October 9, 2020

| Futures | Price | US\$ Change | Change % |
|-------------|-----------|-------------|----------|
| WTI Crude | US\$40.52 | -0.75 | -1.82 |
| Brent Crude | US\$42.82 | -0.63 | -1.45 |
| OPEC Basket | US\$41.06 | +0.61 | +1.51 |
| Natural Gas | US\$2.76 | +0.13 | +4.94 |