

Image not found or type unknown

Barbados Using Innovative Ways to Contact, Forge Ties With Diaspora

Government / **Published On February 11, 2020 05:52 AM /**

Staff Consortium **February 11, 2020**

Image not found or type unknown



A Barbadian national

BARBADOS — The Barbados Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade is intensifying its outreach to the diaspora to encourage more second, third, and fourth generation Barbadians to register with the ministry, the Barbados government has made known.

Minister in the Ministry of Foreign Trade, Sandra Husbands, said it was looking to relaunch its National We Gatherin' 2020 competition to achieve deeper penetration into the diaspora. The competition is designed to provide the government with contact information for its diaspora.

Ms. Husbands disclosed that approximately 10,000 Barbadians living abroad had registered with the ministry or its overseas missions, and she hoped that many others would do so.

“We know that we have hundreds of thousands more persons of Barbadian descent. We are now into second, third, and fourth generation Barbadians and some of them never had the opportunity to bond and connect with us in the way the first generation would have We want to reconnect with them,” she said.

The diaspora registration drive is being facilitated through the ministry’s National We Gatherin’ 2020 competition, where persons who submit their details will get a chance to win prizes including a trip to Barbados.

“There are a number of people who have started to put in their information, but what we want to do is intensify it now, especially with Barbadians coming home for We Gatherin’. If they can help us to find and locate our second, third, and fourth generation Barbadians, then what we will have is an asset base that we can look at, and identify some of the things people wish to do; ways in which they want to help Barbados and ways in which they can help us export goods and services,” Ms. Husbands said.

“One of the other critical things they can do is help us with political lobbying because they are in capitals where decisions are being made that will affect us. So, how can we engage them to help make representation for the things that are important to the Caribbean?” she queried.

Ms. Husbands pointed out that several countries have also been pursuing this approach, including Ireland, Scotland, Ghana and Grenada.

She noted that the ministry was also seeking to record the contribution of Barbadian excellence in the diaspora through its Global Stories project, since many Bajans in their adopted countries have “by their living done credit to their nation”.

The minister believes that the stories of these persons in the diaspora could be used to inspire generations of Barbadians at home, and to promote trade.

“You have people with skills, knowledge and connections that can be an inspiration for current day generation Barbadians. We want little kids who sit in St. Stephen’s Primary or at West Terrace Primary School to hear that there is a person, a Barbadian, who attended their school many years ago and now is doing great things across the world,” she explained.

“People trade with people they can trust. You only trust people that you know, so we can use those global stories to help us penetrate new markets that we have not been in before. Barbados is looking at going to Ghana; we are looking at Kenya ..., and Ghanaians are amazed at how Barbadians look like them. Once you have that connection and people feel that we are family, it is going to be so much easier for them to use our products; listen to our music; and come to our festivals and so on, because there is an emotional connection. So, that is why this is so important to Barbados and to the Prime Minister’s Vision 2020. Finding our diaspora and registering them is key to our success in the future,” Ms. Husbands stated. To find out more about the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ diaspora registration drive, visit the We Gatherin Website.