

## **BRIEFING FOR MINISTER JOSEPH FROR BEYOND THE HEADLINES ON SOCIAL PARTNERS**

The Committee of Social Partners (CSP) was formed in March 2013 and is chaired by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Dr. Keith Mitchell. The Committee comprises representatives from the Labour Unions, Conference of Churches in Grenada, the Evangelical Churches, Civil Society, Private Sector Organisations and Government. The Committee meets on a monthly basis and, to date, the Committee has held thirteen (13) monthly meetings, with the last meeting being held on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014.

The main objective of the Committee is to foster a relationship/ common approach between Government and the social partners through the development and implementation of a National Social Protocol/Compact as a strategic mechanism for the formulation and implementation of national policies and for ensuring nation-wide problem solving on various issues. It will be considered as one of the main platforms for bringing about positive economic growth and job creation.

The CSP has been engaged in the following to date:

- 1. Memorandum of Intent** – The signed a MOI on **October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013** signed a Memorandum which signaled its commitment to negotiate a *Social Compact*.
- 2. Development of a Social Compact** – the Social Compact is the Agreement that will guide the working relationship of the partners over the next few years. In this regard, Government contracted Dr. Andre Vincent Henry, a leading consultant in the Caribbean, to facilitate the process. Several consultations were held with the partners and their membership. The National United Front and the National Democratic Congress were also engaged. This decision to engage the political parties was made when the Social Partners agreed that the old practice in which a new government reverses or delays almost all of the initiatives taken by the previous administration thereby causing the Country to lose valuable time and opportunity, was not in the best interest of Grenadians. To avoid that, the Social Partners agreed that other political parties should be invited to share their views on the drafting of the *Social Compact*. Both parties initially accepted the invitation. Unfortunately, the representatives of the National Democratic Congress had to cancel their attendance at the session, due to unforeseen circumstances. A copy of the document was however given to them and their comments solicited. The

approach used in the development of the Compact is new and represents a commitment by Government to the widest possible dialogue and consultation in addressing the challenges now confronting our Nation. Many countries have social dialogue processes; the Grenada approach is one that is most inclusive, as it also involves strong representation by the civil society organisations and faith-based organisations.

Dr. Henry has since developed a draft Compact which was presented to and endorsed by Cabinet and has been posted on the Government of Grenada's website ([www.gov.gd](http://www.gov.gd)) for public scrutiny. Comments/suggestions can be sent to [nationasocialpartnersforum@gmail.com](mailto:nationasocialpartnersforum@gmail.com) or [financegrenada@gmail.com](mailto:financegrenada@gmail.com).

A complementing Action Plan has been developed for implementation of the Compact.

- 3. Public Education Series** – The CSP launched a public education series styled *National Social Partners Forum* on Tuesday October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013. The launch took place at the Grenada Trade Center Annex. The main objectives of the series are:
- To have an informed national dialogue on the issues of high national significance; and
  - To forge consensus on how we, as a Nation, work together for Grenada's economic revival and prosperity.

The format of the series is that of a public discussion with panelists representing each partner. The discussion is carried live on television, radio and the internet and the general public is given the opportunity to send in their questions via email and have it answered by the panel.

To date five sessions have been held on the following topics:

- i. National Debt
- ii. Sustainable Jobs and Livelihoods
- iii. Productivity and Competitiveness
- iv. The Home Grown Programme
- v. Constitution Reform

- 4. Discussions on the Home Grown Programme** – Extensive discussions have been held on the Home Grown Programme for Fiscal Adjustments and

Reform. To this end a decision was reached to on the formation of a Monitoring Committee for the Programme. The proposed composition and Terms of Reference for the Committee are as follows:

- I. To monitor the implementation of the Homegrown Programme of Fiscal Adjustment and Reforms 2014-16 supported by development partners including the IMF, World Bank, Caribbean Development Bank and the European Union.
- II. Receive and review monthly reports from the Ministry of Finance on performance criteria and structural benchmarks as set out in the Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies (MEFP).
- III. Assist Government to achieve agreed targets and benchmarks.
- IV. Recommend corrective actions as deemed as necessary.
- V. Issue a communique after each meeting on its findings and recommendations.

#### **Proposed Composition**

- I. Government (Chair)
- II. Private Sector
- III. Labour Unions
- IV. Civil Society
- V. Churches
- VI. Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB)

Each Partner will nominate representatives.

- 5. Discussions on the New Imani Programme** - A presentation on the New Imani Programme was to the Committee by the Minister of Youth Empowerment and Sports, Hon. Emmalin Pierre, and a team from her Ministry. The presentation addressed some major concerns that were raised by members of the Social Partners at some of their meetings. It was as a result of these concerns that the Prime Minister thought it would be a valuable exercise to have that Ministry make a presentation to the Committee of Social Partners (CSP). The Minister and her team provided an overview of the

Programme and outlined the monitoring and evaluation process that is being used to assess the trainees. Mrs. Pierre also highlighted some of the challenges of the Programme as well as some of its successes thus far.

It was revealed that close to 300 trainees have been terminated due to breaches including absenteeism (10 or more absences over a given time period). It was also pointed out that, in one instance where an employer had terminated his employees on receipt of IMANI trainees, the Ministry immediately withdrew the trainees, as the Programme is not intended to be a job replacement Programme.

On the other hand, several trainees have already found permanent employment and many more are testifying of the positive change that the mandatory personal development training has made in their lives. The “*Hotline*” for complaints and suggestions for the New IMANI Programme is (473) - 418-1875.

The members of the CSP took the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback on observations with regards to the Programme. They also provided suggestions for improvement and overcoming some of the challenges being faced. The Presentation was well received by the CSP.

- 6. Discussion on the Citizenship by Investment Programme** – A presentation on the CBI was made to the Committee at their last meeting on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> May. The presentation gave an overview of the various aspects of the Programme and addressed many of the concerns raised by the partners.