



“Applaud action not announcements”, says Trade Union Leaders

The HLSTUEI sponsored panel discussion on ‘**The IMF, the Budget and the Workers**’, which was held on Friday, April 29, brought together leaders from the major trade unions to discuss the implications of the 2010– 2011 budget. The discussion also dealt with the conditionalities of the International Monetary Fund and what this all means for the Jamaican worker. The discussion was chaired by Mr. Barry Dawes, Acting Gen. Secretary of the Trade Union Congress. He stated that the trade union movement was crucial to national development.

Economics Lecturer, Darron Thomas, provided an overview of the prevailing economic conditions, the governments thrust toward fiscal discipline, the IMF agreement and the budget presented by the Minister of Finance, Audley Shaw. He noted that the absence of growth has led to unemployment and problems associated with accessing monies to start small businesses. The real issue facing the government, he said, was balancing the need for increased production with fiscal prudence and management.

The President General of the BITU Kavan Gayle, stated that “we should not applaud announcements but action and results.” He noted that in the past the government acted in bad faith with the trade unions by unilaterally deciding on a wage freeze in 2009, and that the unions must hold the government accountable for what they promise the present system and style of governance is to change.

Bro. Gayle said the govt. “must engage in discussions with the unions before seeking an extension of the existing IMF Agreement if they are to win back the trust of the trade union movement and the workers.”

JALGO’s General Secretary Helen Davis-Whyte reminded the audience about the history of our borrowing relationship with the IMF and the negative implications it had on workers during the 1980s. She noted that the extension of the agreement could result in harsher measures for workers, and we should note the promises made in the budget “and hold the government to a higher standard.”

Mr. Jones, President of the JCSA stated that “this is a golden opportunity for the government to win over the Jamaican people through dialogue.” According to him the budget should not be developed without consultation with the various stakeholders, since it is through these consultations that we can make the right decisions about investment in such area as education. He noted that “if we are going to work our way out of poverty in this country it is on the back of education.” Finally, the JCSA President said that “an intensive thought process must be brought to the issue of



Sis. Helene Davis-Whyte - General Secretary



Bro. Kavan Gayle - President BITU



Bro. Wayne Jones - President JCSA



Bro. Vincent Morrison - President NWU



Bro. Barry Dawes - Acting General Secretary,

NWU President, Vincent Morrison questioned the wisdom of the government to spending \$ 62 million in total to established an embassy in Brazil, and to move the accountant general department to the air Jamaica building when the country’s debt has increased by 40 percent over the last three years.

DELEGATES' COURSE— A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

Participants in the one-month Introduction to Labour Studies Course have expressed pride and pleasure at the opportunity it has afforded them to be better officers and delegates and to return to their respective workplace with a new perspective on how the work for greater harmony, productivity and equity.

At the closing ceremony held on Friday, April 29, 2011 Course Co-ordinator, Mrs. Sainia Bennett-Davis, urged the participants to use their knowledge to not only advance themselves in a life-long learning process, but to make sure that they are able to give practical application to the skills and attitudes they have come away with during the last four weeks. She told the group that much effort has gone into making the 89th ILS Course meaningful and enlightening and to take account of the changing environment in which workers have to operate and the importance of making workers remain a central focus of the productivity and advancement of the organisations.

Nigel Cox, the class captain spoke on behalf of the group expressing their heartfelt thanks and appreciation to the staff of the HLSTUEI and acknowledging that while they came from different organisations with little knowledge, they would be leaving with a wealth of knowledge to take on the many challenges that are ahead. He urged them to remain in these hard times and reminded them that what a worker at his workplace, affects all workers.

The course covered such subjects as: **Communication Skills for Trade Unionists, the History and Development of Trade Unions in the Caribbean, the State and Society, How to Read Financial and Economic data, Industrial and Employment Relations, Collective Bargaining and How the Economy works.**

Participants were expected to develop a portfolio which is an organised documentation reflecting the degree of learning, professional growth and competence achieved over the month. This will be the primary means of assessment leading to the Certificate of Participation.



Course co-ordinator Sainia Bennett-Davis addressing the closing ceremony of the 89th ILS Course.

CONFERENCE TO CHART ROADMAP FOR TRADE UNIONS

Trade Union leaders, senior delegates, government and private sector representatives are expected to join in a two-day workshop to discuss the future of the trade union movement. The workshop is being hosted by the Hugh Lawson Shearer Trade Union Education Institute in collaboration with the Jamaica Confederation of Trade Unions to mark 'Workers Week' which runs from May 22– 28.

The workshop, which will be held at the Mona Visitors' Lodge and Conference Centre on May 26 and 27, 2011 under the theme: "**A Roadmap for Trade Unions' Relevance and Sustainability,**" is sponsored by the FES and forms part of the trade unions' contribution to the SALISES 50/50 project.

Head of the HLSTUEI, Danny Roberts told a gathering of trade union leaders that "there is growing concern about the relevance of trade unionism in Jamaica and questions regarding whether or not the trade union movement can survive the vicissitudes of globalisation and the changing patterns of employment relationship." He noted that "the leaders have a moral duty to dedicate their lives to the building of the movement and ensure we provide a legacy of support for the advancement of the cause of the workers in the face of a hostile global environment, where real wages are declining, workers' rights are being trampled, trade unions are marginalized and the welfare and future of the worker and his family are of little significance."

The two day workshop is expected to discuss three broad themes: Gender, youth and leadership, which will explore opportunities for the advancement of women in trade union leadership, how to attract young men and women to a career in trade unionism, and the training of a cadre of trade union officers for management and leadership. The second broad theme will focus on the challenges facing Unions/Union Movement in the 21st century and will focus on promoting technology for organising and collective bargaining, how best to overcome the challenges of regionalism and globalisation by seizing the opportunities they present, reviewing the environment for sustainable development and discarding the legal, social, cultural and political legacies which inhibit trade union growth and development.

The third workshop will focus on the roadmap for the future: the next generation and will examine what the new goals and objectives of trade unions ought to be, looking at options of mergers and alliances of trade union organisations, critically assessing the role of political unionism in advancing the cause of the workers, and the prototype trade union leader– generation X.

There is little doubt that the trade union movement has an important role to play in building the economy and shaping the nation in the next ten years. The ILO recently highlighted the importance of "building networks between trade unions along global production systems", and that "unions have to deal with sophisticated and often anti-union human resource management strategies at a local level within global production systems and respond to difficult representational situations as a result of sourcing decisions."

The importance of having a strong trade union movement cannot be overstated particularly at a time when the issue of good governance, strong economies and job growth depend on a labour force that must not only be knowledgeable, but must

Calendar Events

► Two-day Trade Union Conference on "**Roadmap for Trade Unions' Relevance and Sustainability**", May 26-27, 2011 at the Mona Visitors' Lodge & Conference Centre

Four-day training workshop "**Professional Conduct & Protocols for the Workplace**", May 17-20, 2011 @ the HLSTUEI lecture room.

One-day Public forum on the **Public Sector Transformation Programme**, June 2, 2011

Two-day "**Delegates Development Initiative**" June 2011

Please direct your questions and feedback to us @ hlstuei@open.uwi.edu or 977-4290, 702-3881