

## Foreign Exchange Summary

as at February 14, 2020

Member State	USD	CAD	GBP	Euro
Bahamas (BSD)	1.00	0.75	1.30	1.08
Barbados (BBD)	2.03	1.53	2.66	2.21
Belize (BZD)	2.02	1.53	2.64	2.20
Guyana (GYD)	218.00	158.89	274.50	228.30
Haiti (HTG)	95.58	71.76	130.39	103.22
Jamaica * (JMD)	142.39	107.92	185.42	153.69
OECS (XCD)	2.71	2.04	3.52	2.93
Suriname (SRD)	7.52	5.63	9.81	8.16
T&T (TTD)	6.77	5.43	9.28	7.71

\*Rates applicable for Customs & GCT purposes

### Business News In Brief

#### Antigua increases sales tax on tourism properties

As the government tries to capture more revenue out of the tourism sector, the Antigua & Barbuda sales tax (ABST) has increased for all short-term stays at Airbnbs and hotels in Antigua and Barbuda by 1%. Hotel guests will be required to pay an additional 1% in sales tax on all accommodation as of March 1, an increase over the current rate of 13%, thereby bringing ABST for the sector to 14%. In the meantime, the ABST rate on all short-term boutique rentals will become applicable by June 1. While Antigua & Barbuda has realized increases in tourist arrivals, it has argued that there hasn't been a commensurate increase in revenue. [\(AN\)](#)

#### Guyana set to spur regional growth of 4.1%

CDB President Dr Warren Smith is projecting regional GDP growth of 4.1% for 2020, consistent with expectations of accelerated regional and global economic activity. "With estimated daily production of about 100,000 barrels of oil, Guyana should dominate regional growth performance. Other growth drivers in the region should be the construction, tourism and agriculture sectors," he said. In his review of the performance of Caribbean economies in 2019, the CDB president said that the fastest growing were Anguilla at 10.9% and Dominica at 5.7%. In the meantime, CDB has estimated that the blue economy was responsible for about 7% of GDP, or just over US\$1 billion in Jamaica in 2017. [\(JG\)](#)

#### Jamaica's budget to focus on debt reduction

The Government of Jamaica has tabled a J\$852.7 billion budget for 2020/21 which favours a continuation of its efforts to further reduce the country's debt to GDP ratio. Public debt at the end of the current financial year 2019/20, is projected to be 91.5% of GDP, down from 94.4% at the end of 2018/19. The new estimates of expenditure, tabled by Minister of Finance and the Public Service Dr Nigel Clarke, is just more than J\$6 billion below the net provisions being spent in 2019/20, which should close at J\$859 billion after two supplementary estimates. "The financial year 2020/21 proposed financing for both central government and public bodies is expected to generate a further reduction in public debt to 87.2% of GDP by the end of 2020/21 fiscal year," Clarke noted. The J\$852.7 billion is made up of J\$453.7 billion in recurrent expenditure and J\$74.2 billion to capital expenditure, plus an additional J\$287.8 billion which will be used for debt servicing. [\(JO\)](#)

#### Corporate Movements

- ⇒ Greg Christie has been appointed Executive Director of the Jamaica's Integrity Commission effective on May 18;
- ⇒ NCB Financial Group Limited has appointed Tracy-Ann Spence as Chief Operating Officer for its subsidiary, NCB Capital Markets Limited ;
- ⇒ Sagicor Group Jamaica Limited (SJ) has advised that Caren Scott-Dixon has been appointed Chief Risk Officer and Compliance Officer effective February 6, 2020.

#### Cayman slated to be blacklisted

The Cayman Islands will join Oman, Fiji, and Vanuatu on a European Union (EU) blacklist of foreign tax havens. According to the EU, the Cayman Islands did not pass legislation that adequately addressed concerns about companies who claim tax advantages but do not have a sufficient economic presence on the island, characterizing the 2019 law as "deficient". The territory had also been asked to adapt its legislation on investment funds to bring the rules closer to EU standards. The blacklist, which is constantly revised, has shrunk from 15 countries in 2018 to 8 currently. Officials said that Turkey, which is currently on the "grey" list, would not be moved to the blacklist despite concerns about its information sharing with some EU member states. The Bahamas and Armenia will also be removed. [\(FT\)](#)

## Stock Market Summary

as at February 14, 2020

### Jamaica Stock Exchange

Overall Market activity resulted from trading in 41 stocks of which 24 advanced, 9 declined and 8 traded firm. Market volume amounted to 25,935,878 units valued at over J\$106,383,023.98. Wigton Windfarm Ltd Ordinary Shares was the volume leader with 10,353,911 units (39.92%) traded. JSE Index advanced by 2,005.08 points ( 0.41 %) to close at 485,872.96.

### Barbados Stock Exchange

Two securities traded firm as 730 shares traded on the Regular Market, with a total value of \$2,337.10. Insurance Corporation of Barbados Limited was the volume leader trading 708 shares at \$3.20. Index closed at 3,233.92.

### Trinidad & Tobago Stock Exchange

Overall Market activity resulted from trading in 14 securities of which 5 advanced, 5 declined and 4 traded firm. Trading activity on the First Tier Market registered a volume of 86,304 shares crossing the floor of the Exchange valued at TT\$1,015,033.10. National Flour Mills Limited was volume leader with 49,743 shares changing hands for a value of TT \$74,117.07. The All T&T Index declined by 20.08 points (1.04%) to close at 1,911.03. The Composite Index declined by 8.85 points (0.59%) to close at 1,503.10 and the Cross Listed Index advanced by 0.35 points (0.24%) to close at 148.37.

### Guyana Stock Exchange

1 stock advanced and 4 traded firm as 57,226 units traded on the Regular Market. Banks DIH (DIH) was volume leader with 47,800 shares traded. This was followed by Republic Bank Limited (RBL) which traded 4,471 shares. The LSI closed at 609.70.

### Eastern Caribbean Securities Exchange (ECSE)

1 stock advanced and 1 traded firm as 1,600 units traded. Volume leader was Bank of St Vincent and the Grenadines Ltd with 1,500 shares traded. Index closed at 149.04.

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Editorial Manager: Joseph Cox ; Email: [tei.info@caricom.org](mailto:tei.info@caricom.org)

## Business News In Brief

### Economic growth in the OECS slated to continue

The Monetary Council of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) has predicted economic growth for the OECS in 2020 at 3.2%, attributing the marginally lower forecast on a weaker global economy. It said the 2019 growth was 3.3%, slightly below the 3.8% in 2018. The Council, comprising mainly Finance Ministers from Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Kitts-Nevis, Montserrat and Anguilla, is predicting that growth in 2021 will be 2.2%. Domestic credit extended by the commercial banking sector, in the Regional sub-group was projected to increase by 1.1% at the end of December 2019, relative to the 0.9% growth observed at the end of December 2018 and that credit and monetary conditions are projected to remain favourable in the near to medium term. Credit growth is expected to accelerate in 2020, but mostly to households and governments. ([VIC](#))

### Renewed push for global corporate tax reform

Efforts to reform international corporate tax rules before the end 2020 will continue, according to a statement by the OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework on BEPS. The group of 137 countries and jurisdictions that is negotiating international tax rules are moving ahead with a two-pillar negotiation to address the tax challenges arising from the digitalisation of the global economy. The group agreed to pursue the debate about where tax should be paid – the so-called nexus rules – and what portion of profits should be taxed – the profit allocation rules – on the basis of a “unified approach” released by the OECD in October 2019. The tax reforms of the first pillar aim to ensure that multinational companies can be taxed in jurisdictions where they conduct significant business but have no physical presence in the form of offices, service centres, manufacturing or other operations. The second pillar of the tax discussions takes aim at zero-tax jurisdictions, by trying to adopt new rules that would ensure that international businesses pay a minimum level of tax. ([CC](#))

### International Oil Prices as at February 14, 2020

Futures	Price	US\$ Change	Change %
WTI Crude	US\$52.25	+0.73	+1.42
Brent Crude	US\$57.24	+0.78	+1.38
OPEC Basket	US\$55.86	+0.32	+0.58
Natural Gas	US\$1.85	+0.02	+1.15