

**Announcement of the Cabinet of Barbados
By The Prime Minister of Barbados
Honourable Mia Amor Mottley, Q.C., M.P.**

January 24 2022

Good evening Barbadians at home and abroad and of course Friends of Barbados,

There is an expression frequently used in Barbados, the source of which is not widely known. In the Christian standard Bible, at Luke Chapter 12 verse 48, we read, "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."

It is with this Biblical understanding of the tremendous confidence and responsibility placed in the Barbados Labour Party and myself, as Prime Minister, that I thank you for the unprecedented mandate of a second term with all of the seats in the Lower House of Barbados. We are most honoured! We are humbled! Most of all, we are committed to delivering for all the people of our country. Our new development agenda, which we titled in our Manifesto, "Our Barbados: Owning Our Future", is a transformative one, intended to build human and social capital and a sustainable economy, in which the skills of all of our citizens and residents are recognised and utilised.

The Government that I lead is determined that Barbados will be viewed as one of the world's top countries, a place of energy and enlightenment, of opportunity. It is our intention that Barbadians should continue to hone and draw on the finest of our values and our traditions as a people, so that in every place and in every regard, Barbadians will be viewed as exceptional; as people who stand on principle and hold within our bosoms an empathy for the

human person and human condition and the passion to improve that condition.

The election campaign is now over. Once more, our country's reputation for free and fair elections has been upheld. We are grateful to all of you for that. The democratic process has yielded a result. I'd like to thank all who voted in last Wednesday's election, and in particular, those who turned out to create the convincing majority for the Barbados Labour Party, giving us numbers which are comparable to the 2018 performance. Now is the time for the country to unite, to move beyond partisan divisions and to move forward as one Barbados, as our country.

Now is the time for governance which builds public trust as between government and people. This is the time in which citizens and residents of all ages, classes, and persuasions must offer solutions to the problems that we are facing as a nation and as a people. Constructive engagement, rather than complaint; willing contribution over mere observation and debate. And when we debate, let it be in the cause of advancing our nation, not merely to add to the discussions and the noise, nor to sow division.

Active citizenship that you have heard me speak about so much in the last few months, requires of everyone in our new republic, active effort to construct the nation we want to see; to together define the characteristics and features of the new republic and to work, live and own, in particular, our future in our one Barbados. The purity and power of our intent to do good as between all other Barbadians, our nation, our environment, our differently able people, our children and young people and our elderly must shine as brightly as a light in a dark place.

Since December and throughout this month, I have been seeking to lay before our country the circumstances which compelled me to call that early election. There are no issues that I have concealed from you. Indeed, we are just short of four years in the performance of the last administration. Indeed we were at 43 to 44 months, some four months short of four years. There is nothing that we have not yet shared but I wish now to remind you of those major issues.

The climate crisis with global warming, the presence of sargassum seaweed; the increase in violent storms and hurricanes, climate adaptation financing issues; freshwater shortages among those of us across our country and indeed rise in sea levels. All of these things threaten to change our way of life significantly and in particular, if in 12 to 15 years the world does not stay to below 1.5 degrees to be potentially calamitous.

The climate induced degradation of the quality and nutrients of our soils. I think we have said enough to let you know that in the next 40 to 50 years, there is a genuine global concern, that we will not get the yields from our agricultural products that we expect, largely because of the degradation of our soils.

The economic crisis of being unable to create the fiscal space to pay for urgent infrastructural and citizen development that we need. And of course, that has come as a result of the double-digit decline in 2020 triggered by the pandemic in particular - in spite of the fact that we have done well, well, well to reduce our absolute debt from 16.6 billion, initially to 12.7 before the pandemic, and now at 13.1.

An ageing population crisis and a shrinking workforce, both of which threaten the stability of our National Insurance Scheme and social security in general.

The Global Supply Chain crisis which has over the last few months and continues to place our country Barbados as a small, import-dependent island, at the mercies the mega-manufacturers and shippers for the goods that we need to survive in our normal daily lives in this country.

The threat to public safety induced regrettably by guns and in fact, digital crime.

Finally, the health crisis with the current COVID-19 pandemic, compounded by our high incidence of Non-Communicable Diseases, mental unwellness amongst our people and the emerging threat of super bugs and Anti-Microbial Resistance which in the medium term will be as devastating to us as the COVID-19 pandemic – as we call it, the slow motion pandemic and it potentially threatens to reverse a century in medical progress – being responsible for taking too many lives from our people.

Having regard to these factors, the evolving regional and international issues which relate to our society, the economy, the climate crisis and indeed more recently the peace and security, with highly increased tensions between the United States and Russia in the world in which we live, it is even more incumbent on us to work together, to avoid divide and to avoid distraction.

Consistent with the policy positions outlined in the Manifesto and articulated on the platform over the last few weeks, the Government will as I indicated, through the recommendations of the Thorne Commission and ultimately with the recommendations

we expect to come from the proposed Commissions on Parliamentary Reform and the new Constitution which we promised you from last year, would take pride of place in this year. We intend generally, philosophically, to ensure a larger space for citizens voice and input; for strengthening the functions of our Parliament for more robust engagement and oversight and indeed, interaction with ordinary Barbadians on an ongoing basis.

As we move to the naming of the new Cabinet, I want to recognise upfront and to tell you that everyone's favourite school teacher, and my dear friend, Cynthia Forde, the Member of Parliament for St. Thomas, has asked not to be considered for appointment in the new Cabinet. I want on your behalf, on behalf of all Barbadians to thank Cynthia Forde who has been the salt of the earth and who has been there in a Government in one form or another since 1994, other than the time she was in opposition. Ms. Forde, we thank you for your distinguished service.

Barbados and the world are now at this critical juncture. We, as a country, must have the courage to take the decisions and to effect the transformations that will make a difference to the country today, and to all our citizens and residents now and for the future. You will observe that this Cabinet is smaller than the last two Cabinets and that it will have greater supervisory oversight and capacity to ensure that the Government's policies and programmes are fully operationalised. We face simply, too many critical challenges for us to continue with business as usual.

It is against that backdrop, that you will hear me announce very shortly, the choice of a Deputy Prime Minister, along with three senior Ministers as has happened in other Commonwealth countries, who will have Special Coordinating Responsibilities for the following areas:

1. Infrastructure
2. Social and Environmental Policy
3. Productive Sectors
4. Governance

It is my judgment, that the Cabinet which would best deliver therefore, on the agenda that we have developed as a political party, with the support of you the people of this country, shall be constituted as follows.

It is my intention, as your Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, to continue with the portfolio that I had prior to the dissolution of the last Parliament and therefore will continue to have responsibility within my Prime Minister's Office for Culture, Security, Public Service, CARICOM and the Development Commissions.

The Deputy Prime Minister of Barbados from Wednesday, shall be Santia Bradshaw and she shall have coordinating responsibility as a Senior Minister, for Infrastructure. She shall also be the Minister of Transport, Works and Water Resources and shall be Leader of Government Business in the House of Assembly.

The Honourable Dale Marshall who has already been sworn-in as Attorney-General and Minister of Legal Affairs, will assume the role as the Senior Minister coordinating for Governance in our Cabinet and I thank him for accepting that.

Dr. Jerome Walcott will be the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade but he will be the Senior Minister coordinating for all Social and Environmental Policy as we go forward with these new arrangements.

Kerrie Symmonds will be the Senior Minister coordinating the Productive Sectors but will substantively be the Minister of Energy and Business Development. Business Development will include from Small Business to International Business. As we made clear in the last term, all global business is now local and all local business is now global.

Wilfred Abrahams will be Minister of Home Affairs and Information.

Indar Weir will be Minister of Agriculture and Food and Nutritional Security.

The new Minister of Health and Wellness will be Ian Gooding-Edghill.

Lisa Cummins will be Minister of Tourism and International Transport, taking responsibility not just for the Grantley Adams International Airport but for the Bridgetown Port. She will also be the Leader of Government Business in the Senate.

Kay McConney will be Minister of Education, Technological and Vocational Training.

Dwight Sutherland will be the Minister of Housing, Lands and Maintenance.

Kirk Humphrey will be Minister of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs.

Adrian Forde will be Minister of Environment and National Beautification and might I remind you that Blue and Green Economy will now be within Minister Forde's portfolio with the

exception of the Bridgetown Port which goes back to International Transport.

Colin Jordan will retain Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Third Sector.

Davidson Ishmael will be the new Minister of Industry, Innovation, Science and Technology.

Charles Griffith will be the Minister of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment.

Ryan Straughn will continue in my Ministry and he will be the Minister in the Ministry of Finance and Economic.

There will be a new person appointed in the Office of the Prime Minister as Minister, and that she will be Shantal Munro-Knight.

Dr. Sonia Browne will be Minister of State in the Ministry of Health and Wellness with day-to-day responsibility for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and for Chronic Noncommunicable Diseases.

Sandra Husbands will be Minister of State, both in the Ministry of Foreign Trade but also in the Ministry of Business Development stranding the two Ministries and this is a precedent that we have taken from other Commonwealth jurisdictions largely because the two entities are completely linked and will require that kind of coordination.

Dr. Romel Springer will be Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Water Resources but with responsibility for Water Resources.

Corey Layne will be Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs.

It is the intention of my Government in Parliament as Parliamentary Members, to nominate as Speaker, the Honourable Arthur Holder, and as Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Neil Rowe. Peter Phillips we intend to nominate to serve as Chairman of Committees and Chairman of the Standing Finance Committee.

I want to address a new matter however.

Paragraph 9.14 of the Report the Forde Constitutional Commission recommended that the Committee System in Parliament, including the Joint Select Committees, be expanded and that committees be provided with adequate financial and staffing resources. In previous Manifestoes the Barbados Labour Party had committed to making greater use of the Committee system but this proposal has never been formally put into effect even though we had a number of ad hoc committees addressing different types of legislation in the last Parliament. I wish now to do so.

This new initiative actualises Standing Order 59.4 which provides that the House of Assembly can appoint a Select Committee to consider and inquire into some matter and to report their opinion or observations to the House or for any purpose in which they can assist the House. Under Standing Order 58.3.1 the House may appoint members to sit with Senators as such a Joint Select Committee.

It is the Government's intention to increase therefore, Parliament's oversight, engagement and involvement on matters of national importance, on matters of national policy significance and in major pieces of legislation. In that regard, therefore, we will add to and

invigorate the system of standing committees of Parliament by the addition of three new Standing Committees to the existing Committee that exists. These three Committees will be covered as follows:

Economic – we propose to nominate Member of Parliament Mr. Chris Gibbs to Chair that Joint Select Committee on Economic Affairs.

On the matter of Social and Environmental Matters, we propose to nominate the Member of Parliament, Mrs. Toni Moore to Chair that Standing Committee of both Houses.

And on matters pertaining to Governance, we propose to nominate Mr. Ralph Thorne to be the Chair of that Standing Committee of both Houses of Parliament.

As it relates to the issue of the Senate and the Government Senators, as you are aware, Her Excellency, the President, will make her own announcement with respect to the Independent Senators and I have already intimated that there will be some changes that we will come to shortly. But as far as it relates to the Government Senators, it is my intention therefore to advise Her Excellency:

1. President of the Senate - Honourable Reginald Farley;
2. Deputy President of the Senate - Honourable H. Elizabeth Thompson;
3. Leader of Government Business in the Senate - Senator Lisa Cummins;
4. Senator Jerome Walcott;
5. Senator Shantal Munro-Knight;
6. Senator Dr. Crystal Haynes;

7. Senator John King;
8. Senator Patricia Parris;
9. Senator Shanika Roberts-Odle;
10. Senator Lorenzo Harewood;
11. Senator Andwele Boyce

Those of you who are quick at mathematics will know that I've only called 11 names.

During the election campaign, I made a promise, a serious promise to engage our young people and bring them into the centre of governance and national self-determination. It is in my view an anomaly that a person who is 18 years old in Barbados has the right to vote, but they do not have the capacity to serve in the Senate of our nation. It is therefore my intention to correct this by asking the Cabinet to agree and Parliament thereafter, to bring a constitutional amendment to allow an 18-year-old to serve in the Senate of Barbados for the first time. I propose, should it be accepted, and successful, that Senator Khalil Kothdiwala should be that person who will serve as a Senator. I have said from the very beginning, if you are old enough to vote, then you must be old enough to serve.

I look forward to the support of all across civil society for this fundamental change.

In addition, in 2018, faced with a similar election result of 30-nil in the Lower House, I proposed then to offer to the Opposition Parties, the opportunity to appoint the two Senators despite not securing any Seats at the polls. It is the intention of this Government again, to engage with the Opposition Parties which contested the last two elections, to determine how best they may participate in the appointment of two Opposition Senators provided for in our

Constitution. I am equally awaiting a legal opinion from the Attorney-General on this matter before we start those formal discussions with the Opposition Parties.

In addition, I signaled to you on Thursday morning that the Prime Minister's Office will need restructuring in order to help bridge the multiple functions that are now before us both locally, regionally, and internationally. Demands are now placed on this office in a tremendous way. Indeed it is almost as if it is the place to which everyone writes in order to resolve issues regardless of what those issues are.

Separate from that, we also have a very ambitious political agenda to deliver. It is against that background that I therefore intend to innovate and to create for the first time, a Chief of Staff in the Prime Minister's Office with a small support team. The Chief of Staff I propose to appoint is Mr. Jonathan Reid.

Despite the challenges which lie ahead, this is a moment for optimism and a time of opportunity. We must use it to educate, to upskill and train a new generation of confident Barbadians for nation-building, for regional engagement and for global leadership; to leverage modern technologies to overcome our size, to penetrate markets and to solve the development challenges of our age; and to finally and definitively end the painful cycles intergenerational poverty; to have for the first time, a surplus of decent work and high quality jobs in the new and emerging areas such as heritage and culture, renewable energy, construction and physical development, green technologies for climate adaptation and mitigation; for our voice to truly matter globally in spite of our small size; to pursue new relationships while strengthening traditional friendships, working to uplift our Caribbean Community and all Small Island Developing States across the world, so that we

may cement our familial ties with non-traditional countries and non-traditional continents. Our time to be able to continue to contribute above our weight with respect to being an advocate for just causes in the protection of the human family is now.

But our time to be able to ensure that our citizens and our residents can be owners of all that they survey, along with those who invest from overseas such that we are in a position to be able to deliver for our people in ways that are meaningful and in ways that fundamentally matter to them.

This is who we are. This is who we can be. This is what Barbados can become for we are truly one people, born of struggle, but charting our destiny, committed to collaboration; understanding that not only must we create the future we want, we are capable of so doing and we shall be successful.

Barbadians at home and abroad, may God Bless us all and May God Bless our beloved Barbados.

We look forward as a Government to working with each and every one of you, to make this Barbados the best that it can be – to own our future and to ensure that our people will be the best in becoming not just those who are here for the ride but people who can own in their own country of their birth, rather than being subjugated to being tenants as too many of their forefathers have.

We look forward to building the best Barbados we can over the next five years and for avoiding the crises that lay ahead of us in 10 to 15 years.

Thank you. God Bless us all.