

Foreign Exchange Summary

as at November 20, 2020

Member State	USD	CAD	GBP	Euro
Bahamas (BSD)	1.00	0.76	1.33	1.19
Barbados (BBD)	2.03	1.55	2.70	2.42
Belize (BZD)	2.02	1.55	2.68	2.40
Guyana (GYD)	218.00	159.62	277.65	247.79
Haiti (HTG)	69.20	49.58	85.36	76.96
Jamaica * (JMD)	148.10	113.81	195.25	178.72
OECS (XCD)	2.71	2.05	3.55	3.19
Suriname (SRD)	14.29	10.81	18.97	16.95
T&T (TTD)	6.76	5.50	9.45	8.46

*Rates applicable for Customs & GCT purposes

Business News In Brief

St Lucia to introduce Tourism Levy December 15

The Government of St Lucia will introduce a tourism levy effective December 15, 2020 to aid in the financing of the industry marketing and development. In a two-tier system, guests will be charged either US\$3 or US\$6 per person per night depending on a room rate below or above US\$120. A rate of 50% of the tourism levy will apply to guests who are 12 to 17 years at the end of their stay. The fee will not apply to children under 12 years. Additionally, the government will from December 1, reduce the VAT from 10% to 7% for tourism accommodation service providers. Other countries such as Antigua, Barbados, Belize, Jamaica, St Kitts, and St Vincent have similar levies on accommodation for visitors. [\(JG\)](#)

Suriname turns to the IMF for financial support

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) through its Western Hemisphere department has formally advised that the Government of Suriname has turned to the IMF for financial support. According to the Fund, "the Surinamese government has recently requested Fund financial support for their economic plan aimed at tackling the country's macroeconomic vulnerabilities and putting Suriname back on a path of strong, sustained, and equitable growth. The authorities have also retained financial and legal advisors to help address issues relating to Suriname's public debt and have begun the process of engaging with creditors." [\(IMF\)](#)

Cayman's offshore banking sector shows first-quarter growth

In the first quarter of 2020, the assets and liabilities of Cayman Islands (CI) banks both increased for the first time in years. The number of resident banks declined to 124 at the end of March, down from 125 at the end of 2019 and 133 at the end of 2018. But banking assets grew from US\$662.7B to \$727.5B in the first quarter and corresponding liabilities jumped from \$662.2B to \$723.9B, Cayman Islands Monetary Authority statistics show. Since the financial crisis in 2007, cross-border assets and liabilities reported by banks licensed in CI have been declining from a peak of close to \$2 trillion. This is in part due to regulatory changes, particularly in the United States, that have reduced the incentives for corporate banking clients to pool cash balances offshore for investment in money market funds and other short-term instruments. Consolidation in the banking industry amid increasingly costly regulation is another reason for the continued decline. [\(CC\)](#)

Corporate Movements

- ⇒ Unilever Caribbean Limited has appointed Jean-Marc Mouttet as Managing Director in November 2020
- ⇒ Supreme Ventures Limited (SVL) has appointed Nickesha Eulette, Senior Vice President – Finance, effective October 29, 2020 .

Economy declines 11.3 per cent for July-September — PIOJ

The Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) has reported an 11.3% economic decline for the second quarter, or July-September period, relative to the corresponding period of 2019. During the review period, many of the major industries such as those in the service industries, especially the hotel and restaurants sector, continued to experience decline. However, a further decline during this period was tempered by growth in the agriculture sector (up 2.0%) along with an uptick in construction activities and the phased reopening of the economy. The PIOJ in its preliminary estimates further said that there was a 10.7% decrease in the country's real GDP for the first nine months of 2020. This reflected a decline of 6% in the goods producing industry and an 11.4 % downturn in the services industry. In the meantime, the All Jamaica Consumer Price Index for October 2020 was 106.9, indicating an inflation rate of 0.8%. For the review period, the calendar year-to-date inflation rate was 4.4%, the point-to-point 5.0% and the fiscal year-to-date was 3.1% as at October 2020. [\(JO\)](#)

Stock Market Summary

as at November 20, 2020

Jamaica Stock Exchange

Overall Market activity resulted from trading in 36 stocks of which 14 advanced, 19 declined and 3 traded firm. Market volume amounted to 44,980,918 units valued at over J\$1,341,663,305.81. Sagicor Select Funds Ltd Manufacturing & Distribution was the volume leader with 15,015,141 units. Index advanced by 1,154.92 points to close at 388,463.43.

Jamaica Junior Stock Exchange

Overall market activity resulted from trading in 31 stocks of which 15 advanced, 12 declined and 4 traded firm. Market volume amounted to 4,844,204 units valued at over J\$20,370,620.12. Index closed at 2,537.29.

Barbados Stock Exchange

2 securities declined & 2 traded firm as 7,816 shares traded valued \$19,050.40. One Caribbean Media Ltd was the volume leader trading 4,325 shares. Index closed at 2,446.36.

Trinidad & Tobago Stock Exchange

Overall Market activity resulted from trading in 12 securities of which 4 advanced, 3 declined and 5 traded firm. Trading activity on the First Tier Market registered a volume of 125,223 shares crossing the floor of the Exchange valued at TT\$1,977,774.45. GraceKennedy Limited was volume leader with 77,000 shares changing hands for a value of TT\$277,200.00. The All T&T Index declined by 16.26 points to close at 1,710.45. The Composite Index declined by 8.19 points to close at 1,281.45 and the Cross Listed Index closed at 115.25.

Guyana Stock Exchange

2 stocks traded firm as 624,734 units crossed the floor. Banks DIH was volume leader with 614,234 shares traded. The LSI closed at 656.93.

Eastern Caribbean Securities Exchange (ECSE)

2 stocks traded 1,600 shares. Volume leader was Bank of Nevis which traded 1,500 shares. Index closed at 161.2.

CARICOM Business is a weekly newsletter produced by the Directorate of Trade & Economic Integration.

Editorial Manager: Joseph Cox ; Email: tei.info@caricom.org

Business News In Brief

Expenditure cuts looming in Grenada

The Government of Grenada has signaled the need for expenditure reduction in preparation for its 2021 budget occasioned by a decline in revenues. As at September 2020, Current Revenue stood at EC\$53.7m which was EC\$5.2m lower than the target and EC\$2.0m lower than the collections for September 2019. Grants received in September 2020 amounted to EC\$5.8m which was EC\$3.1m lower than the amount received in September 2019. According to PM Dr Keith Mitchell, "this is the first time in 6 years that we can say we are having a serious problem with raising revenue." the Prime Minister sought to provide assurances regarding continuity of support to those marginalized by the economic fallout caused by COVID-19. A date is yet to be announced for the budget presentation but traditionally it has been done on the last Friday in November. ([NOW](#)) ([NN](#))

News Highlights

- [A Pandemic Surge and Evolving Policy Responses](#)
- [A Year like no other: IMF Annual Report 2020](#)

Canadians sitting on largest cash hoard ever recorded - CIBC

According to a new CIBC report, the COVID-19 pandemic has pushed Canadian households and businesses to accumulate more than \$170 billion in excess cash. The report estimated that households are sitting on \$90 billion, which is equal to 4% of consumer spending, while businesses are holding on to no less than \$80 billion. The report also said the savings rate for households was likely about 13% in the third quarter, compared to about 3.6% before the pandemic. Meanwhile, Canadian businesses are growing their cash positions by almost 15% year-over-year, the report said. The government's Canada Emergency Business Account loan program is also boosting firms' cash hoards, with speculation rife that many companies are keeping the money in deposit accounts and possibly using it as insurance. ([Bloomberg](#))

International Oil Prices as at November 20, 2020

Futures	Price	US\$ Change	Change %
WTI Crude	US\$42.17	+0.41	+0.98
Brent Crude	US\$45.24	+1.07	+2.42
OPEC Basket	US\$43.12	+0.07	+0.16
Natural Gas	US\$2.67	+0.07	+2.69