

Foreign Exchange Summary

as at December 28, 2018

| Member State | USD | CAD | GBP | Euro |
|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Bahamas (BSD) | 1.00 | 0.73 | 1.27 | 1.14 |
| Barbados (BBD) | 2.03 | 1.49 | 2.58 | 2.34 |
| Belize (BZD) | 2.02 | 1.49 | 2.58 | 2.33 |
| Guyana (GYD) | 210.45 | 154.72 | 267.05 | 241.33 |
| Haiti (HTG) | 78.10 | 57.40 | 98.42 | 89.24 |
| Jamaica * (JMD) | 128.27 | 95.87 | 163.59 | 152.13 |
| OECS (XCD) | 2.71 | 1.99 | 3.43 | 3.10 |
| Suriname (SRD) | 7.52 | 5.52 | 9.55 | 8.58 |
| T&T (TTD) | 6.80 | 5.21 | 9.12 | 8.17 |

*Rates applicable for Customs & GCT purposes

Business News In Brief

Growth momentum slows in Trinidad - Central Bank

CBTT says domestic growth momentum appeared to have slackened in the 3rd quarter of 2018, while inflation remained very low. It said taking all factors into consideration, it has decided to maintain the repo rate at 5%. Inflation fell to 1.0% in November & preliminary data used to gauge non-energy economic activity was also lower in the 3rd quarter of 2018 relative to 2017. In the 2nd quarter, GDP grew by an annual 2.8%, down from 3.2% in the first quarter. Lending to consumers was up an annual 7.1% in October while lending to businesses fell 1.3%. ([LoopTT](#))

Beneficial ownership register to be made public by 2023

The U.K. has indicated that it will issue an order in council instructing British Overseas Territories to establish fully operational public registers of beneficial ownership by 2023, if they have not done so by the end of 2020. The U.K. revealed the timeline in discussions with the Overseas Territories at the Joint Ministerial Council earlier this month. British lawmakers believe having this type of information accessible on the internet would help in the fight against tax evasion, money laundering and financial crime. Although most of Britain's 14 Overseas Territories, including Cayman, have beneficial ownership registers that grant access to British law enforcement and tax authorities, the registers are not public. ([CC](#))

Jamaica records growth of 1.8 percent

The Jamaican economy grew by 1.8 per cent during the third quarter of 2018 when compared to the similar quarter of 2017. This was due to a 5.1 per cent growth in the Goods Producing Industries and a 0.7 per cent increase in the Services Industries. Within the Goods Producing Industries, Mining & Quarrying grew by 51.0 per cent and Construction by 3.7 per cent. However, Manufacturing declined by 0.3 per cent, while Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing remained unchanged. All the Services Industries showed improved performance with the exception of Electricity & Water Supply which declined by 0.1 per cent and the Producers of Government Services which remained unchanged for the review period. (STATIN)

Bahamas focusses on financial stress tests

The Central Bank of the Bahamas (CBOB) is working to implement enhanced liquidity monitoring tools introduced by the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision, to ensure that banks maintain high-quality liquid assets to survive a "stress event". The Basel Committee is an international forum of central bank governors seeking to improve the quality of banking supervision worldwide. The CBOB has released a discussion paper on Implementing Basel III: Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR) and Net Stable Funding Ratio (NSFR) for a 60-day consultation period. According to a CBOB release "These reforms seek to ensure that a bank maintains sufficient amounts of high-quality liquid assets to survive a material short-term liquidity stress event, lasting 30 calendar days, and limit a bank's reliance on volatile sources of funding, by ensuring that long-term or illiquid assets are funded by a minimum amount of stable funding," ([NG](#))

Million dollar fines for breach of plastic ban in Jamaica

With the ban on certain single-use plastics & styrofoam products slated to start on January 1, 2019 & facing fines of up to J\$2 million or a maximum of 2 years' imprisonment, the list of Jamaican businesses applying for a temporary exemption is growing. The National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA) said that to date, 11 applications have been submitted. However, exemptions will not be granted beyond January 1, 2021. Items to be exempted include polystyrene foam for the packaging of food items such as raw meats & vegetables, plastic straws for medical or other special-needs purposes. ([Gleaner](#))



Stock Market Summary

as at December 28, 2018

Jamaica Stock Exchange

Overall Market activity resulted from trading in 30 stocks of which 16 advanced, 10 declined and 4 traded firm. Market volume amounted to 38,390,816 units valued at over J\$962,896,660.42. JMMB Group Limited was the volume leader with 27,208,371 units (70.87%) traded. JSE Index advanced by 7,763.29 points to close at 369,762.62 .

Barbados Stock Exchange

2 securities traded firm as 3,279 shares traded on the Regular Market, with a total value of BB\$9,624.66. First Caribbean International Bank was the volume leader, trading 2,000 shares at BB\$2.86. Index closed at 3,373.96.

Trinidad & Tobago Stock Exchange

Overall Market activity resulted from trading in 13 securities of which 4 advanced, 5 declined and 4 traded firm. Trading activity on the First Tier Market registered a volume of 293,166 shares crossing the floor of the Exchange valued at TT\$6,008,113.70. JMMB Group Limited was the volume leader with 151,652 shares changing hands for a value of TT\$265,391.99. The All T&T Index advanced by 1.61 points (0.09%) to close at 1,704.85. The Composite Index declined by 0.37 points (0.03%) to close at 1,302.97 and the Cross Listed Index declined by 0.33 points (0.27%) to close at 121.75.

Guyana Stock Exchange

Market activity resulted from trading in 3 stocks of which 1 advanced and 2 traded firm. Market volume amounted to 20,125 units with Banks DIH (DIH) being volume leader with 11,000 shares (54.7%) trading. The LSI closed at 514.87.

Eastern Caribbean Securities Exchange (ECSE)

Market activity resulted from trading in 1 stock. Market volume amounted to 211 units with Bank of Nevis Limited being the sole trader at XCD\$4.25 per share. Index closed at 152.47. Also, the Eastern Caribbean Home Mortgage Bank's 365-day Commercial Paper raised \$27.6 million.

This newsletter is compiled & edited by the Directorate of Trade & Economic Integration at the CARICOM Secretariat only as a convenience for the Member States.

Business News In Brief

NCBJ offloads JMMB shares

National Commercial Bank Jamaica Ltd (NCBJ) has sold its remaining shares in JMMB Group Ltd realizing a gain of nearly J\$3B. The sale of 326,277,325 shares which were taken up by PROVEN Investment yielded proceeds in excess of J\$9B for NCBJ, which is a subsidiary of the NCB Financial Group. This now gives PROVEN Investment 20.01% of the participating voting shares in JMMB Group. In 2011, NCB Capital Markets Ltd — a subsidiary of NCBJ — acquired 428,777,325 shares or a 29 per cent stake in JMMB, making it the 'single largest' owner of the financial institution. The transaction was valued at roughly J\$3.45B. Earlier in 2018, NCBJ offloaded 102,500,000 JMMB Group ordinary shares which were taken up by PanJam Investment. [\(JO\)](#)

Corporate Movements

- ⇒ Supreme Ventures Limited has appointed Stephen Summers as General Manager of its Guyana Company – Supreme Ventures Enterprise.
- ⇒ Arlene Laing has been appointed Coordinating Director of the Caribbean Meteorological Organization
- ⇒ Digicel Group has advised that Chairman Denis O'Brien will assume the role of Group CEO on an interim basis until a new CEO is recruited.

Oil Watchers predict \$70 a Barrel in 2019

The world's biggest banks are reckoning on a rebound in oil prices next year as fears of a recession prove misplaced. The Brent benchmark will average \$70 a barrel in 2019, almost a third higher than its price on Friday, according to a Bloomberg survey of oil analysts. Despite plans by OPEC and its allies to limit production next year to prevent a glut from forming, oil's fortunes have increasingly been driven by moves in financial assets and concerns about the global economy. However, analysts expect markets are about to tighten as growth stays strong, OPEC's supply cuts kick in, and unintended losses in Venezuela and Iran escalate. The price on Friday was about \$53.21 while the average so far in 2018 has been about \$72. [\(Bloomberg\)](#)

International Oil Prices as at December 28, 2018

| Futures | Price | US\$ Change | % Change |
|-------------|-----------|-------------|----------|
| WTI Crude | US\$45.33 | +0.72 | +1.61% |
| Brent Crude | US\$53.21 | +0.48 | +0.91% |
| OPEC Basket | US\$53.92 | -1.21 | -2.19% |
| Natural Gas | US\$3.303 | -0.243 | -6.85% |