

# Notary Public system widens in overhaul

**Senator Gregory Nicholls.**

Parliament has passed new legislation to modernise and expand the country's notary public system, a move hailed as a significant step towards easing the way business is done in Barbados.

In a significant update to the nation's legal infrastructure, the **Notary Public Bill** potentially streamlines processes for both local and international transactions requiring notarisation to address long-standing inefficiencies.

The **Notary Public Bill**, which cleared the Senate on Wednesday and heads to the President for signature, broadens the pool of eligible notaries and streamlines the notarisation process.

Senator Gregory Nicholls, speaking in support of the bill, highlighted the challenges faced under the previous system, where notarial services were limited to a small

number of public officers at the registrar level.

"Very frequently, we would come across clients who would require documents to be notarised," the government lawmaker told the upper chamber. He explained that registrars, burdened with multiple responsibilities, often struggled to provide timely notarial services.

"The registrars have to deal with their day-to-day business of running the administration of the courts, sit as judicial officers, and deal with the public on simple matters," he said.

The new legislation expands eligibility for notary public appointments to include attorneys and chartered accountants in good standing. This expansion is expected to alleviate bottlenecks and improve public access to notarial services, particularly for urgent overseas transactions.

Senator Nicholls emphasised that the reform includes regulatory provisions to prevent potential abuses.

"The government will always have the ability to rein in any conduct associated with the discharge of the service," he declared.

The bill sets regulated fees for notarial services, including \$50 for issuing a notarial certificate and \$10 for certifying exhibits. It also mandates an electronic register of notaries to the public to ensure ongoing compliance and accountability.

"The integrity of the system is maintained, and not people taking advantage of the situation, making a one-off application, and then discharging the services without being able to give confidence to the registrar that you are providing the services in the manner

required by the law," Senator Nicholls said.

Responding to criticism from Opposition Senator Tricia Watson about the bill's rapid progression through Parliament, Senator Nicholls dismissed the claims as "flatulence of the highest order". He insisted the legislation had been on the order paper for a considerable time and should not be controversial.

Senator Nicholls underscored the importance of the reform for Barbados' business environment.

"This legislation is one of those bills that will come to our Parliament, not sexy in any way, but necessarily important," he said, arguing that the changes would facilitate business operations and enhance the efficiency of the legal system.

(RG)

# Businesses join hurricane relief drive



**BPSA Chairman  
Trisha Tannis.**

The Barbados Private Sector Association (BPSA) will render crucial aid to those neighbouring Caribbean islands decimated by the passage of Hurricane Beryl.

Chairman of the BPSA Trisha Tannis said in a statement that corporate Barbados must play its part in the relief efforts.

"We are also very conscious of the devastation to our neighbouring islands. The call for help to assist with the basic human needs of our neighbours must be answered," Tannis asserted.

"The Barbados Chamber of Commerce (BCCI) and other member associations of the BPSA will play a part to assist, working in association with the CDEMA, the official disaster management agencies in the affected islands and the Caribbean Private Sector Association (CPSO) to provide the opportunity for all interested persons to also answer the call to help those impacted," she disclosed.

The association noted especially, the adverse impact particularly to the local fishing industry and livelihoods.

"Together we pray for a speedy resurgence of the industry and that once again our resilience will be demonstrated for all to see. We encourage all to be generous and thank all for their contributions," the private sector leader said.

She also gave special thanks to those local companies that have agreed to support the relief efforts by offering discounts to corporate

entities buying items from the applicable needs list of relief items for donation. She identified the applicable emergency items as food including non-perishables such as powdered milk, mixed vegetables, sardines, tuna, canned meats and produce.

Tannis announced that items are to be dropped off at the collection point, **the Goddard Warehouse**. However, she explained that some retailers will facilitate the drop off of items to the collection point.

"While all help is appreciated, the required and urgent need is for those applicable items. So please be so guided accordingly. We thank you for rising to the occasion. We also sincerely thank all those companies and persons who have already made direct contributions and those persons involved in the collection and transportation of items," the private sector head highlighted.

She said the private sector will continue to work with the Government of Barbados and all stakeholders in recovery efforts both in Barbados and in the Caribbean.

Among the other items required are flavoured water, juices, preferably commercial-size, shelter, dignity kits, 1 000 cots, 20 000 tarpaulins of varying sizes, 10 000 blankets, 10 000 hygiene kits, 10 000 collapsible water containers of 5-10g and 100 X 3 000g plus, 25 chainsaws, 50 flood lights, 2 500 solar lights and generators.

(EJ)