



# DOMINICA HIGH COMMISSION

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER - ISSUE 06

DECEMBER 2016

YEAR IN REVIEW

## The Dominica High Commission Leads Celebrations to Observe Dominica's 38th Anniversary of Independence

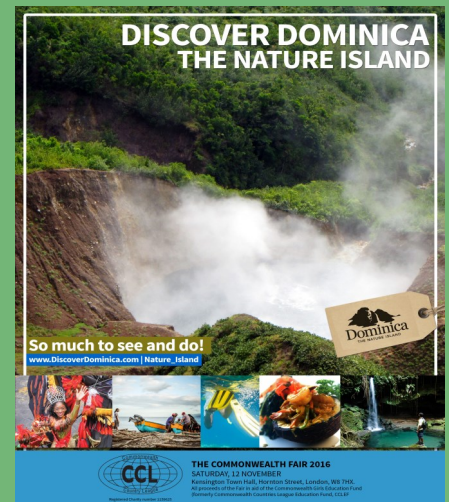


The High Commission joined the Dominica Natural Disaster and Development Fund (DNDDF) and the various other Dominican Associations in the United Kingdom in observance of the 38th Anniversary of Independence of Dominica. This year's celebration was anchored under the theme "Strengthening our Commitment to Nation Building". The theme emphasised a sentiment which Dominicans the world over could identify with, particularly following the difficult period of 2015.

A thanksgiving Mass was held on Sunday 23rd October, 2016, as Dominicans in the United Kingdom gathered to pray and give thanks. The service was organised by the DNDDF and the Acting High Commissioner, Ms Janet Charles delivered a message on behalf of the Government. (Independence celebrations continued on page 7)

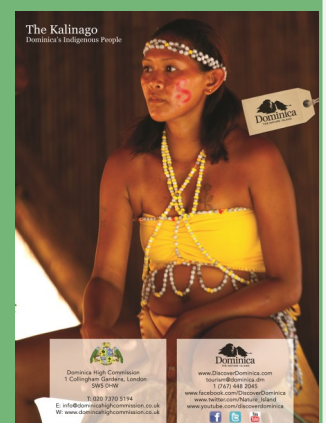


## Dominica Chairs the Organizing Committee of the Commonwealth Countries League (CCL) Fair 2016.



Ms Janet Charles, Acting High Commissioner served as Chair of the 2016 CCL Fair. This afforded Dominica the opportunity to take a leading role in the planning of the Fair. Additionally the Discover Dominica Authority designed the cover of the brochure to feature Dominica (front and back cover of CCL 2016 brochure pictured). The High Commission is grateful to the Discover Dominica Authority for its support for the CCL Fair.

Dominica's Stall raised about £900 and the initial financial statement from the CCL Treasurer has reported that the Fair raised over £25,000.00.



### In this Issue...

- ◇ Message from His Excellency Charles Savarin D.A.H. President of Dominica and Ms Janet Charles, Acting High Commissioner
- ◇ 2016 CCL Fair
- ◇ Dominica's Awardee of the 2016 Queen's Young Leader Award

**2016 CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM HIS EXCELLENCY CHARLES A. SAVARIN, D.A.H,  
PRESIDENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA**

**THEME: THE LOVE OF GOD IS THE REASON FOR CHRISTMAS**

My fellow Citizens and Residents of Dominica,

There is no greater love than the love of God. On Christmas Day He gave us the ultimate gift - His one and only son, Jesus, as an atoning sacrifice for our sins, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. God created us in His image and likeness, which includes the ability to enjoy a personal relationship with Him, but we faltered and still he did not abandon us but sent Jesus into this world so we could understand His love and our need for Him. This is wonderful news that should cause us all to rejoice and celebrate His birth this time of year. The entire reason for Christmas is the love of God which should dwell among us.

In Luke Chapter 10 verse 27, we are commanded to love God and to love our neighbours as we love ourselves.

But how, we may ask, do we show this love for our neighbours which we are commanded to profess? In January of 2016, my wife and I were privileged to be received at the Vatican by His Holiness Pope Francis. We were accompanied by Doctor and Mrs. Gerald Grell; Mr. and Mrs. Antoine Raffoul; Ambassador Eddie Lambert; Mr. and Mrs. Francis Emanuel; Baroness Patricia Scotland and Mrs. Wendy Jno. Charles D'Angeiri. That visit with the Holy Father imprinted itself on all of us and the declaration by the Holy Father of this year as a Year of Mercy is profoundly significant for us as Christians, for how can we have mercy if we do not have love in our hearts. So how do we show that love?

Matthew 25 gives us guidance in the parable of the sheep and the goats where we are called upon to feed the hungry; give drink to the thirsty; shelter the homeless; cloth the naked; visit the sick and the imprisoned; for by doing this to our neighbour is like doing it unto the Lord. These are the works of mercy and of love that we are called upon to show to our neighbour.

Thus when we, as a people and as a government, embark on a housing revolution to provide assistance for the repair of homes which are in a state of disrepair, or to build new homes for the homeless or for those whose homes are beyond repair, or to upgrade the living standards and quality of life of the less fortunate by eliminating pit latrines and building modern flush toilets in their stead, with potable water connections where these did not exist, we are not creating a sense of dependency but carrying out our Christian duty as a people and as a government to care "for the least among these" of our neighbours.

It is that same Christian duty which impels us to care for the sick by providing free medical attention for those under 18 and over 60 and providing financial assistance to those requiring overseas medical attention.



The entire social program of our country can be seen in light of the call made to us in Luke 10 to love God with all our heart and to love our neighbour as we love ourselves.

The call to us in Matthew 25 is strengthened by the injunction in James 2 which tells us that "faith by itself, if not accompanied by action, is dead".

To love God we must have faith in God and to have faith in God is to do His bidding, to love our neighbour as ourselves and to demonstrate that love by our deeds.

Without referencing the Holy Bible, the United Nations first adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) to be achieved by 2015 and have now adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's), to be achieved by the year 2030. As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), we have made tremendous strides and have achieved most if not all of the MDG's and are well on our way to achieving the SDG's before the deadline of 2030.

In his 2016 Budget Address the Honourable Roosevelt Skerrit, Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, identified a number of major new developments which would have a significant impact in boosting the economy, particularly in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Erika. These include the rehabilitation of the E.O. Leblanc Highway with grant funds from the Government of the People's Republic of China; a number of hotel development projects; the Roseau and Portsmouth enhancement projects; the development of the agricultural and tourism sectors; the development of our geothermal energy potential; and the construction of the much awaited new state of the art national hospital on the site of the Princess Margaret Hospital with grant funding from the Chinese Government. So my Fellow Dominicans and Residents, we have a lot to be thankful for, and should look to the future with great optimism.

Let us all during this festive season commit ourselves to the "corporal works of mercy" and share the love and peace of Christ with each other. As we share special moments with family and friends, we are commanded not to forget our disadvantaged brothers and sisters who are hungry, homeless, naked, sick and/or imprisoned.

I also implore you to always remember the members of the essential services, who will be working during the Christmas Season in order that the rest of us can enjoy a sense of safety and security throughout the season. I refer in particular to the members of the Commonwealth of Dominica Police Force, Fire and Ambulance Services, the State Prisons, Customs and Immigration Departments; employees of the Sea and Air Ports, the Doctors, Nurses and Health Care Workers. We should also remember in a special way, the families and friends of the victims who lost their lives during the passage of Hurricane Matthew in The Bahamas and particularly in Haiti.

So, in a spirit of gratitude for God's love, for what we have been able to achieve together over the past year, and looking forward to all that we hope to achieve together in the years ahead, my wife and I extend to every citizen and resident of our beloved country our very best wishes for a Blessed Christmas Season and a Healthy and Productive New Year!

May the Good Lord bless us all.



## MESSAGE FROM MS JANET CHARLES ACTING HIGH COMMISSIONER

Fellow nationals, I extend warm greetings to you and your family for this festive season.

As we bid farewell to 2016 and prepare to usher in a new year, we must do so with gratitude to God for the blessings which he has bestowed upon us, our families and our country. 2016 was a period of rebuilding for Dominica, after the devastation of Tropical Storm Erika. From every experience, we must try and take the positive lesson, no matter the harshness or unpleasantness of the experience. Erika revived the spirit of 'kodmen' in Dominica - The spirit of community, and the spirit of joining hearts and hands and voices to help each other, and to aid the less fortunate. We are thankful for the progress which we have made so far in the rebuilding process and it is for us to keep that community spirit alive.



One of the main objectives of the High Commission is to foster the ties and collaboration among the various Dominican Associations and Dominican nationals in the United Kingdom. Remember the commendable response which we were able to achieve in our joint relief effort to Dominica in the months following Erika. I would therefore urge each of us, to use this as a measure of the strength which our unity can achieved, and I make a personal plea to each of you to work together whenever possible so that the results of our efforts can be magnified for the good of our country.

2016 has been a proud year for Dominica. Honourable Roosevelt Skerrit, Prime Minister, took up Chairmanship of CARICOM, and at the same time, I was the Chair of the CARICOM Caucus of High Commissioners in London. Further, Dominican Baroness Patricia Scotland officially took up office as the first female Secretary-General of the Commonwealth. It was also the year in which Dominica was privileged to have served as Chair of the Commonwealth Countries League Fair. It was an ideal opportunity for the High Commission to be involved in the organizing of this event, and for the culture of Dominica to feature this year. In this regard I would like to share the messages sent by His Excellency Charles Savarin D.A.H and from myself, which were included in the CCL Brochure (page 5).

I wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and all the best for the New Year.

# Messages of support included in 2016 CCL Brochure

## **A Message from President of the Commonwealth of Dominica** **His Excellency Charles A. Savarin, DAH**

I am delighted to send this message in support of the Commonwealth Countries League Fair 2016. CCL supports one of the noblest of causes, the benefits of which are undeniable and far-reaching: The education of girls.

The United Nations declares that 'Everyone has the right to education'. Education is an opener of doors, a motivator, an enabler and a most important catalyst of human and economic development. However, in some countries girls are disadvantaged in their access to education. An educated girl has a direct positive impact on the improvement of her own life, the lives of her family members, the betterment of her community and the development of her society.

The value of educating girls cannot be overestimated and we must do all we can to encourage and support the programmes which facilitate this basic human right.

This year's Fair is being held under the Commonwealth theme for 2016 'An inclusive Commonwealth'. This is a most appropriate theme as we seek to reach and enable the participation of each individual in the common good. The diversity within the Commonwealth is unique and it is wonderful to see that CCL embraces this fact by supporting the education of girls and young women to help bring about a lasting transformation across the Commonwealth.

The efforts of the CCL Fair over the years, has resulted in empowering girls and young women throughout the Commonwealth to achieve their ambitions and expand their horizons. In Dominica, all children between the ages of 5 and 16 are required by law to be enrolled and to attend school, and as of 2005 there is universal access to secondary education for all those 11 years and over who have completed the primary school program.

It is a great privilege for Dominica to have been asked to be Chair of the 2016 Fair, and we are honoured to have played a part in the coordination of this prestigious and praiseworthy event.

It is my pleasure to congratulate the Commonwealth Countries League, its members and supporters. I wish you all an enjoyable and successful Fair and encourage you to continue to do the work which you do for the sake of The Girls.

## **A Message from Ms Janet Charles, Acting High Commissioner,**

It was an honour for me to have been asked to Chair the Commonwealth Countries League (CCL) 2016 Fair, and it has been my privilege to carry out this responsibility and to work with the incredibly dedicated CCL Fair Organising Committee.

It has been humbling for me to have played a part, even in the smallest way, towards the work of CCL in the promotion of education for underprivileged girls across the Commonwealth.

Dominica is a small island state, with a small population. However, small by nature, is not a determination of our aspiration and our seriousness about education. Dominica celebrates the equal contribution that women make towards development. Presently women make up 25% of total members in Dominica's Parliament. The global average is about 22.8%. Dominica also has many shining examples of women in leadership like Dame Eugenia Charles, Prime Minister of Dominica (1981-1995); Dr Carissa Etienne, Director of the Pan American Health Organization; The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland, Secretary General of the Commonwealth; Honourable Alix Boyd Knights, Speaker of the House of Assembly in Dominica.

It is therefore without hesitation that Dominica gives full support to the aim of CCL in providing the opportunity for disadvantaged girls to obtain a secondary education. Education is the building block that so many young women need in order to seize the endless opportunities that are available for making a better future for themselves and their families. In this regard, I extend my personal thanks to CCL for its contribution over the past 40 years toward this worthy cause.

The success of the Fair depends on the commitment and generosity of the private stallholders and the Commonwealth High Commissions. Over the years, this commitment has been visible as the Fair continues to be one of the major calendar events for many High Commissions. I wish to thank the High Commissions and private vendors for their continued support for the CCL Fair.

To all the supporters here today, be assured that your presence at this Fair, and your patronage makes a real difference to the lives of the girls who receive the education grant. This is evident by the countless feedback and success story received by CCL sponsored girl.

I wish you all a wonderful day at today's Fair and thank you again for your kindness.

**Honourable Roosevelt Skerrit, Prime Minister  
and Honourable Ian Douglas, Minister for Trade, Energy and Employment  
Meet with Dominican Nationals in the United Kingdom**

**Dominica High Commission - Thursday 16 June 2016, from 7pm**

Honourable Roosevelt Skerrit, Prime Minister and Honourable Ian Douglas met with Dominican nationals in the United Kingdom to update on developments in Dominica and on the rehabilitation which has been taking place post Tropical Storm Erika.

Ms Janet Charles, Acting High Commissioner welcomed attendees and recognised the efforts of the Dominican nationals, the Associations and the members of the Tropical Storm Erika Relief Committee for their support and contribution to the relief effort.

In his feature address, The Honourable Prime Minister expressed his heartfelt thanks to the Dominican nationals in the United Kingdom who supported and demonstrated solidarity with Dominica in the difficult time following TS Erika. The Prime Minister also recognised the contribution of the many countries, and the international community who responded to the immediate humanitarian crisis and the going reconstruction in Dominica. The Prime Minister acknowledged the enormous task of rebuilding the country and he reiterated the Government's commitment to building back better.

The Honourable Prime Minister took questions from the floor and engaged in a lively discussion with nationals on matters of national interests including national security, child protection issues, progress in the provision of health care, improvements in air access to Dominica, infrastructural works and projects for social and economic development.

Honourable Ian Douglas in his remarks, reiterated Government's appreciation for the support to Dominica in the rebuilding process and he commended Dominicans at home and abroad for their resilience.

Both the Honourable Prime Minister and Honourable Douglas gave details of the relocation and assistance programmes which are available for the nationals who were displaced by TS Erika.

To date £84,235.55 has been raised by donations made through the Dominica High Commission and the Honourable Prime Minister announced that the funds will be allocated towards the refurbishment of the Colihaut Primary School and the Construction of a toilet block.



# Celebrating Dominica's 38th Anniversary of Independence in the UK

## Miss Wob UK and Ti Matador UK 2016

The independence celebration started with the WCTI's signature and main event, the Miss Wob Dwiyet UK and Ti Matador UK which took place on 1st October under the patronage of the Acting High Commissioner, Ms Janet Charles. Alisha Laurent-Smart was victorious as Miss Wob Dwiyet UK 2016. While, 10 year-old Shadae Sidora-Henry representing Grandbay captured Ti Matador UK 2016.

The show was its usual success with a burst of creole fashion, food and music to commence the UK independence celebrations. The core objective of the WCTI is creating an increased awareness of the Dominican creole culture and heritage among the diaspora youth in the United Kingdom.

This year for the first time, in addition to the fashion rounds, the young ladies were tested on their general knowledge of the Dominican heritage and Creole culture. The lead designer for the fashion wear was Mrs Jennifer Laurent-Smart with guest performances from a promising young soloist Elsa Daisy and others.

## Evensong

Each year the Dean of Westminster Abbey invites Dominica's representative to the United Kingdom and nationals to Evensong in observance of Independence Day when prayers are offered for our Nation, its leaders and people. This year's evensong was held on Friday 4th November 2016 at 5pm and the second lesson was read by the Acting High Commissioner.

## Independence Reception

Following Evensong on 4th November, the High Commission hosted a reception for nationals at the Mission. Guests were treated to a quadrille performance, traditional Dominican Storytelling and steel pan music. The High Commission wishes to thank Ms Claudette Henry for leading the national anthem, Mrs Jane Grell for her storytelling, the Caribbean Quadrille Dancers for their beautiful performance and DJ Vern for providing the music.

## Anniversary Dinner and Dance

This annual event was organised by the DNDDF and was held on 5th October 2016 at the Holiday Inn Kensington Forum. Patrons had the opportunity to socialise, network and to enjoy Caribbean food and music, to celebrate our country's independence



(Above photos of Miss Wob Dwiyet UK and Ti Matador UK: Photos courtesy WCTI)



## DOMINICA PARTICIPATES IN THE COMMONWEALTH DAY OF OBSERVANCE 2016

On 14th March 2016, the 53 countries of the Commonwealth came together to celebrate Commonwealth Day 2016 under the theme 'An Inclusive Commonwealth'.

The observance of Commonwealth Day provides an opportunity for countries and citizens of the Commonwealth to celebrate and promote the shared values of peace and democracy, among others. It is also an opportune time to recognise and celebrate the diversity of the Commonwealth.

Several activities took place globally to mark the day. Among the activities in the United Kingdom was the annual multi-faith service at Westminster Abbey, with guests from around the world participating in the event. Members of the Royal Family, High Commissioners and UK politicians were amongst those participating in the service.

The Parade of Flags is one of the highlight of this yearly inter-faith service. This year, Dominica's flag was carried by Ms Daustina Commodore, a Dominica student who is studying law in the UK.

In her official message to the Commonwealth, Her Majesty The Queen expressed that "This is an essential ingredient of belonging to the Commonwealth: the willingness to share, to exchange and to act for the common good. By including others, drawing on collective insights, knowledge and resources, and thinking and working together, we lay the foundations of a harmonious and progressive society. The greater the diversity of those included in such a shared enterprise, the greater the gains. Each of us has cause to celebrate the sense of belonging expressed in our 2016 theme: An Inclusive Commonwealth."

Commonwealth Day was observed in Dominica with several activities organised by schools around the country. An event was held at the Arawak House of Culture with primary school students displaying the national flags of the Commonwealth countries.



Dominican primary school students at event in Roseau



Acting High Commissioner, with Ms Daustina Commodore



Commonwealth Flagbearers



## CARICOM Day Celebrated in London



CARICOM High Commissioners

CARICOM High Commissioners came together to observe CARICOM DAY. The day was marked with a service on 24th July 2016 at the St. Mary-at-Hill Church. The service was attended by Ms Janet Charles Acting High Commissioner and Chair of the CARICOM Heads of Mission Caucus. Also in attendance were CARICOM High Commissioners and diplomatic representatives and nationals from the CARICOM diaspora. Ms

Abion Stevens who holds dual nationality from Dominica and St Kitts and Nevis was the flag bearer. Ms Stevens was chaperoned by Mrs Carol Elwin and Mr Regional Stowe, both Dominican citizens. The Dean of the Caucus, His Excellency Cenio Lewis, High Commissioner for St Vincent and the Grenadines gave the concluding remarks.

CARICOM Day is set aside to observe and celebrate the unity of the Caribbean Community, and is observed throughout members states. CARICOM was established on 4th July 1973 as an economic union which coordinates economic policies and development planning. The headquarters of CARICOM is situated in Georgetown, Guyana and the Chairmanship operates on a 6 months rotational basis, with the current Chair being Honourable Roosevelt Skerrit, Prime Minister of Dominica.



Mrs Carol Elwin, Ms Abion Stevens and Mr Reginal Stowe



Ms Abion Stevens

## Dominica Takes Leading Role in the 2016 Commonwealth Countries League (CCL) Fair

The 2016 CCL Fair took place on Saturday 12th November 2016 at the Kensington Town Hall, London. It was the usual spectacle and fusion of colour, cultural and fashion from around the Commonwealth. Countries organised their stalls to feature the food, craft, fashion, music and dance from around their respective countries, and patrons were entertained by a varieties of performances on the main stage.

The Fair showcased the diversity of the Commonwealth countries, and reflected our common goal and commitment towards the promotion of education, particularly to the underprivileged girls who benefits from the proceeds of the Fair.

This year the Fair was Chaired by Ms Janet Charles, Acting High Commissioner. This afforded Dominica the opportunity to play a bigger role in the overall organisation of the Fair. The High Commission was tasked with designing the promotion flyer, and the High Commission would like to thank Mr Sylvester Defoe for his colourful and eye-catching design of the flyer.

As Chair, Dominica also had the opportunity to feature on the front and back covers of the Fair Brochure. The design was done by the Discover Dominica Authority depicting the boiling lake and Dominica's indigenous people, the Kalinago. Among messages of support received for inclusion in the brochure, was a message from the President of Dominica, His Excellency Charles Savarin D.A.H.

The Fair was officially opened by Ms Charles. Mrs Nalini Paranavitane, President of CCL gave the opening remarks, thanking patrons for their support of the Fair and for the sponsorship of the education of underprivileged girls from around the Commonwealth. Ms Charles and the other members of the welcome party visited the stalls accompanied by Ms Lisa Lavinier of the Dominica UK Association (DUKA) Mas Dominique Carnival Band in her full carnival costume. The President of Malta, Her Excellency Marie Louise Coleiro Preca was a special guest at the Fair. Cllr Mrs Elizabeth Rutherford, Mayor of Kensington and Chelsea and Baroness Patricia Scotland Commonwealth Secretary General, and High Commissioners were among the other dignitaries at the event.

The Fair presented an opportune moment to showcase Dominica's culture. In so doing DUKA, who came second place at this year's Nottinghill Carnival, were invited to participate in the opening ceremony and DONA was invited to do a quadrille performance. Music on the day was provided by DJ Vern, the Island Selector who played a wide selection of music from all regions of the Commonwealth with genres ranging from Bouyon, R &B, Reggae, Soul, Bhangra and Cadence. Entertainment was provided by several different performers such as Indian dancing, Trinidadian Beauty pageant contestants and Fijian traditional dancers. Also there was a grand raffle draw with prizes including airline tickets and 5 star hotel accommodation in Malta, airline tickets to Sri Lanka and a luxury Dominican product hamper.

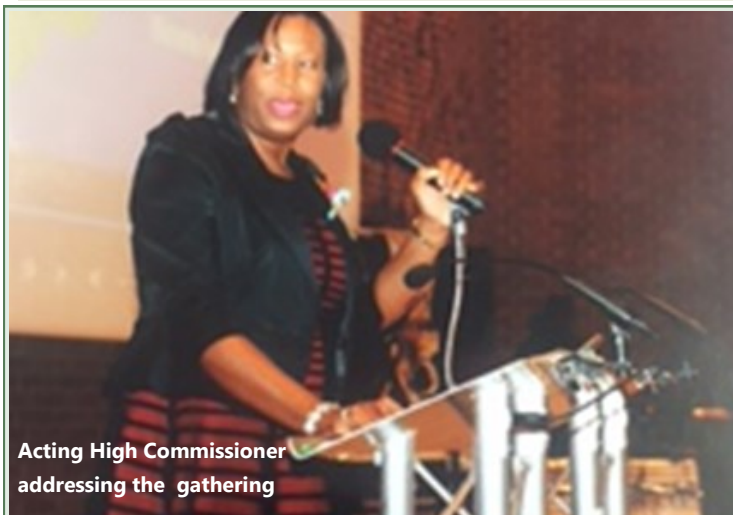
Colourful and vibrant stalls reflected the richness and diversity of the Commonwealth providing visitors with a great experience - from food to craft, music and entertainment, the day provided an enriching journey through the many countries of the Commonwealth. Dominica's stall offered Dominican treats such as bakes, salt fish, coconut cakes, rum punch and products from Dominica including pepper sauce, herbal teas and rum and raised about £900.00 for the charity.

The High Commission wishes to thank all the volunteers who assisted in the preparation and the manning of the Dominican Stall. Special appreciation to Mrs Clara St Paul, Mrs Ethelca Brand, Ms Bertha Joseph, Ms Thora Shillingford, Ms Edrina Xavier, Mr Joseph Vidal, Mr George St Paul, Mrs Brenda Mark Osbourne, Ms Daustina Commodore, Mr Joshua Moses, Ms Genora Joseph, Ms Shellyanne Mead, Ms Lisa Lavinier, Mr Sylvester Defoe, Ms Isabel Charles, Mr Peter Wood, Ms Hilma Alfred, DJ Vern, DONA Quadrille Dancers and DUKA Masqueraders.

Dominica is proud to have served as Chair of the 2016 CCL and The High Commission looks forward to your support in 2017.



# Countries League (CCL) Fair 2016 in Photos



Acting High Commissioner  
addressing the gathering



Pacifica Island music



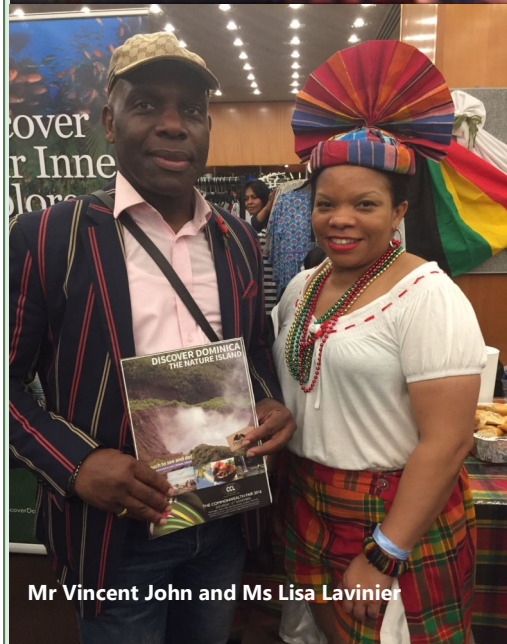
Dominica's Stall



Mayor of Kensington and Chelsea, President  
of CCL, Acting High Commissioner,



President of CCL, Acting High Commissioner, former Mayor of  
Brent, Ms Lisa Lavinier of DUKA Mas Dominik



Mr Vincent John and Ms Lisa Lavinier



Ms Charles, with President of Malta (3rd from left) and other dignitaries

Photos courtesy CCL and Lisa Lavinier





Dominica's Stall



Dominica's Stall



Dancers

Scenes from CCL Fair 2016 Photos courtesy CCL and Lisa Iavinier





Awardee Ms Tina Alfred with Ms Janet Charles, Acting High Commissioner

## Dominican Tina Alfred Receives Queens Young Leaders Award 2016

Ms Tina Alfred, coordinator of the victim support programme at Life-line Ministries in Dominica, works to support teenagers who have experienced gender based violence. She was instrumental in the establishment of the Coalition for the Protection of Children and Youth and is a member of the Dominica National Council of Women. The plight of victims of sexual offences moves Ms Alfred to action and she works with women's groups in Dominica to promote the mandatory reporting of sexual offences and hopes to set up a 24-hour helpline for those seeking to escape violence and abuse.

On 23rd June 2016, Ms Alfred was recognized for her inspirational work when she was among 60 young leaders from across the Commonwealth who met with the Queen at Buckingham Palace to receive the Queen's Young Leaders Award. The Award was set up by the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust in partnership with Comic Relief and the Royal Commonwealth Society. This programme is designed to recognise and celebrate exceptional people aged 18-29 from across the Commonwealth, who are taking the lead in their communities and using their skills to transform lives.

The event was attended by Her Majesty The Queen and other members of the Royal Family, High Commissioners, UK athletes and television personalities. In addressing the gathering, Prince Harry remarked to the awardees that "The Queen's Young Leaders award recognises what you have achieved, not for yourselves, but for your communities, for your peers, and for those less fortunate. You have already been an inspiration to so many; but I hope this award will inspire you to go out and achieve even greater things in the future, empowered by the network of leaders you now sit amongst."

Ms Alfred became the second Dominican to receive the Queen's Young Leaders Award since the programme was launched in 2014, following Ms Kellyne George who was in the first cohort of awardees in 2015. In an announcement made a few weeks ago by the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust, two Dominicans, 19 year old Rianna Patterson and 28 year old Eber Ravariere have been chosen among the 60 awardees for the 2017 Queen's Young Leaders Award.



2016 Queens Young Leaders with Her Majesty, Prince Harry, David Beckham, Sir John Major

## Dominican National Mrs Ethelca Brand Receives OBE from The Queen



Mrs Brand with Jennifer Laurent-Smart at the reception at the Dominica High Commission

The Dominica High Commission joins with the Government and People of Dominica to congratulate Mrs Ethelca Brand on becoming an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE). The honour was bestowed on Mrs Brand for her 'Services to the Community in London'. The announcement was made in The Queen's 90th Birthday Honours List which was released 10th June 2016.

For over 40 years, Mrs Brand has been an integral part of the Dominica community in the United Kingdom. She has been instrumental in organising many fundraising drives for Dominica, most recently, following the devastation of Tropical Storm Erika. Mrs Brand has been an active member of Dominica Overseas National Association (DONA), and one of DONA's Quadrille Dancers.

Mrs Brand's community work and volunteering extends beyond the Dominican community. She is an active member of the Methodist Church in Acton, and is a member of the Acton Gospel Coral. She is involved in social clubs which brings companionship and organises social activities for the elderly, and those without close family. Mrs Brand makes regular visits to hospitals and homes to visit those who are ill and infirmed. She also volunteers in a soup kitchen which offers meals to the homeless.

In 1988 Mrs Brand received the Meritorious Service Award (MSA) of the Commonwealth of Dominica. In 2000, she was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for Services to Community Relations by The Queen.

On the occasion of Mrs Brand's receipt of her OBE, and in recognition of her continued contribution to Dominica, the Dominica High Commission hosted a reception in her honour on Friday 9th December at the High Commission. The event was attended by members of the Dominican Associations in the United Kingdom, and the family and friends of Mrs Brand. Tributes were paid to Mrs Brand in song by Mrs Josephine Moise and the Acton Gospel Coral, in storytelling by Mrs Jane Grell, and in Poetry by Mrs Grace Quansah. Mr Darren Sylvester provided a summary of the excellent work which Mrs Brand has done for Dominica and for the community in London. Chairpersons of the Associations also offered words of congratulations to Mrs Brand.

At the reception, the High Commission congratulated Mrs Brand on behalf of the Government of Dominica. She was assured that her tireless work in service for Dominica is recognised, valued and appreciated. Mrs Brand has been a stalwart of the Dominican community in the United Kingdom, and the Dominica High Commission is proud of her achievements.



## THE DOMINICA HIGH COMMISSION THANKS COMMONWEALTH HIGH COMMISSIONERS FOR SUPPORTING DOMINICA'S CANDIDATE, THE RT HON PATRICIA SCOTLAND QC

A reception was held at the Dominica High Commission on 21st March 2016 to thank High Commissioners and Commonwealth diplomatic missions for their support for Dominica's candidate for the post of Commonwealth Secretary General. Ms Janet Charles, Acting High Commissioner welcomed Commonwealth High Commissioners to the Dominica High Commission, expressing thanks to their countries and governments for the support and confidence placed in Baroness Patricia Scotland by electing her as the 6th Secretary-General of the Commonwealth.

In addressing the gathering, Ms Charles expressed the gratitude of the Government of Dominica in affording such an opportunity to a distinguished national of Dominica.

In her remarks, Baroness Scotland expressed heartfelt thanks to all those who had journeyed with her over the 2 years since her nomination was announced. It was a long journey and she was thankful for all the support and encouragement which she received. She further expressed the honour and pride that she felt, as a citizen of a small island state, in having been elected to serve in this post.

There is a tangible sense of excitement and expectation among Commonwealth diplomatic missions who were encouraged by the vision which Baroness Scotland has for the Commonwealth. With priorities such as the protection of women's rights, climate change issues and fostering trade, countries are looking forward to a period of renewed vigour under the stewardship of Baroness Scotland.



The Rt Honourable Patricia Scotland with Commonwealth High Commissioners at the Dominica High Commission

# COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY-GENERAL DESIGNATE

## The Rt Hon Patricia Janet Scotland QC



Baroness Scotland addressing the gathering



Caribbean High Commissioners with Baroness Scotland



DONA Quadrille Dancers (who performed at the event) in the audience

On 4th April 2016, Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC began her first day in office as Secretary-General of the Commonwealth of Nations. The new Secretary General was welcomed to office at Marlborough House, the headquarters of the Commonwealth Secretariat, by staff of the Secretariat, and Commonwealth High Commissioners.

Hundreds of guests witnessed this historic event when Patricia Scotland became the first woman to hold the post of Commonwealth Secretary General. The event was emceed by Garth Crooks, the former English footballer, and included performances by singer Heather Small of M People, tenor Franz Hepburn and actor Hugh Quarshie.

Baroness Scotland was introduced by Ms Janet Charles, Acting High Commissioner for Dominica and in her address to the gathering Baroness Scotland commented "I am determined that we are going to work together on tackling violence against women and girls, deal with the existential threat of climate change, promote trade and good governance, champion the health, well-being and human rights of our citizens, and ensure young people have the opportunities they need for the future".

She described herself as "a classic child of the Commonwealth" being born in Dominica, of Dominican and Antiguan parents and growing up in London. She grew up with her parents instilling in her the value of education, family and faith. The new Secretary-General made it clear that one of the priorities would be tackling the scourge of domestic violence, describing it as a problem that is "literally stealing our futures".

Speaking about the threat of climate change, she urged members of the Commonwealth to work together and make good on commitments agreed at the global Paris Climate Conference in December 2015. "We can show the world about building resilience and finding innovative solutions."

"I am confident that we can change things for the better. I want the Commonwealth to be a voice for everyone who shares our common values and hopes," she concluded.

The welcome ceremony marked a momentous occasion which ushered a new era of renewed vigour and commitment for the Commonwealth Secretariat and the member states of the Commonwealth.

Dominica takes exceptional pride that Baroness Scotland was selected by Heads of Government of Commonwealth Countries to be Secretary General.



## DUKA's Mass Domnik Carnival Band Secures 2nd Place at Nottinghill Carnival 2016



With the theme "**Amazonia**" the DUKA Mas Domnik UK Carnival Band thrilled spectators and the judges at Nottinghill Carnival in a blaze of colour, energy and revelry.

Amazonia was a display of flamboyant and fabulous costumes, adorned with feathers to honour the national bird of Dominica the *Amazona Imperialis*.

Amazonia was designed by Mr Lincoln Rahamut and built by the DUKA Youth Ambassadors, including Rihanna, Saskia and Ebony. The Leopard customs were designed by Ms Rita Alcid, while the Sensays were conceptualised by the individuals wearers, lead by Mr Lloyd Bertrand. DUKA Mass Domnik also had a tee shirt section, and the float paraded along the carnival route entertained by the popular Dominican artist Asa Banton.



DUKA has been participating in the annual Nottinghill Carnival since 2006 and this is the second time which the band has been awarded second place. DUKA Mass Domnik theme for 2017 will be Kalinago (Caribs) of Dominica.

The High Commission congratulates DUKA Mas Domnik UK Carnival Band for their success in the 2016 carnival.



Photos courtesy Mr Vincent John



## 1st Year Anniversary of Tropical Storm Erika



It was a sombre occasion when Dominica observed the one year mark since the passage of Tropical Storm Erika. The

Government of Dominica declared Saturday 27th and Sunday 28th August 2016 as National Days of Prayer and Thanksgiving as the Nation remembered fellow Dominicans who lost their lives to Erika, and recalled the carnage which was brought by this storm.

In addressing the Nation on 26th August 2016 Prime Minister Honourable Roosevelt Skerrit remarked that "we have worked hard to reconstruct our lives and rebuild this beautiful nation of ours. We are not yet where we would wish to be, in terms of the rebuilding effort, but I am sure all would agree that our progress has been remarkable, and we are on course to building-back-better, our beloved nature isle."

It was one year since Dominica faced the deadliest natural disaster since Hurricane David. The deluge that was Tropical Storm Erika dumped an average 17.83 inches of rain on Dominica triggering flooding and mudslides that left thirty-one (31) people dead, thousands more displaced and causing over \$EC1 billion in damage.

"I said a year ago and I reiterate now that the government shall erect a monument to honour victims of Erika. This will be done, when once we have returned a greater sense of normality to the lives of those displaced and most affected" the Honourable Prime Minister stated.

## Resettlement Project for Residents of Dubique



Officials at the site of the Dubique resettlement project

In October 2016, the government announced that the residents of Dubique, who were evacuated due to Tropical Storm Erika, will be resettled in Grand Bay. By 31st August 2015, in the immediate aftermath of Tropical Storm Erika, approximately 121 residents were evacuated from Dubique, and were housed in temporary accommodation funded by the Government of Dominica.

The first fifty (50) of three hundred homes donated to Dominica by Venezuelan will be allocated for the Dubique community.

Speaking about the Dubique resettlement, the Honourable Prime Minister commented "In a matter of weeks of Tropical storm Erika, we started the construction of homes in the first instance for the residents of Dubique".

He continued, "very soon we expect the fifty homes to be completed and you can move the people into those homes. The Cabinet has taken a decision in terms of the allocation of the houses and we will be engaging the residents of Dubique shortly".



## Commencement of Work on the Resettlement of Petite Savanne Community

On 29th November 2016, work began on the Petite Savanne resettlement project. The Government of Dominica signed an Agreement for the construction of works on the resettlement with the Montreal Management Consultant Establishment (MMCE) on 16th June 2016.

The new community will consist of a minimum of 315 housing units; a Community Centre; Sporting facility; Commercial Centre and a Farmers Market.

Petite Savanne was one of the most severely affected area of Dominica during the ravages of Tropical Storm Erika. The community had to be evacuated and many residents were placed in temporary accommodation.

The resettlement will be on 49.6 acres of land at Alford Estate in Bellevue Chopin and the public has been assured that the buildings have been designed to suit the climate and terrain of Dominica.



(Government Information Services: 8th November 2016)

## Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit Assumed Chairmanship of CARICOM

Honourable Roosevelt Skerrit, Prime Minister of Dominica presided over the 37th Meeting of the Conference of CARICOM Heads of Government which took place in Georgetown Guyana from 4th to 6th July 2016.

In addressing the opening session, the Honourable Prime Minister welcomed the new Heads of Government from St Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica. Prime Minister Skerrit also welcomed the experience of long serving Heads from St Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname.

The Chairmanship of CARICOM held a rotation system of a six month period.

## Work Began on New West Bridge in Roseau



Work began with the fencing of some areas of the construction site along River Bank between the West Bridge and the E. C. Lobblack Bridge as well as west of

the West Bridge in the area currently being used as the Portsmouth bus stop.

In 2015, Government had identified the rebuilding of the West Bridge as a priority project to improve the capital both aesthetically and structurally.

The integrity of the West Bridge was further compromised after being buffeted for several hours by the raging Roseau River during Tropical Storm Erika. This is phase one of the Roseau Enhancement Project.

Ground was broken for the \$18.2 million project on April 22nd 2016.

The project is being funded by Dominica's Economic Citizenship Programme.

(Government Information Services: 8th June 2016)



# New Hospital for Dominica

As part of a phased approach to the construction of the new national hospital, HUNAN Construction Engineering Group Corporation of the People's Republic of China has begun works on the site of the Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) in Goodwill.

The administrative building, located on the eastern end of the PMH site is now under construction. The administrative building will serve as the work space of HUNAN Construction throughout the life of the project.

Work on the administrative building is expected to last until November, 2016. As a result, residents near the hospital as well as clients of the hospital will likely experience an increase in noise, disruptions and dust due to the construction. Therefore, all are asked to be cautious when using that section of the grounds. This is the first building to be erected on the PMH site following the ground breaking ceremony for the new national hospital on August 08, 2016.

The US \$40 million new national hospital is a grant from the Government of the People's Republic of China. It is part of the Government of Dominica's plan to advance the country's healthcare system in infrastructure and otherwise.

The Governments of Dominica and the People's Republic of China formally established diplomatic relations in March 2004.

*GIS, 13 September 2016*





# NATIONAL EMBLEMS OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA

## THE NATIONAL FLOWER OF DOMINICA



**Sabinea Carinalis "Bwa Kwaib"**

- ◇ The flower honoured as our National Flower is a wild xerophytic plant known botanically as *Sabinea carinalis*, commonly known as Carib Wood or 'Bwa Kwaib'. It was legislated as the National Flower, along with the Coat of Arms and National Flag in 1978. (The National Emblems of Dominica Act, 1978) (Act No. 18 of 1978).
- ◇ As an indigenous plant, one of the reasons for which it was selected, it has survived our entire history, and hopefully, will be with us for all time. It can therefore be said to represent the continuity of our young people.
- ◇ When in bloom, it displays precocious bright scarlet flowers along the entire length of its branches, and is found growing along dry coastal areas. Distribution in the wild is low, but it is an extremely hardy plant. When grown at high elevations, even in good soil, 'Bwa Kwaib' will be bushy but not flower profusely. Around April, when in full bloom, the plant presents a magnificent spectacle.
- ◇ Its hardiness and scarlet flowers are reminiscent of our strong rugged and resourceful people with an ability to survive and overcome problems, and Dominica's ability to triumph despite seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

# *Season's Greetings*



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**Main cover photograph:** Mr Vincent John, Chair of DNDDF; Ms Janet Charles, High Commissioner; Cllr Peter Herrington, Mayor of Waltham Forest; Baroness Patricia Scotland, Commonwealth Secretary General; Mrs Susan Herrington, Cllr Bryan Collier MBE, Civic Dignitary of Newham and Mrs Marie Collier