

**REMARKS BY
JEAN RICOT DORMEUS,
OAS REPRESENTATIVE
AT THE CLOSING CEREMONY
OF THE YOUTH RURAL TOURISM WORKSHOP**

Friday, August 26, 2011

Ms. Milinette Ambrose, Acting Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism,
Ms. Cleon Athill, Director of Youth Affairs,
Mr. Donald Charles, Co-President of the Young Americas Business Trust / Antigua
and General Manager of the Antigua and Barbuda Development Bank,
Facilitators Guillermo and Rael of the Mount Carmel International Training
Center,
Distinguished participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I feel thrilled and heartened to be part of history in the making. As we conclude this action oriented workshop to help youth set up their business in the area of rural tourism, we can already envision that the seeds we have planted in the hearts and the minds will soon bear fruit. We can nurture the legitimate hope that very soon a significant number of participants will use the powerful tools they received to create their business, grow wealth, give employment, and transform their community.

The Organization of American States and its YABT Affiliate are dedicated to supporting youth holistic development in the Americas, helping to disseminate knowledge, build capacity and prepare for competitiveness. We are pleased to have a strong partner in Antigua and Barbuda, the ABDB whose general manager is profoundly committed to the success of this program. I thank Don and his team for this workshop excellent preparatory process.

For this hope generating event, we have brought to Antigua two of the best trainers in the world from MASHAV, the Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation and the Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Centre (MCTC). I am sure you participants have appreciated the expertise and effectiveness of Guillermo and Rael. I want to thank them.

I also wish to thank Ms. Jacqueline Richardson of the Ministry of Education for her sterling contribution, Mr. Stephen Samuel of the Directorate of Youth, Ms. Sheila Roseau and Asha Challenger of the Directorate of Gender Affairs, and Ms. Cynthia Simon of the Ministry of Tourism, for their exceptional support. Special thanks to Ms. Roberta Williams of the GARD Center for her assistance. As you can see, Government agencies, international institutions, and organizations of the civil society have joined forces to deliver this impactful, mindset changing workshop.

Over this week, you got acquainted with powerful concepts that have created prosperity around the world. You have become aware of the critical importance of goals setting, research, consultations, as well as potentiality, market and risk analysis. You know that a tourist destination has a life cycle and needs to be rejuvenated at some point in time. The wise use of these tools is the stepping stone that will take you into a new dimension of prosperity and success.

Also you were gratified with site visits to connect you with the real business world. I am sure they will fertilize your mind and open your eyes to an array of new opportunities. I had a chance to be with you at Stingray City and Betty's Hope. What I took away from this experience is that your business proceeds from what you love, what you want to share, and how you want to make your customers feel. Bernardo Concepción of Stingray City profoundly impressed me with his enthusiasm, kindness, spirit of service, and desire to give something special. Actually, I think the parrots, the monkeys, the speedboats, the photo with the rays are only instruments to share what is in his heart and imagination to make Antigua vacation memorable for his patrons.

You have participated in this workshop some with a burning desire to set up their business, others to be able to replicate the training and others just out of curiosity. Whatever your purpose was, you now have a mission. You are charged to make your community and your country better by generating prosperity, by showing by example that everybody in Antigua and Barbuda can create wealth and help sustain society, no matter what. You have become like homing pigeons that will carry and deliver a message to your circle of influence. You do not have to wait for somebody to create a job for you; you can create a profitable business and employ other people.

Is it easy? Tell me what important thing has ever been easy in life. To make it, you need to desire it passionately. Your commitment to create your business and your business idea must become your dream, your music, your fun, your entertainment, your carnival. You need to cultivate genuine love for your partners, your potential customers and even your competitors. You need to display resourcefulness, persevere, show creativity, overcome obstacles, and stand firm and calm in the face of challenges. Your faith should be strong enough to sustain you through.

Remember, failure is failure only if you give up. Just yesterday morning, I read a thought by former professional basketball player Michael Jordan: "I have failed over and over and over again in my life, and that's why I succeed". Success is a great lady, she does not say yes at once.

The OAS and YABT have helped to equip you with the tools you need to succeed. These tools will be like fertilizer left in a bag if you do not readily use them. When you use them, the sky will be the limit and the hope of creating prosperity without ceiling will be stronger than ever. No matter what your present circumstances are, you can make it. Reject all excuses your mind or society may present to you; you have all you need and zillions of reasons to succeed.

Further, you enjoy a privilege that escape to billions of people around the world. It is the backing of the Antigua and Barbuda Development Bank. Don Charles said it loud and clear during the opening ceremony. Come to the bank with strong, sustainable projects, and most likely you will access resources to implement them. So what else do you need?

The story of Harold Charles of Turks and Caicos Island comes to my mind. He began as a cleaner in an airline company, with a big dream and a victor attitude. In 1994, with a partner, he created Sky King from almost nothing. In 2008, he sold the company to Air Turks and Caicos for \$25 million. Can you do the same thing? You bet.

Now is your time. Now is your time to take the great adventure of success and prosperity. Now is your time to engage in forging a better tomorrow for yourselves, your relatives and your country. Now is your time to nurture the seed

planted in you, see it blossom and produce fruit. Now is your time to deliver a strong message to youth in Willikies, in Bethesda, in Newfield, in All Saints, in Bolans, Jennings, Urlings and Old Road. Deliver this message everywhere in Antigua and Barbuda with the faithfulness of the homing pigeon.

In the wonderful world of business creation and management, three things are important after all: faith, hope and love. Like Apostle Paul, I will tell you the greatest of all is love. Go love with all your strength, before you know it, your dream will smile to you.

Thank you and God bless you all!