

**REMARKS BY**  
**THE HONOURABLE DAVID J.H. THOMPSON, Q.C., M.P.**  
**PRIME MINISTER OF BARBADOS**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE**  
**INAUGURAL NETWORK CONSULTATION**  
**AUGUST 6 – 7, 2010**

Welcome to all the Barbadians from overseas who have braved the various conditions to take part in this Inaugural Network Consultation!

I welcome as well all those Barbadians who have returned home permanently and have taken the time to be part of this process.

Your attendance and participation in this event signals another step in cementing the nexus between Barbados and its diaspora.

For me personally, this Consultation is a vital part of the Diaspora policy of this government and is a dream come true. For too long our policy has been diffuse, complicated, unfocussed and resource-starved.

In my 2008 Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals I said then that this government, "...viewed the diaspora as an integral part of the economic, social and cultural development of Barbados and is determined to create a comprehensive strategy for engaging them."

I also indicated that a Biennial Network Consultation would be inaugurated so that we can effectively communicate, share goals, set standards and get to know each other. This event therefore represents the realisation of that vision.

Barbados, can be proud of the capability and capacity of its human resources, wherever they may reside. I am always heartened by the commitment of Barbadians overseas to the social and economic development of the country, and who by their remittances and philanthropic contributions over the years have made an indelible mark on this country.

I anticipate that this relationship will continue and that in the near future there will exist a seamless connection between Barbadians on the 'rock' and Barbadians in the Diaspora.

I wish to encourage all those young Barbadians in the Diaspora to get more involved in the national activities wherever they live.

Over the next two days, you should exchange ideas, explore strategies to be more effective and better define the mechanisms for continued engagement.

As you are aware, circumstances concerning my health prevent me from sharing this moment with you, in person, but rest assured that I will be following closely the outcome of the sessions.

I wish you a successful consultation and I look forward to the further strengthening of this inaugural dialogue.

May God bless all of you.

David Thompson