

Foreign Exchange Summary

as at December 4, 2020

Member State	USD	CAD	GBP	Euro
Bahamas (BSD)	1.00	0.78	1.34	1.21
Barbados (BBD)	2.03	1.58	2.74	2.48
Belize (BZD)	2.02	1.57	2.71	2.43
Guyana (GYD)	218.00	163.62	283.56	256.27
Haiti (HTG)	70.57	52.99	91.27	82.77
Jamaica * (JMD)	145.12	112.58	196.10	178.07
OECS (XCD)	2.71	2.08	3.61	3.22
Suriname (SRD)	14.29	11.07	19.25	17.38
T&T (TTD)	6.76	5.53	9.59	8.77

*Rates applicable for Customs & GCT purposes

Business News In Brief

Suriname downgraded to restricted default by Fitch

US-based rating agency, Fitch Rating, has downgraded Suriname's creditworthiness to the level of restricted default relative to the "C" rating it had been accorded in October. The downgrade, the ratings agency claimed was occasioned by Suriname's inability to make interest payments due on November 25. It said this is a reflection of the high government debt, which is expected to reach 137% of GDP by the end of 2020, without any agreement with creditors. Fitch also predicts a structurally large budget deficit, difficult financing conditions and an acute shortage of foreign currency. [\(CBR\)](#)

Jamaica moves towards an Independent Fiscal Commission

The Government of Jamaica has initiated action to institutionalise fiscal transparency and strengthen its fiscal responsibility framework by way of an Independent Fiscal Commission This was effected through tabling a Bill to that effect in the House of Representatives. According to Finance Minister Dr Nigel Clarke, "the fiscal commission will be the guardian and interpreter of Jamaica's fiscal rules, monitoring compliance with these fiscal rules, reporting on fiscal outcomes and keeping the public informed by providing an independent analysis on fiscal policy developments." The Commission will replace the Economic Programme Oversight Committee. [\(LOOP\)](#)

Grenada records 2.9% primary surplus amid growth downturn

Real GDP in Grenada is projected to decline in 2020 by 12.2% underpinned by notable declines in key sectors such as Tourism, Wholesale and Retail Trade, and Transport. That's the perspective contained in the Government of Grenada's 2020 Economic Review & Medium-Term Outlook. According to the publication average inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index was negative for the first 6 months of 2020 at -0.6%, whereas unemployment currently stands at 28.4% compared to 15.7% in the corresponding period of 2019. Public finances have deteriorated in 2020, with the primary and overall surpluses estimated at 2.9% of GDP and 0.9% of GDP respectively, compared to 6.8% of GDP and 4.6% of GDP correspondingly in 2019. Public debt is expected to increase to 68.6% of GDP by year-end up from 57.7% at the end of 2019. [\(NOW\)](#)

Corporate Movements

- ⇒ The Bank of Saint Lucia has appointed Rolf K. Phillips as Managing Director effective November 1st 2020;
- ⇒ Angostura Holdings Limited has appointed Tishana Abdool as Assistant Secretary effective November 27, 2020.

IMF suggests income taxes for the Bahamas

The IMF at the conclusion of its Article IV Mission in the Bahamas, has projected that government debt will increase to over 85% of GDP and suggested increased real property taxes on higher valued residences and the introduction of income taxes. According to the Fund, real GDP is projected to decline by 16.2% in 2020, followed by a modest rebound of 2% in 2021 and to converge back to its pre-pandemic level only by 2024 . The current account balance is projected at a deficit of 17.4% of GDP in 2020 and will improve only gradually, consistent with the projected pick up in tourism in 2022. Foreign reserves reached a record level of \$2.3 billion in October and should remain well above the minimum suggested threshold of three months of imports over the medium-term. The IMF is also encouraging the authorities to phase out the broad set of hurricane and pandemic-related tax waivers at the first legislative opportunity as there are more effective and targeted measures to support the vulnerable. This as the Fund notes that tax policy and administration measures are essential to a robust consolidation. [\(IMF\)](#) [\(NG\)](#)

Stock Market Summary

as at December 4, 2020

Jamaica Stock Exchange

Overall Market activity resulted from trading in 41 stocks of which 20 advanced, 18 declined and 3 traded firm. Market volume amounted to 26,035,964 units valued at over J\$1,186,034,996.18. Barita Investments Ltd was volume leader with 12,109,602 units. Index advanced by 973.03 points to close at 396,423.72.

Jamaica Junior Stock Exchange

Overall market activity resulted from trading in 40 stocks of which 28 advanced, 10 declined and 2 traded firm. Market volume amounted to 3,764,642 units valued at over J\$7,764,561.80. Index closed at 2,496.22.

Barbados Stock Exchange

One security traded firm as 502 shares traded with a total value of \$893.56. Insurance Corporation of Barbados Ltd was the sole security trading. Index closed at 2,423.29.

Trinidad & Tobago Stock Exchange

Overall Market activity resulted from trading in 14 securities of which 1 advanced, 9 declined and 4 traded firm. Trading activity on the First Tier Market registered a volume of 254,549 shares crossing the floor of the Exchange valued at TT\$6,034,897.51. National Enterprises Limited was volume leader with 104,405 shares changing hands for a value of TT\$313,465.00. The All T&T Index declined by 13.04 points to close at 1,715.35. The Composite Index declined by 7.07 points (0.55%) to close at 1,289.23 and the Cross Listed Index closed at 116.71.

Guyana Stock Exchange

1 stock advanced and 2 traded firm as 28,700 units crossed the floor. Banks DIH was volume leader with 21,681 shares traded. The LSI closed at 656.93.

Eastern Caribbean Securities Exchange (ECSE)

1 stock traded 223 shares. Sole trader was East Caribbean Financial Holding Co Ltd. Index closed at 161.2.

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Business News In Brief

Jamaica revenues up 1.1% in 2nd quarter

Jamaican government revenues and grants for the period of April to October 2020 exceeded projections by \$2.88 B to \$298.68 B. However this represents a decrease of 16.7% relative to the \$358.76 B recorded for the corresponding period in 2019. Tax revenue amounted to \$261.69 B, which is \$2.42B more than budgeted while non-tax revenue came out at \$33.46 B, \$11.7 million over budget. Grants amounted to \$3.51 B outperforming projections by \$444.50 million. Total expenditure for the period April to October 2020 amounted to \$370.80 B, \$87.70 million less than the budgeted amount of \$370.88 B. Recurrent expenditure, amounted to \$343.38 B or 92.61% of total expenditure. The fiscal deficit for the period was \$72.11 B relative to a projected deficit of \$75.07 B. Additionally, the primary surplus for the period amounted to \$3.60 billion, relative to the budgeted primary surplus of \$210.70 million. ([JO](#))

News Highlights

- [IMF: Article IV Consultation with The Bahamas](#)
- [Grenada: 2020 Economic Review](#)

OECD sees improved economic outlook

The OECD believes the global economy will bounce back from COVID-19, and grow by as much as 4.2% in 2021. This is the same rate the economy is expected to decline this year. Global GDP in the 4th quarter of 2020 is expected to be 3% below the same quarter last year, while for the Euro area and the US the decline is projected to be 7.3% and 3.2%, respectively. The organisation had earlier reported that global trade had rebounded sharply in the 3rd quarter with merchandise exports up 21.6% and imports up 18.1%. However, international trade remains around 5% below its pre-pandemic level in the final quarter of 2019 and close to 10% below the 3rd quarter of 2018. ([CC](#))

International Oil Prices as at December 4, 2020

Futures	Price	US\$ Change	Change %
WTI Crude	US\$46.09	+0.45	+0.99
Brent Crude	US\$49.03	+0.21	+0.43
OPEC Basket	US\$47.45	+0.78	+1.67
Natural Gas	US\$2.55	+0.04	+1.59