

# Bootcamp Teaches Trade Negotiations Techniques

By Carol Williams

A two-day bootcamp on trade negotiations has opened in St John's with a regional negotiator calling for businesses to mimic the mettle displayed by Antigua & Barbuda in its four-year-old battle with the United States, in fighting for local industries.

Lincoln Price of the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery said that anything less would not be sufficient.

"You have to fight and you have to come with the energy and with the boldness to fight for your industries in the same way that you're fighting for Internet gaming now, that is what you have to do with all the other sectors that

you think are global winners," Price said.

"If you ignore trade negotiations, it's really about ignoring your survival and your growth, because trade negotiations are not a theoretical thing anymore. We have seen that in the example of bananas and you have seen in terms of sugar and in other sectors."

He was at the time addressing participants at what has been dubbed an interactive trade negotiations bootcamp titled, "profiting from proactive trade negotiations."

Organized by the Antigua & Barbuda Business Alliance, which comprise the hotel and tourist association, the cruise tourism association,

the Employers' Federation and the tour operators' association, the sessions seek to arm local businesses with the knowledge on regional and international trade negotiations and identify ways they can benefit.

Finance and Economy Minister Dr Errol Cort is also advocating for businesses to become more involved in trade negotiations to ensure their continued survival.

Government cannot do it alone, he pointed out, as what may be decided may not be practical for businesses.

"In my view, in all of our regional and international meetings, the business community needs to be represented and needs

to attend these meetings with government, so that they have a direct first-hand input into all that is being discussed, into all that is being negotiated," he said.

Interim chairperson Patrick Ryan said numerous opportunities are available to the Caribbean, but have not been taken advantage of.

As examples, he cited two of the biggest cruise lines in the world, which visit the region, *Carnival Cruise Lines* and *Royal Caribbean*, which have utilised what he said, the Caribbean is known for.

Ryan said, too, that not enough attention is given to the music, which forms part of our culture.

"I don't think we understand the power of music and what Caribbean culture has taken us to and those levels and it is us here now in trade, in services, to expand on that and go forward," Ryan said.

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