

JANUARY–MARCH 2025

BEC QUARTERLY PULSE



BEC IN ACTION!

Dear Members,

Through this newsletter, we highlight the **Barbados Employers' Confederation's (BEC)** advocacy efforts and key activities from the first quarter (January-March) of 2025.

As the collective voice of employers, we remain committed to championing your interests, influencing policy, and ensuring that your concerns are heard at every level.

● FEBRUARY 2025

Disability Awareness in Focus!

BEC attended the **Disability Awareness Workshop** held in connection with Ministry of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs (MPEA) on February 28, 2025.

This Workshop sought to give participants:

- A comprehensive understanding of the newly enacted Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill and its associated implications.
- Provide invaluable insights through direct narratives from persons with disabilities, offering unique perspectives on their lived experiences and needs.

● JANUARY 2025

Working with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on Your Behalf!

The **Barbados Employers' Confederation (BEC)** participated in the **ILO Decent Work Programme's Validation Workshop on the Country Diagnostic**.

Held from January 15 -16, this session focused on assessing the current situation and priority areas. Some areas under discussion included:

- Fundamental Rights at Work
- Gender in Employment
- Barriers to Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining



● FEBRUARY 2025



BEC's Hearts & High Fives Promotion!

Valentines' Day 2025 was about **Hearts & High-Fives** to celebrate all our incredible longstanding and new members. To make it even more exciting, our team randomly selected the lucky companies to be celebrated!

We presented **BEC Hearts & High Fives** gifts to the drawn members. The items given included:

- ♥ A copy of The Red Book: A Guide To Employment Relations In Barbados
- ♥ A copy of our Conducting Discipline: A Step-By-Step Guide
- ♥ A BEC Risk Assessment
- ♥ A free BEC OSH Box
- ♥ Free attendance at one (1) BEC Training Workshop in 2025
- ♥ A free ticket to attend an event for BEC Week 2025
- ♥ A free session on our online training platform in 2025



**BEC Spread the Love
This Valentines!**



NEW AT BEC!

In January and March of this year, **BEC** welcomed two new members of staff.

Nakita Trotman is our newest Employment Relations Advisor. Meanwhile, Naketa Wiggins is our new Employment Relations Associate.



Read More on Our Website

<https://barbadosemployers.com>



BEC Joins Forces with the Education Ministry for the National Child Labor Committee Forum!

BEC was well represented at the **National Child Labour Committee Forum** held on February 27, 2025, at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre.

The theme for this session was **Power Up – Promoting Decent Work and Youth Advocacy Against Child Labour**. The secondary school students in attendance were encouraged to help combat child labour by reporting any harmful situations impacting their peers.

BEC's Member Forum!

To ensure our members continue to be well informed, we held our free Member Information Session on March 4, 2025. This was well attended.

The topic for this event was 'Spying vs. Surveillance: How Safe is Your Business?'. Our featured speakers included: Crime Prevention Officer with The Barbados Police Service, Inspector Roger Babb, Attorney-At-Law, Safiya Moore and Guardsman (Barbados) Ltd, General Manager-Operations, Hurtado Mitchell.

Two (2) key points made were:

- There should be continuous education of staff about a company's crime prevention strategies.
- Each company should continuously test their video cameras to ensure they are in good working order.



LATEST NEWS

BEC IN THE NEWS!

Plea to put protocols in place

by COLVILLE MOUNSEY

IN LIGHT OF LAST SUNDAY's daylight shooting at a gas station that left a customer dead and an employee injured, a call is being made for businesses to integrate cyber security protocols into their health and safety training.

It is coming from behavioural scientist Professor Stephen Denworth, who is warning that failure to address this issue could have broader implications, including the potential for data breaches in government and other sectors.

Two of the three homicide cases for this year have involved the use of firearms. The number of 18-year-olds killed in the last year has increased, with 10 deaths in 2024, up from 8 in 2023.

These figures are alarming, especially when combined with the fact that the Barbados Police Service has reported a significant increase in cyber-related incidents.

Denworth emphasised the psychological and social ramifications of such events, with heightened fear and anxiety among the population.

He also highlighted the importance of providing professional support for employees who might be traumatised by such incidents.

He emphasised the need to adapt their health and safety protocols to include training on responding to violent situations.



BARBADOS Employers' Confederation executive director Simon Mounseyn-Gonzalez

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PROFESSOR OF MANAGEMENT and organisational behaviour Stephen Denworth, said:

"Businesses operating under intense pressure are so busy responding to customer needs that they often neglect their own health and safety protocols. This is a dangerous oversight, especially in the current climate of cyber threats and physical security risks."

He noted that public awareness is crucial in ensuring that businesses take the necessary steps to protect their employees and customers.

Denworth also stressed the importance of regular training and drills to ensure that all staff are familiar with the company's security protocols.

He called on the Barbados Employers' Confederation (BEC) to lead by example and implement robust security measures within its own operations.

Denworth's comments come as the Barbados Police Service continues to investigate the recent shooting at a gas station, which has left the community in a state of heightened alert.

He urged businesses to take proactive measures to prevent such incidents, including investing in security technology and providing ongoing support for their staff.

Denworth's plea is part of a broader effort to raise awareness about the importance of health and safety in the workplace, particularly in the context of the current security challenges.

He emphasised the need for a multi-layered approach to security, combining physical measures with cyber security and employee training.

12, THURSDAY, JANUARY 10, 2025, DAILY NATION

N Focus

The critical aspects of data protection

The following article was submitted by Patricia J. White, manager, employment relations at the Barbados Employers' Confederation.

IMAGINE THE SHEER PANIC and chaos a company feels when it realises its digital fortress has been breached. In today's hyper-connected world, data protection isn't just important – it's a lifeline.

As businesses drive deeper into digitalisation, they become increasingly dependent on these platforms for their operations, which also points a giant target on their back for cybercriminals.

Take the recent nightmare faced by Chase Healthcare in the United States. A ruthless ransomware gang hacked into their systems, making off with sensitive health data. The fallout was massive, with personal, medical, and billing information of around 100 million people compromised. It's a chilling reminder of how vulnerable we all are.

And it's not just the US feeling the heat. Here in Barbados, we have had multiple attacks, with our most recent one occurring in October 2024 with the Barbados Statistical Service. That entity fell victim to a breach of their systems, where sensitive personal and statistical data were accessed. The aftermath from these breaches are felt far and wide, underscoring the urgent need for robust data protection measures.

This piece explores the critical aspects of data protection and the steps companies in Barbados must take to ensure compliance and protect their stakeholders.

Understanding the Data Protection Act and its implications is the first step in ensuring that your company is compliant with the law.

The Data Protection Act of Barbados, 2023, provides a robust legal framework to safeguard personal data. Yet, the challenge lies in translating this legislation into effective policies and practices within companies.

The Act is designed to regulate the processing of personal data and protect the privacy of individuals. It mandates that companies handle data lawfully, fairly, and securely. Key provisions include obtaining explicit consent from data subjects, ensuring data accuracy, and implementing measures to prevent unauthorised access. Companies must also be transparent about how they collect, use, and share personal data, even at the point of recruitment.

Understanding these requirements is the first step for businesses to align their operations with the law.

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• March 2025

BEC Represents Barbados in China!

BEC was part of the Barbados delegation participating in the Advanced Training Program on Barbados Vocational Education Management and Barbados' Research on WorldSkills and Industry Connections in China.



This industry study tour, which ran from March 10-20, took place in Guangzhou, China. WorldSkills standards, industry-driven skill training and vocational training were among the areas covered during sessions.

BEC represents employers' interest on the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council.



Take A Listen!

Tune in to [HOTT 95.3FM](https://www.hott953fm.com) on [Wednesdays](https://www.hott953fm.com) from [7:40 am](https://www.hott953fm.com) to [7:45 am](https://www.hott953fm.com) for [Transform Yuh Business](https://www.hott953fm.com).

BEC will be sharing HR related tidbits during this weekly radio programme carried on this station by SigniaGlobe Financial Inc.

[Read More on Our Website](https://barbadosemployers.com)



<https://barbadosemployers.com>

Your Voice at the 353rd Session of the ILO Governing Body!

BEC's Executive Director participated in discussions representing the voice of employers during the 353rd Session of the ILO Governing Body from March 10 to 20 in Geneva.

Here are four highlights from the Session:

- 1. Change in Employer Leadership**
 - As Renata Hornan-Draus retires, Matthias Thorns was appointed as the new IOE Vice-President to the ILO and Employers' Group spokesperson, ensuring continuity in employer representation at the global level.
- 2. Democratization in ILO Governance**
 - This is a long-standing issue, and the Governing Body is exploring options to enhance fair and equal representation, including granting voting rights to deputy members, with further discussions scheduled for 2026.
- 3. Programme & Budget Challenges**
 - Budgetary debates cannot exclude geopolitical realities. Notably just 6 countries contribute 2/3 of the budget. Key discussions also centred on non-discrimination principles in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity.
- 4. ILO Agenda on Labour Migration**
 - With over 167 million migrant workers globally, the ILO will strengthen its policy responses, leveraging the Global Coalition for Social Justice to address ongoing transitions, conflicts, and insecurity.



The Caribbean's post-COVID recovery is driven by tourism, emphasizing the need for economic diversification. Key priorities include climate resilience, Just Transition, digitization, and labour migration policy development.

The importance of employer engagement in governance, economic resilience, and labour policy development remains critical to ensure that our regional priorities are addressed.

BEC Issues A Budget Response!

Minister in the Ministry of Finance Ryan Straughn delivered the National Budget speech 2025 to the Lower Chamber on March 10, 2025.

Following this, **BEC** submitted a response, focusing on areas impacting employers and the labour market. We also asked for policy guidance to be issued early.

Here are the concerns we highlighted on your behalf:

1. Implications of the Resilience and Regeneration Fund

We indicated that employers needed clarity on implementation guidelines and assurances that these contributions will yield tangible benefits for business continuity and disaster resilience.

2. NIS Reform and Employer Obligations

We urged authorities to provide further engagement on how the requirement for businesses with payment arrangements to participate in various government surveys for five years. The concern was also raised about potential administrative burdens, confidentiality of business data and how this will be structured and enforced.

3. Automatic Minimum Wage Increases – A Missed Opportunity for Collaborative Decision-Making

We highlighted that the announcement of an automatic 2% increase in the national minimum wage from January 1, 2026, without the engagement of the Minimum Wage Board, was concerning.

The BEC has repeatedly advocated directly with the Ministry of Labour and at Social Partnership for the reconvening of the Board over the past 2 years. Now that the Minimum Wage Board has reconvened in January 2025, the BEC and the other social partners have actively participated in recent discussions on wage-setting mechanisms.

We strongly encouraged the government to consider the Board's recommendations before implementing further changes, ensuring that the various factors to be considered in minimum wage setting, as outlined in legislation, are taken into account.

4. Maternity and Paternity Leave: A Balanced Approach

It was highlighted that the expansion of maternity leave to 14 weeks for single births and 17 weeks for multiple births, alongside the introduction of three weeks of statutory paternity leave, aligns with evolving workplace policies. Many progressive employers have already implemented paternity leave through company policies and collective bargaining.

When the proposal for a review of Maternity and Paternity Leave policies was made by the tripartite Structure of Work Committee, it recommended that the changes be informed by actuarial analysis.

UPCOMING!



SAVE *the* DATE

BEC WEEK 2025



TO

