

BEC QUARTERLY PULSE



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!

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





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.





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.







BEC IN THE NEWS!

Plea to put protocols in place



N Focus

The critical aspects of data protection





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.

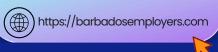


Take A Listen!

Tune in to <u>HOTT 95.3FM</u> on <u>Wednesdays</u> from <u>7:40 am to</u> <u>7:45 am</u> for <u>Transform Yuh</u> <u>Business</u>.

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



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!





BEC WEEK 2025

MAY 12

TO

MAY 18

