

Lion's Roar



NEWS from Equity Bank Bahamas Limited | Nassau, The Bahamas | Winter 2024 | equitybahamas.com

SKIP THE LINE

Equity Bank Bahamas Now Offers Private Banking Services to High Net Worth Bahamians

EQUITY BANK BAHAMAS (Equity) is poised to redefine the landscape of private banking in The Bahamas as it now offers services tailored to meet the diversified requirements of its clients locally and globally.

Equity's suite of comprehensive Private Banking services cater to the distinctive needs of High Net Worth (HNW) Bahamians and their businesses, marking a significant milestone in exercising its Authorized Dealer license with the Central Bank of The Bahamas. Equity's Bahamian clientele now have access to the same superior services as its discerning international clients.

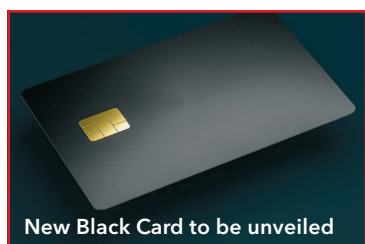
"As a boutique bank, we provide specialized services for a particular segment of the financial market," shared **Dillon Dean**, Group Chief Executive Officer. "Our ability to accept B\$ deposits and provide related B\$

financial services now allows Bahamians greater access to global financial markets, tapping into Equity's professional expertise developed over 38 years. This expansion into the B\$ market signifies Equity's commitment to tailoring its renowned financial acumen and service protocols to the local high net worth space."

This expansion into B\$ services marks a significant leap toward providing a comprehensive suite of financial solutions to meet

diverse client needs.

This strategic move enables Equity to offer a spectrum of services to Bahamians including depository bank accounts, bespoke asset management, proprietary investment funds (subject to regulatory approvals), custody services, and trust and corporate services in both local and multiple foreign currencies, subject to exchange control approvals. Clients can take advantage



New Black Card to be unveiled



50 Years of Independence

Monday, July 10, 2023 marked the 50th Anniversary of Independence for The Bahamas, a resilient Caribbean country brimming with natural beauty, rich culture and longstanding traditions.

Over this 50-year period The Bahamas has not only evolved as a premier destination for world travellers but a major financial center for global HNW individuals and families.

Bahamians from all walks of life take pride in their country's accomplishments and evolution over the past 50 years. Equity shares in this pride as it continues to evolve to meet the financial aspirations of its global and local clients. ■



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Let's Talk about TRUST

At the heart of a trust relationship is TRUST, a fiduciary arrangement. It is on this premise that the Trust product was born.

The holder of the Trust must be confidential since the person establishing the Trust shares short and long-term goals and plans for themselves and their family. Some of these goals and plans are often not shared with the current generation and are not to be shared or revealed until the occurrence of a certain event or the meeting of certain criteria, usually age-related. Equity Trust Bahamas Limited is well poised to manage such a fiduciary relationship and to provide the trust and confidentiality that a client requires.

As professionals in the trust industry, we prioritize the privacy and confidentiality of our clients' information. We maintain robust security measures and strict protocols to ensure the protection of sensitive data. Confidentiality agreements are often in place between the client and the trust administration team to further reinforce this commitment to privacy.

It is our duty to handle the client's information with the utmost care and to only disclose it as required by law or with the explicit consent of the client. Trust officers and administrators are required to adhere to strict ethical standards and professional codes of conduct that emphasize confidentiality and trust.

Rest assured Equity considers client confidentiality to be of the utmost importance and will make every effort to safeguard and protect the privacy of our clients' personal and financial information.

Beyond confidentiality there are multiple compelling reasons to consider The Bahamas and Equity for trust services.

From a jurisdiction perspective:

- The Bahamas is one of the more progressive jurisdictions in the world for innovative and premier trust legislation.
- Trusts in The Bahamas benefit from its tax neutral environment for Bahamians and non-resident clients.
- The Bahamas has a politically and economically stable economy.
- The Bahamas boasts a strong public and private sector partnership that is the basis for responsive legislation to meet evolving wealth management needs for High Net Worth individuals and families.
- Permanent Residency options exist for non-residents.

Selecting Equity Trust Bahamas Limited as a Trustee brings the following benefits:

- Full service Private Banking is available in the same location, which includes custodial services of assets. This integrated approach allows for streamlined and efficient management of your financial affairs. Interest bearing deposit accounts.
- Tax efficient fiduciary deposit options.
- Cash management, including



currency transfers and foreign exchange in all major currencies.

- Access to Equity Subsidiaries and Affiliates: By partnering with Equity Trust Bahamas Limited, you gain access to a wide range of services offered by Equity's subsidiaries and affiliates. This provides a comprehensive suite of wealth management services and solutions.

TRUST OPTIONS

There are various types of trusts available, each serving different purposes and catering to specific needs. In this context, there are two types of trusts that are commonly utilized by both residents and international clients.

Revocable Trust

The Settlor, the individual who places their assets with the Trustee, presents his assets, normally financial assets, i.e. cash, time deposits and or equities to the Trustee to manage during the Settlor's lifetime. The Settlor can appoint an investment adviser to





professional investment firm to manage the assets with a view to gaining a reasonable return while reducing the risk of eroding the principal. Distributions to be made from the trust are usually specific, the beneficiaries are named and the timetable for distributions is specific and set out in the revocable deed. The Settlor can revoke (terminate) the trust during his/her lifetime. If the revocation clause is used the funds are returned to the Settlor. It is expected that after the death of the Settlor, the assets of the trust are paid out to the named beneficiaries and the trust is terminated.

Irrevocable Trust

The Settlor presents his assets, which can consist of financial assets, life insurance policy, vehicles, yachts, real estate or other assets. The Settlor can entrust the Trustee to manage the assets of the trust or to appoint an independent investment adviser to manage the funds. Where the

Trustee is given the power to manage the funds, it is normal for the Trustee to engage the service of a professional investment firm to manage the assets with a view to gaining a reasonable return while also reducing the risk of eroding the principal.

Distributions from the trust are normally at the discretion of the Trustee but the trust instrument can also call for a Protector (an individual or company named in the Trust Deed when it is established) to agree to the discretionary distribution proposed by the Trustee. The need for a distribution can arise as a result of a beneficiary (usually from a class of beneficiaries) requesting the Trustee to consider a distribution to him or her, for a specific purpose. The Settlor cannot revoke (terminate) the trust. If the Settlor is named in the class of beneficiaries, he/she can request the Trustee or the Protector (if one is named in the trust with the requisite powers) to cause all of the assets to be paid to him/her, resulting in the trust ending due to a lack of assets. This practice however is not recommended unless the Settlor first seeks professional legal and tax advice as there may be serious implications for terminating an Irrevocable Trust. An irrevocable trust is viewed as a succession tool and is expected to continue for the Settlor's lifetime and successive generations. ■

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► **NEW PRIVATE BANKING SERVICES FOR HNW BAHAMIANS** | from front page

of term deposits from seven days up to one year, overdraft facilities and cash management services including transfers.

With the use of cards as a payment instrument for purchasing goods and services increasing day by day, Equity will unveil an exclusive Black Card in the near future, delivering elite client benefits.

"Because of convenience, security and increase in the electronic point of sales



used by businesses this product will be a unique incentive for Equity clients," said Mr. Dean.

The introduction of B\$ deposits is not merely a new service offered by Equity but a testament to its commitment to understanding and addressing the unique financial requirements of Bahamians seeking premium service, concierge treatment, and a holistic wealth management approach for legacy planning and private banking services.

"Equity Bank is rooted in traditional values," said Mr. Dean, "but we believe

in applying a modern approach that is focused on performance that caters to the needs of its clients. Protecting the client's capital is the Bank's primary objective. Being proficient in identifying unique client needs beyond the standard, we are also dedicated to providing specialized attention to HNW Bahamian businesses seeking bespoke private banking, personalized portfolio management informed by continuous dialogue, tailored investment solutions while ensuring a genuine service culture." ■

For inquiries or to experience our Private Banking services, contact Equity Bank Bahamas today via email or telephone..

Digital Assets Landscape in the Year 2023

For the Digital Assets landscape, 2023 has been a year of remarkable progress and evolution. While the market experienced its share of volatility, the year also witnessed significant advances in terms of regulatory frameworks, institutional adoption, and technological advancements.

These positive developments pave the way for a more mature, sustainable, and inclusive digital future.

REGULATORY LANDSCAPE

The Bahamas, a leader in digital asset regulation, further solidified its position in 2023 by proposing amendments to the Digital Assets and Registered Exchanges Act (DARE Act). These amendments strengthen the DARE Act's regulatory framework and demonstrate the Bahamian government's commitment to fostering a safe and thriving digital asset ecosystem. The new proposed amendments include but are not limited to:

1. Digital Asset Business Activities Expanded
2. Operating Digital Asset Exchanges
3. Custody of Digital Assets or Custodial Wallet Services
4. Staking

5. Issuers of Digital Assets
6. Stablecoin Issuers
7. Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs)
8. Liquidity Requirements

With its commitment to innovation, security, and responsible development, The Bahamas is poised to be at the forefront of this transformative journey. The proposed amendments to the DARE Act, combined with the Sand Dollar CBDC and the creation of a dedicated regulatory sandbox, demonstrate the country's resolve to build a vibrant and sustainable digital asset ecosystem. As the digital age continues to unfold, The Bahamas will unfold with it, shaping a future where digital assets can unlock economic prosperity and financial inclusion for all.

On a global scale, regulatory activity aimed at bringing clarity and stability to the digital assets space continues to evolve. The European Union's Markets

in Crypto Assets (MiCA) framework is poised to be one of the most comprehensive regulatory regimes in the world. In the United States, President Biden signed the Executive Order on Ensuring Responsible Development of Digital Assets, outlining a government-wide approach to regulating the space.

COINDESK CONSENSUS 2023

The annual Coindesk Consensus conference held in Austin, Texas, in April 2023, reflected the evolving state of the industry. While the focus shifted away from the speculative frenzy of previous years, discussions centered around real-world applications, institutional adoption, and building sustainable blockchain ecosystems. The event also highlighted the growing importance of decentralized finance (DeFi) and the increasing focus on environmental sustainability within the space. Liongate Bahamas Limited (LBL) digital assets team attended the event and gained tremendous insights as to what is currently occurring in the space and what the future holds. Furthermore, the team was able to network with like-minded professionals and create key relationships within different aspects of the digital assets ecosystem.

D3 BAHAMAS FINTECH CONFERENCE 2023

The D3 Fintech Conference held in Nassau, Bahamas, in October 2023, provided a platform for global leaders to discuss the future of financial services in the digital age. The event explored the potential of blockchain technology to



revolutionize traditional finance, focusing on topics like central bank digital currencies (CBDCs), tokenization of assets, and digital identity. The conference also highlighted the critical role financial institutions can play in bridging the gap between the traditional and digital asset worlds. LBL represented the conference well with speaking engagements, a well outfitted marketing booth and a charitable art show.

LOOKING FORWARD

Despite the challenges faced in 2023, the long-term potential of the digital assets space remains undeniable. Technological advancements like Layer 2 solutions and sharding offer scalability solutions to address congestion issues, paving the way for mass adoption. Additionally, the increasing focus on regulatory frameworks and institutional engagement fosters trust and transparency, making the space more attractive to investors and businesses who previously remained on the sidelines due to regulatory uncertainty. As more institutions enter the market, we can expect increased liquidity, innovation, and overall growth in the digital assets ecosystem.

DeFi continues to evolve at a rapid pace, offering decentralized alternatives to traditional financial services. From lending and borrowing to asset management and derivatives trading, DeFi protocols are empowering individuals to take control of their finances without relying on intermediaries. The continued growth of DeFi promises to democratize finance, making financial services more accessible, transparent, and efficient for everyone.

Real World Asset (RWA) tokenization is increasingly becoming a prominent topic within the digital assets' ecosystem. The tokenization of assets, including real estate, art, and securities, opens up a universe of possibilities for investment and asset management. By representing real-world assets on a blockchain, tokenization makes them more divisible, liquid, and accessible to a wider range of investors. This has the potential to unlock significant economic opportunities and reshape traditional industries. ■

Data Security: First and Foremost at Liongate

IN THE DYNAMIC TERRAIN of technology and data-driven services, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) has surfaced as a fundamental framework committed to safeguarding individuals' personal data and privacy rights. Originating in the European Union (EU) member states, GDPR's influence extends far beyond national borders, resonating globally and leaving a lasting impact on industries.

In this regard, Liongate Bahamas Limited (Liongate or LBL) is committed to ensuring the security of client data, aligning with the requirements of the Bahamas Data Protection Act and GDPR.

Liongate, an affiliated entity of the Equity Group of Companies, operates as a Financial and Corporate Services Provider, holding registration under the Digital Assets and Registered Exchanges Act (DARE) as an authorized digital assets service provider, with approval for activities within The Bahamas.

It offers a wide range of High Net Worth boutique products and services and through various partners within the Equity Group, Liongate provides additional services such as Corporate and Individual Bank Accounts, Investment Fund Administration, Custody Services and Trust Administration.

Liongate's approach to GDPR encompasses:

- **Prompt Response:** LBL guarantees a swift and responsive reaction to client inquiries, ensuring that concerns related to data protection are promptly addressed.
- **Secure Data Removal:** LBL employs a robust and meticulous data deletion process, ensuring clients of the comprehensive and irreversible elimination of their personal information from the company's systems.
- **Transparent Communication:** LBL maintains open and transparent communication channels with clients throughout the data handling process, providing updates and addressing any queries promptly.
- **Encrypted and Secure Measures:** LBL employs robust encryption methods and stringent security measures to safeguard client data, ensuring compliance with GDPR standards for data protection.
- **Documentation and Compliance Records:** LBL meticulously documents each step taken in response to client requests, maintaining comprehensive compliance records as evidence of adherence to GDPR principles.

To fortify this framework, Liongate strategically integrates advanced solutions from both Datto and Mimecast into its operations. Leveraging Datto's cutting-edge cloud-based backup and disaster recovery services, Liongate ensures the seamless preservation of critical data, assuring business continuity and minimizing potential data loss—aligning perfectly with GDPR requirements.

Additionally, by leveraging the robust capabilities of Mimecast, Liongate enhances its email security and strengthens archiving protocols. The implementation of Mimecast's comprehensive suite not only safeguards sensitive communications but also aligns with GDPR's principles of data minimization, security, and information consent.

The fusion of advanced technology and GDPR's security principles creates a harmonious equilibrium within Liongate. In a world where data is paramount, Liongate exemplifies the synergy between progress and confidentiality. With a strong commitment to a responsible digital future, Liongate emphasizes that dedication to excellent data protection has no bounds. ■

What is General Data Protection Regulation?

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a comprehensive data protection law that came into effect on May 25, 2018, across all EU member states. Its core objective is to provide individuals with greater control over their personal data while imposing stringent responsibilities on organizations that collect, process, and store such data.

GDPR enforces principles of transparency, purpose limitation, data minimization, accuracy, and accountability.

GDPR's key requirements include:

- **Data Processing**
- **Consenting Of Data**
- **Data Subject Rights**
- **Data Protection Officer**
- **Transparency**
- **Storage Limitations**
- **International Data Transfers**

Organizations must have a legitimate reason to process personal data, such as fulfilling a contract, complying with legal obligations, protecting vital interests, performing a task carried out in the public interest, or obtaining consent. Obtaining clear and informed consent from individuals for processing their data is crucial. Consent must be freely given, specific, and revocable at any time. GDPR grants individuals

rights such as the right to access their data, rectify inaccuracies, erase data (the "right to be forgotten"), restrict processing, object to processing, and data portability. Organizations that engage in large-scale processing of personal data or process sensitive data must appoint a Data Protection Officer to ensure compliance. Organizations are obligated to report data breaches to the relevant authorities and affected individuals within 72 hours of becoming aware of the breach.

GDPR restricts the transfer of personal data outside the EU unless adequate safeguards are in place.

Fintech companies handle vast amounts of personal and financial data. GDPR mandates stringent security measures to protect this data from breaches and unauthorized



Fintech platforms must provide users with mechanisms to exercise their data subject rights, including accessing, rectifying, and erasing their personal information



GDPR in The Bahamas

access, thereby fostering consumer trust. GDPR's transparency requirements compel Fintech companies to clearly communicate their data collection, processing, and sharing practices to users, promoting informed decision-making.

Fintech platforms must provide users with mechanisms to exercise their data subject rights, including accessing, rectifying, and erasing their personal information.

Many Fintech firms operate internationally, necessitating compliance with GDPR when processing EU citizens' data. This applies even if the company is located outside the EU. While GDPR safeguards personal data, it may require Fintech innovators to develop privacy-enhancing technologies that align with the regulation's principles. ■

THE BAHAMAS, although not an EU member state, has recognized the significance of data protection and privacy. The Data Protection (Privacy of Personal Information) Bill, introduced in 2019, aims to establish a comprehensive legal framework for data protection in the country. Drawing inspiration from General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the bill outlines principles related to data processing, consent, individual rights, and data breach notification.

Fintech companies operating in The Bahamas are required to understand the local data protection regulations, the evolving legal landscape, and the potential impact of GDPR on their operations. As global data flows continue to increase, Fintech firms must adopt a proactive approach to compliance to foster consumer confidence and remain competitive in the international market.

GDPR has revolutionized data protection and privacy practices on a global scale, affecting industries well beyond the borders of the EU. The Fintech industry, with its emphasis on technological innovation and data utilization, is deeply impacted by GDPR's principles. As The Bahamas and other countries navigate their own data protection regulations, Fintech companies must recognize the importance of balancing innovation with privacy, fostering consumer trust, and staying abreast of evolving regulatory landscapes. By doing so, Fintech firms can not only comply with GDPR and similar regulations but also contribute to a safer, more responsible digital ecosystem.

Here is an example of a GDPR Scenario for a Bahamas based business:

In the tranquil turquoise waters of The Bahamas, a forward-thinking technology company, let's call it "BahamaTech Solutions," has carved out a niche for itself as a provider of cutting-edge software solutions.

With a clientele that spans the globe, BahamaTech prides itself on using Microsoft 365 cloud services to streamline its operations and enhance customer experiences.

One sunny morning, the company's founder, Alex, receives an email from a concerned client, Emma, living in Paris, France. Emma is an EU citizen who has been utilizing BahamaTech's software suite for her e-commerce venture.

In the email, Emma requests that BahamaTech to remove all her personal data from their systems.

This seemingly simple request, however, sets into motion a series of events that navigate the intricate channels of the GDPR and its implications for BahamaTech.

As Emma's email lands in Alex's inbox, he realizes that BahamaTech, although based in The Bahamas, has entered the realm of international data regulations due to its dealings with EU clients.

The GDPR, with its far-reaching arm, extends its influence on organizations that process the personal data of EU individuals, regardless of their geographical location.

Alex's initial reaction is one of realization and responsibility.

He recognizes that BahamaTech must adhere to GDPR principles when handling Emma's personal data, even though they are not physically situated within the EU.

This entails respecting her request for data removal, ensuring secure data transfer, and upholding the rights within the GDPR standard. ■

COMMUNITY

Liongate Bahamas Limited Charitable Art Exhibition

LIONGATE BAHAMAS Limited was thrilled to host its Charitable Art Exhibition under the theme “Celebrating All Things Bahamian” on Wednesday, October 11 at Bar Sol, Atlantis Resort.

The exhibition featured more than 40 works of art from young and talented artists **Kevin Cooper, Deime Ubani, Justin Moultrie, Jordon Ritchie, Jalan Harris, Eddion Whyms, and Preston Hanna.**

Art sales revenues were kept by the artists, with 15% of the proceeds donated to the **Bahamas Association for the Physically Disabled (BAPD)**, which exists to provide the best possible service to young people in the community with special needs, through the provision of special education, physical therapy, computer training and speech therapy.

Remarks thanking guests for their attendance were made by **Michael Dean**, CEO of Liongate Bahamas Limited, as well as **Gilbert Cassar**, Head of Business Development and Fintech, and **Michael Clare**, Head of Digital Assets and Fintech Operations. Mrs. **Charlotte Albury**, President of BAPD also gave brief remarks and encouraged guests to purchase art and support the artists and in return BAPD.

Proceeds were graciously accepted by Ms. **Linda Smith** on behalf of the BAPD. ■



BAPD cheque presentation, from left: Gilbert Cassar, Ivlylyn Cassar, Sasha Dean, Linda Smith, Michael Dean

The Bahamas Takes a Balanced Legislative Approach

IN AN ADDRESS at the annual STEP LATAM conference Senator **The Hon. Michael Halkitis**, Minister of Economic Affairs reminded delegates that the importance of financial services sector as a source of employment and diverse contributor



to the Bahamian economy are reasons that decision making in the country is deliberate, measured and balanced.

In citing post-FTX as an example he noted, "We are pushing ahead with needed amendments to strengthen our world-leading digital assets legislation. Amendments to our DARE Act will clarify the regulation of stablecoins, introduce more investor and consumer protection measures, and regulate staking activities, among other key areas,

such as NFTs.

Continuing he said, "We are not merely responding to current needs. These changes reflect our anticipation of where the industry is headed and how our regulatory framework must be developed to

take advantage of emerging opportunities. Those interested in investing in Digital Assets in The Bahamas will find it to be a well-regulated environment that strikes the right balance between protecting stakeholders and industry participants while empowering enterprises."

This balanced approach equally applies to recent amendments made to the Business Licence Act (2023) which is in compliance with OECD standards

and the Commercial Entities (Substance Reporting) Act addressing the compliance concerns the EU had about Economic Substance Reporting.

"We have also passed the Arbitration Amendment Act (2023), which incorporates trust provisions, and enacted the International Commercial Arbitration Act (2023)," said the Minister. "The time is coming very soon when The Bahamas will live up to its potential as an International Arbitration Centre. The framework is now in place and the government is moving swiftly to get the necessary components in action to position The Bahamas as a regional leader for arbitration and alternative dispute resolution."

These legislative developments reflect The Bahamas ability to adapt and survive according to the Minister.

"We will continue to move from strength to strength as we meet the latest challenges, take advantage of the emerging opportunities, and continue to demonstrate to the world exactly why we have been a leader on the global financial services stage for the past few decades." ■

Equity Executives Honoured at Industry Awards Event

TWO EXECUTIVES from Equity Bank Bahamas were recognized at the Bahamas Financial Services Board's (BFSB) 19th annual Financial Services Industry Excellence Awards event.

Delphino Gilbert Cassar, Head of Business Development and Fintech, was named Young Professional of the Year and **Shari Quant**, Assistant Vice President, Internal Audit, Legal and Risk, was recognized as Achiever of the Year.

"We are so very proud of Delphino and Shari," said **Ivlynn Cassar**, Chairman, Equity Bank Bahamas. "For both of them to be recognized from among the many highly qualified young professionals in the industry is an outstanding achievement. It also reflects Equity's uncompromising client-centric commitment to professionalism in delivering exceptional

services and inspiring confidence and security among our clients around the world."

The Awards event held in Nassau capped off BFSB's 25th Anniversary celebrations.

Launched in April 1998, BFSB represents an innovative commitment by the financial services industry and the Government of The Bahamas to promote a greater awareness of The Bahamas' strengths as an international financial centre.

The Board is a multidisciplinary

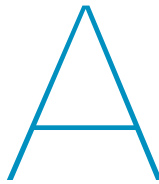
body that embraces active contribution from individuals within government, banking, trust and investment advisory services, insurance and investment fund administration as well as interested legal, accounting and management professionals. ■



Cira Davis, a Director with the Bahamas Financial Services Board, presenting awards to Shari Quant and Gilbert Cassar

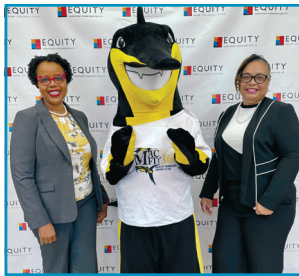
COMMUNITY

2023 Philanthropic Summary



AT EQUITY, we are fiercely committed to bolstering individuals across Bahamian community and are unwavering in our dedication to their success. In 2023, Equity Bank Bahamas Limited actively contributed to the betterment of the community by donating to and sponsoring a range of youth sporting events and non-profit organizations.

In February, Equity was a proud sponsor of the **Black Marlins Swim Club** as they competed in a swim meet at the Betty Kenning Swimming Complex. The company also sponsored the **Bahamas U16 Tennis Team** as they travelled to Guatemala to represent The Bahamas at the **2023 Junior Billie Jean King Cup**.



In April, **Team Bahamas Aquatics** competed in Curacao for the **36th Carifta Swim Championships** with Equity as one of its sponsors. Several company representatives attended the event to support Team Bahamas won gold for the fifth consecutive year!

Supporting Macfit Black Marlins: Vanessa Coleby and Kim Thompson

In May, Equity sponsored **The Maritime Museum Foundation** and attended their **Dine Around** fundraising event.

In June, the company sponsored the inaugural **Baha Mar Resort Foundation Golf Invitational**, which benefits philanthropic initiatives and organizations that make a difference in our community.

In July, in celebration of **The Bahamas Humane Society's 99th birthday** Equity sponsored the organization's **Flower Power** fundraising party in recognition of its outstanding job in providing and promoting the humane treatment of animals.

In September, Liongate Bahamas Limited was happy to be a sponsor at the **Bahamas Feeding Network 2nd Annual Tee Off For Hunger** golf tournament. The goal of the tournament was to raise funds to deliver more than 100,000 meals to members of the community who suffer with food insecurity and hunger.

Equity remains steadfast in its commitment to making a positive impact on the community throughout the year. By embracing a culture of philanthropy, we not only recognize our social responsibility but also actively contribute to the well-being of the community we serve. ■



Baha Mar Golf Invitational: Michael Clare and Gilbert Cassar

Team Bahamas at the Carifta 2023 Swim Championships



International Markets Overview

The global economic scenario persists amid intricacies, characterized by divergent paths across different regions.

The International Monetary Fund's (IMF) October 2023 report delineates a world contending with a recovery that varies among nations following the pandemic and amid geopolitical tensions due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. While earlier in the year, there were signs of initial economic resilience, multiple factors currently impede a complete and uniform resurgence.

Forecasts indicate a moderate slowdown in global growth, with advanced economies expecting a decline from 2.6% in 2022 to 1.5% in 2023 and 1.4% in 2024. Similarly, emerging market and developing economies project a modest decrease from 4.1% in 2022 to 4.0% in both 2023 and 2024. These figures fall below historical averages,

signifying persistent challenges inhibiting robust recovery.

Global inflation is expected to gradually decrease from 8.7 percent in 2022 to 6.9 percent in 2023 and further to 5.8 percent in 2024. Recent revisions have upwardly adjusted the 2023 and 2024 forecasts by 0.1 and 0.6 percentage points, respectively, delaying a return to target until 2025 in most cases.

In the US, annual inflation eased to 3.1% in November 2023 from October's 3.2%, marking a five-month low. Energy costs notably dropped by 5.4%, driven by declines in gasoline, utility gas service, and fuel oil. Core inflation stood at 4%, with a modest rise in the monthly rate.

These fluctuations highlight the

complex inflation landscape, reflecting diverse sectoral impacts amid challenges in achieving targeted inflation rates in a multifaceted economic scenario.

China's property sector crisis, inflationary pressures, and geopolitical tensions pose threats to global growth, necessitating vigilant monitoring and proactive policy responses. Central banks face the delicate task of restoring price stability.

The European Central Bank (ECB) recently signaled an early end to its bond purchase scheme, impacting markets. The euro saw gains following

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the ECB's decision, with regional stocks experiencing an uptick. Meanwhile, in the United States, Wall Street's indices rose notably, fueled by the Federal Reserve's dovish tone on interest rates.

The market response to these economic shifts signals a delicate balance between optimism and cautiousness, influenced by both global and regional dynamics.

As the world navigates this economic landscape, a multi-pronged approach involving effective monetary policy, fiscal prudence, structural reforms to spur growth, and global cooperation remains imperative to foster sustainable recovery. ■

This information is provided for general knowledge purposes only and does not constitute any form of financial advice.



Bahamian Markets Overview

THE BAHAMAS continues to shine on the world stage, boasting record-breaking tourist arrivals, exemplifying a robust rebound in the economy. The nation welcomed over 8 million visitors, a staggering milestone underscoring its allure as a premier tourism destination.

• **The Hon. Chester Cooper**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism, Investments and Aviation, celebrated this achievement, highlighting a remarkable 45.7% surge in foreign air and sea arrivals in October compared to the prior year. He proudly affirmed, "We're not only back, we're better than ever," signaling an upward trajectory for the Bahamian tourism sector.

• Amidst this exuberance, the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Article IV Mission report for 2023 offers a balanced perspective. The Bahamian economy soared with a 14.4% real GDP growth in 2022, driven significantly by the resurgent tourism sector. However, challenges persist, notably in labour force participation, especially among men, which lags behind pre-pandemic levels. The IMF projects a 4.3% expansion in 2023, steering the economy back to its estimated potential output.

• Noteworthy is the decline in

inflation from a peak of 7.1% to 2.3% in July 2023, primarily attributed to the global decrease in energy prices. However, the outlook is not without risks. Potential economic slowdowns in source markets could dent tourism demand, impacting growth. Moreover, global price fluctuations in essential



commodities pose challenges, especially for lower-income households and the balance of payments.

• The fiscal landscape portrays a commendable reduction in the fiscal deficit to 4.1% of GDP in FY2022/23, aiming for an overall surplus of 2.1% by FY2026/27, leading to projected national debt to 68% of GDP (FY2026/27) from 88.9% in 2022. Yet, the IMF suggests additional measures to meet these fiscal targets, advocating for comprehensive tax reforms and improved spending efficiency, particularly in education, healthcare, and infrastructure.

• Efforts to manage public debt and bolster the financial system are vital. The Bahamas' high debt rollover necessitates better debt management strategies, while the global regulatory climate is calling for heightened attention from central banks on the supervision of the digital assets arena. The Central Bank of The Bahamas was the first country in the world to launch a Central Bank Digital Currency in October 2020, the Sand Dollar, and now is navigating further adoption.

• Fostering resilience and sustainable growth emerges as a critical endeavour. The nation's pursuit of climate finance and renewable energy projects aligns with global sustainability goals. The IMF encourages climate-related investments and a shift to renewable energy sources to mitigate vulnerability to global commodity price fluctuations.

Embracing digitalization in public services and data collection enhances private investment prospects and aids in targeted social assistance programs.

• While celebrating the Bahamas' economic milestones, it's crucial to navigate challenges prudently, reinforcing fiscal frameworks, and promoting sustainable practices to ensure continued growth and stability.

The Bahamas stands at a pivotal juncture, primed to leverage its successes while proactively addressing economic intricacies to sustain its upward trajectory. ■

This information is provided for general knowledge purposes only and does not constitute any form of financial advice.

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