



Barbados Association of Non Governmental Organisations

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27 August 2006

International covenant on civil and political rights

Dear Madam,

We regret the short time given to comment as in the Civil Society sector it takes a lot of coordination to collect and collate feedback.

From what has been collected, a general comment is that while Barbados boasts about the constitutional rights its citizens enjoy, the quality of the benefit can be questionable at times.

There are a few more undemocratic laws which still exist on the statute books of Barbados and, like the Vagrancy Act, they should all be repealed. These laws are inconsistent with the constitution but are in force as legislation saved after transition from colonial rule to Independence.

While we can say that no laws enacted have proved to diminish constitutional rights, this body of law which has been saved seems to be unshakable even though much of it runs counter to the constitution. The general feeling coming from the legal fraternity is that if government wanted more just laws they would be repealed.

Hence, under the circumstance, these unjust and undemocratic laws prevail in the courts, even when the mother country has legislated changes to their common law to end the injustice. A case in which this is being presently contemplated is the case of an application to the High Court by the Public Counsel based on a case stated by the Fair Trading Commission.ⁱ

The case stated rests upon the notion that a lay-litigant cannot be awarded "costs"ⁱⁱ under the saved Common Law definition of costs as remuneration for legal services provided by an attorney. However, the UK has repealed this Common Law provision by a statute which allows the lay-litigant to be compensated.

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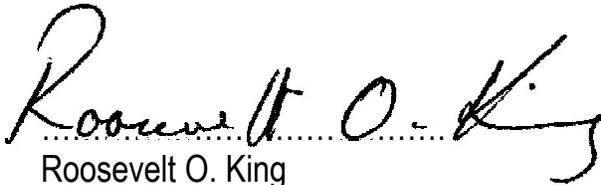
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In this document below, please note that Roman Numerals indicate endnotes. It was not possible to include a copy of the Maintenance Act because of time constraints to submit questions.

We also regret our inability to offer material from our other newspaper, The Advocate News, due to its unavailability on-line.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Roosevelt O. King". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'g'.

Roosevelt O. King
Secretary General

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Question 1

- a. Are NGOs part of the Social Partnership?
- b. To what extent is Civil Society an integral part of the decision-making and policy making processes?

At Paragraph 65 page 20 – Non Governmental Organisations:

1. BANGO¹ is a network of 137 organisations and not an umbrella organisation. Its mission is to organise Civil Society into sectors to more effectively bring the outputs of Civil Society to bear upon national and regional policy;
2. Contrary to this statement, “In May 2004, BANGO was integrated into the process of collective bargaining with the Government, the private sector, the unions and civil society, i.e. the Social Partners² or Partnership...”, Civil Society is not a part of the Social Partnership.
3. A resolution prepared by the Unions was signed on May Day 2004 by the Government, the Barbados Private Sector Association, CTUSAB (Congress of Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados) and BANGO, pledging greater cooperation between Civil Society and the Social Partners. This was labour’s effort to bring civil society into the arena and not a government initiative. Since then BANGO has never been invited to meet with the social partners, which according to legal instruments is made up of Government, the private sector and labour.
4. while the town hall meetings and other consultations have occurred, the outputs from these meetings are of token effect and may or may not be officially adopted. Furthermore, the characteristic of Town Hall meetings is that government presents the topics for discussion when they are in a ‘fait accompli’ stageⁱⁱⁱ. These meetings do not conclude with decisions and usually end with irate members of the community emerging^{iv}. There is need for institutionalising the consultative process with Civil Society.

¹ www.bango.org.bb

² <http://www.barbados.gov.bb/Docs/protocolfour.pdf#search=%22Social%20Partnership%20-%20Barbados%22>

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Question 2:

Are there any instances where large sections of the poor community are being discriminated against in the pursuit of their economic, social and cultural development contrary to section 15 of the Constitution of Barbados?

Article 1; specifically the right to "...freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development":

1. There is concern here about the plight of the vendors who are being chased off the street by Police, losing their produce in the exercise. These vendors were previously licensed to vend in these places but for the past ten years^v the authorities have not renewed any of their licenses. These are poor people who are being oppressed by the existence of undemocratic laws still on the statute books of Barbados from antiquity.
2. There is no consistency in the exercise of these laws because when the said vendors are forced by circumstances to go back into the city and vend rather than commit some crime, they are let alone. Then one fine day the law swoops down. This is arbitrary action hiding behind antiquated legislation and whether or not it is designed to do so, the effect on the vendors is persecution and terror.
3. In the new Bridgetown Development Plan^{vi}, all the sites are being turned into gardens or parks, leaving out the vendors. This means that in the fullness of time, the economic prosperity being generated by trade in Bridgetown will be the reserve of established and rich businesses^{vii}. Should not the resources of the island's capital be accessible to the lower economic sector? Is it right that a Bridgetown Development Plan should be thrust upon the citizens of Barbados without an opportunity for input by the stakeholders?
4. Disenfranchisement by Deprivation of a people's means of subsistence: Denying access means that hundreds of poor Barbadians are being robbed of the opportunity to utilize the country's main resource to earn a living. Traditionally, vendors are known to school their children, build homes, purchase properties, etc., laying the foundation for the prosperity of their children. Many academics, professionals and achievers, including the Prime Minister of Barbados had mothers who nurtured them through vending. To

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- remove this right is to remove a resource available to those who may otherwise fall through the cracks^{viii}.
5. The action of the police removing the vendors from the streets of Bridgetown and confiscating their produce is counter to the provision of Section 15 of the Barbados Independence Order Act, which is the proper constitution of the State of Barbados. This Section provides for protection against inhumane and degrading treatment.

Question 3:

Considering that it is against the laws of Barbados not to send a child to school, what provisions are being made to assist parents in the low economic class with getting their children with disabilities to school so that they could enjoy equal opportunity to benefit from the free education system in Barbados?

Page 28, Education:

1. Main concern by the disabled is that children with disabilities from poor families are not able to take advantage of the opportunity for free education, mainly because of the expensive nature of transportation. The Council for the Disabled (an umbrella NGO for the disabled community) has purchased a bus and is in the process of raising funds to purchase another one. The Government promises five buses for public access by the disabled but this is barely scraping the surface. The disabled contend that every bus should be equipped to carry one or two wheelchairs.

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Question 4:

- a. Does the interpretation of the words “A single woman” in the Maintenance Act of Barbados, as administered by the Magistrates Court, include ‘a single man’ by application and practice by that court?
- b. In the event that the answer is no, to what extent are men disadvantaged by this and what steps are being taken to correct this disadvantage?

Article 3:

1. The law does distinguish between men and women in the Magistrates’ Court which administers the Maintenance Act. The Act provides for mothers who have children out of wedlock in contrast to the mothers who have children in marriage which comes under the Family Law Act and is administered by the high court.
2. Men who have children out of wedlock are not allowed to seek redress against mothers in these courts for maintenance or visitation rights. It provides only for ‘A single woman’ to seek redress in the Magistrates Court for child maintenance.
3. These fathers generally are discriminated against when summoned to court. This is supported by their complaints of not being given a hearing; verbal abuse by magistrates; and general treatment in a manner that is inhumane, degrading and inconsistent with the rules of natural justice.
4. As a result they sum up that they are sent to jail because they are unemployed or for working for a low wage. The effect of this is that they lose their jobs. In one case a leather-craft vendor was ‘snatched’ from his stall by the Marshals and, being given no opportunity to secure his tools and stock, lost all to looters.
5. Another man complained that the Marshals come for him every three months to take him to jail for fourteen days and to that extent it makes no sense working for the small wages his lack of skills attract since he inevitably lose his employment.
6. Since there is no provision for visiting rights for fathers, the resultant impact is that if they don’t pay they are denied the right to visit their children.

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7. Men who have their children in their custody find it extremely difficult to get contributions from mothers and have no recourse by law if they are/were not married to the mothers.
8. Impact on the children is that children have to deal with the stigma of their father being a “jail bird” and they are denied access to their father during their childhood development.

Question 5:

To what extent does the system of committal to prison for contempt of court negate the principle that a person who cannot pay a debt should not be imprisoned for it?

Article 11:

1. There is of some concern where the debtor is unable to pay. An order for committal for contempt of court where the debtor is unable to pay is equivalent to imprisonment for inability to pay. The committal of a father to prison for non-payment of child maintenance in the form of contempt of court is still committal for inability to pay.
2. It ought to be incumbent on the court to ascertain whether or not a debtor can pay. The court has several social services agencies at its disposal that can assess whether or not a person has the means. As stated, under the constitution, a person is presumed innocent until proven guilty. Hence unless it can be ascertained that a debtor can pay, then that person should not be held to be in contempt of court for their inability to pay. There is no “mens rea” unless it can be proved that the person is willfully refusing to pay.

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ⁱ Daily Nation Newspaper – Barbados

FTC PAY LAG

September 15, 2005

by JANELLE WALTERS

INTERVENORS WHO TOILED for eight months on the Cable & Wireless (C &W) rate hearings last year are still waiting to have costs for their work decided by the Fair Trading Commission (FTC).

While C &W promptly paid the \$6 000 which the Court of Appeal, in an unprecedented ruling, said should be paid to each of the six intervenors for the court appearances last year, they said the FTC appeared to be dragging its heels.

And, after posing questions to others, the 17 intervenors are now asking the FTC: when will our matter be heard?

The FTC on July 20, 2004, issued its decision denying C &W's application.

"It has been an inordinately long time waiting," said Hallam Hope, of CARITEL.

He told the DAILY NATION that at first it was thought that perhaps the FTC was attempting to clear up the price cap issue which arose out of the C &W bid for a price hike.

However, that had since come and gone and still they had yet to hear any word from the FTC about when they would have the issue discussed.

Hope said future hearings could still end in the issue of costs to be decided, and costs could be quite "substantial".

Roosevelt King, Secretary General of the Barbados Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (BANGO), said intervenors had sacrificed their time and other interests - business and personal - to undertake the task.

He spoke of long hours, and the decision to work in shifts around the clock to get the job done.

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"We did nothing less than a lawyer would have done. We had to meet the same standards," he said, adding that unlike lawyers, they did not have a degree and therefore had to work even harder to maintain the same level of work.

King said there were various means of ensuring that costs for intervenors were covered. He spoke to the establishment of a fund to which all the service providers could contribute and from which intervenors could be paid.

He made it clear though, that "if [intervenors] got \$180 000, you can be sure the lawyers got \$1.8 million".

He believed that as it stood, the Fair Trading Commission Act in Section 46 (1) placed a "mandate on the FTC to consider costs for persons bringing applications; intervenors and lawyers".

That section stated: "The cost of and incidental to any proceeding before the commission shall be in the discretion of the commission and may be fixed at a sum certain or may be taxed."

Another intervenor taking issue with the long wait to hear from the FTC was Alvin Thorpe.

And in a letter to the commission, dated June 28, 2004, he, too, pointed out Section 46 (1) and noted the precedent that was set by the Court of Appeal in awarding costs to **the intervenors**.

"It therefore seems this was in the contemplation of Parliament in the drafting of the legislation," Thorpe said.

"In the circumstances, I would urge the commission to exercise its discretion in favour of intervenors and award costs to them."

Authorities at the FTC could not be reached for comment.

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ⁱⁱ Nation Sunday Sun Newspaper – Barbados

Counsel says no to objectors

April 02, 2006

by ALBERT BRANDFORD

CONSUMERS' champion, Barry Carrington, the Public Counsel, has gone to bat in the High Court against fellow intervenors seeking to be awarded costs out of the last telephone rate hearing.

Carrington, who was also one of the 17 intervenors in a public hearing by the Fair Trading Commission (FTC) which rejected Cable & Wireless' application for a domestic telephone rate increase, says that as "unrepresented lay litigants" they're not entitled to one cent other than out of pocket expenses.

In a notice of originating motion filed in the Supreme Court before Mr Justice Christopher Blackman, on which proceedings began last week (Tuesday, March 21), the Public Counsel argued that the award of costs was traditionally made to a litigant who retained legal counsel, and that those costs represented a sum of money to defray the legal expenses of the party to whom the costs have been awarded.

"Difficulty arises vis-a-vis awarding costs," Carrington submitted, "when a non-legal person appears before a court or administrative tribunal and represents his/her own interest or the interest of some other person."

He noted that Barbados received its laws and jurisprudence from the United Kingdom, and from the Statute of Gloucester in 1278 to 1975, the law in England was that an unrepresented lay litigant was not entitled to costs arising out of legal proceedings other than disbursements.

"That law," he added, "was received in Barbados in the 17th century when Barbados was settled, and has continued in effect ever since."

Public Counsel informed the court that the UK, by enacting the Litigants in Person (Costs and Expenses) Act, 1975, permitted lay litigants to recover costs of appearing before Courts and Administrative Tribunals and amended the Rules of the Supreme Court and subsequently its Civil Procedure Rules to expand on the change of the law.

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He submitted, however, that: "There is no similar or parallel enactment in the laws of Barbados to the aforesaid Litigants in Person (Costs and Expenses) Act 1975 which would entitle the said intervenors to receive costs other than out of pocket expenses.

"Moreover, it has never been the settled practice in Barbados to grant unrepresented lay litigants the legal costs (other than out of pocket expenses) of appearing before Courts and Administrative Tribunals.

"Intervenors who were not represented by legal counsel in the Cable & Wireless (Barbados) Ltd. rate hearing before [the FTC) are in the same position as litigants in person before a court."

Following the FTC's rejection of the August 2003 application, C &W asked for a review of the July 20, 2004 decision, which was also dismissed and the commission, said it would hear the parties on the issue of costs on a date to be determined.

On December 12, 2005, the FTC issued Draft Costs Assessment Guidelines for public comment, which contained a provision by virtue of which intervenors could be paid an honorarium in the discretion of the commission in recognition of efforts in preparing and presenting an intervention or submission.

Intervenors, however, said they expected to be paid for their efforts in the rate hearing in much the same manner as an attorney-at-law would be entitled to be paid.

To bolster their case, they pointed out that the compensation issue arose when C &W sought a judicial review and the High Court voided a Confidentiality Hearing which subsequently went to the Court of Appeal.

Public Counsel noted, however, that the judge made no order as to costs in the judicial review proceedings.

By an Order of April 7, 2004, the Court of Appeal dismissed the C &W appeal and ordered inter alia that costs of \$6 000 each be paid to **the intervenors** who took part in the judicial review proceedings: the Barbados Consumer Research Organisation Inc. (BARCRO), Alvin Cummins, CARITEL, Barbados Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (BANGO), and Mrs Audrey McKenzie, all of whom were not represented by counsel.

C &W submitted that a sum of money should be fixed for the unrepresented intervenors and paid as their expenses, limited to the Court of Appeal, while Public Counsel and the

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FTC argued that any costs of the proceedings should be limited to the Court of Appeal and that a sum should be fixed.

Subsequently, **the intervenors** are reported to have made public statements claiming that the \$6 000 represented \$3 000 a day for two days of appearances in the Court of Appeal and was a legal precedent that must be followed by the FTC when costs were awarded to them.

Five of the 17 intervenors appeared before Mr Justice Blackman, who has fixed April 20, 2005 as the date for them to make submissions in respect of the case stated; May 4, 2005 as the deadline for preparing responses to other parties' submissions; while the hearing dates have been set down for May 10, 11 and 12.

The intervenors have also been instructed to select three persons from among them to make submissions or oral presentations in court, and inform the judge by April 20.

While **the intervenors** are yet to meet on the selections, it was felt among them that BARCRO's representative, Malcolm Gibbs-Taitt, would likely be one of the three to be chosen.

ⁱⁱⁱ Nation Newspaper - Barbados

Oistins Outcry

August 23, 2006

RESIDENTS AND BUSINESS PEOPLE in Oistins, Christ Church, are worried about possible increased foreign ownership and reduced access to the beachfront and social services if it is turned into a full-fledged tourism facility.

These were among the concerns raised on Monday night during a town meeting at the Christ Church Parish Church Centre. It was held to discuss the findings of a social impact assessment of the proposed relocation of the Oistins Civic Centre. Just over 50 people attended the meeting that lasted just over three hours.

The preferred site for the centre is adjacent to Granny's restaurant, also in Oistins, but away from the beachfront.

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Residents also expressed concern about the expense to relocate them and suggested the historical character of Oistins could be changed.

They argued it could result in less business for vendors operating at the popular facility, which is a hive of activity on Friday and Saturday nights at the "Bay Garden" and also serves as the fishing port.

Sharon Layne, of AXYS Environmental Consulting Barbados (Inc.), which did the social impact assessment, highlighted a number of other concerns raised in the study.

These included: an increase in traffic, noise and light disrupting the area's peace and quiet, changes in land taxes, the potential for increase in crime, and the addition of high rise and modern type architecture that would conflict with modern architecture.

However, some positives identified included generating foreign exchange and employment; boosting business; revitalising the economy there; property values increasing; and expansion of the civic facilities and functions now considered inadequate.

Layne said 272 people were consulted, of whom 33 per cent had no objection to the proposal; 12 per cent had no objection as long as the new site within Oistins was accessible; while 30 per cent were opposed to the move.

The study also showed that almost half of the people believed the best use of the land now used for the civic centre would be as a tourist attraction.

Layne promised a report would be submitted to Government by September 15 on her organisation's findings. (KB/ES)

^{iv} Nation Newspaper – Barbados

NOT HERE!

July 12, 2006

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by TREVOR YEARWOOD

AMERICAN DEVELOPER MATTHEW KERINS' PROPOSAL to site a US\$22 million water park in Graeme Hall, Christ Church, - an area best known for its wetlands and bird sanctuary - came under withering fire during a three-hour town hall meeting Monday evening.

At the end, the embattled construction company boss said he thought his idea was a good one that meant employment for 125 people and a boost of revenues from tourism, but if it was turned down by the Town Planning Department, "I will pack up my bags and go to another island".

Before this happened, though, he said he was likely to commission a wider public opinion poll to determine how Bajans really felt about what was being billed as "a family-oriented park" likely to attract as many as 400 000 tourists and locals annually.

In one of the most robust **town hall meetings**, Kerins and his engineering spokesman Robert Bascom, president of Coastal and Engineering Solutions Inc., were grilled on all aspects of the proposed park and the likely impact it would have on the neighbouring homes and wetlands.

Charges made during the meeting in the Christ Church Parish Church hall included the following: the park would be too noisy, would use too much water in a country designated as water-scarce, would add to traffic congestion and would utilise valuable agricultural land.

Some of the roughly 175 people at the meeting warned, too, that unless care was exercised, the proposal could end up releasing chlorine into the air and also damaging what conservationists call the last significant wetland and migratory bird site in Barbados.

Kerins also heard charges that he had no plans for cleaning up the mess if his project failed or had a crisis; and that his survey of almost 350 people to determine what they felt about the park was not impartial but shaped to create a certain result.

Kerins reported that the noise level at the site would not be high. Andrew Mowatt, representative for water park builder Whitewater, said no decision had been taken on using chlorine to treat the park's water, although chlorine was a cheap and effective

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control agent. Nevertheless, he pointed out that effective management of the operation would rule out chlorine getting into the air and creating a health problem.

Bascom also dismissed the idea of indiscriminate disposal of waste from the park. However, his comments that the park was just "a major swimming pool" and the land in question had been subjected to fertiliser and pesticide use while under agriculture, drew some howls of protest from the crowd.

Politicians from both sides of the fence attended, among them Government Member of Parliament Joseph Edghill, Minister of Health Jerome Walcott, Opposition Democratic Labour Party (DLP) MP Ronald Jones and prospective DLP candidate for St Michael West Central, Marilyn Rice-Bowen.

Rice-Bowen, also a Graeme Hall resident, blamed Government for the project going as far as it did, declaring: "The developer should never even be given the time of day to look into developing this area."

Resident Andrew Alleyne favoured scrapping the project immediately.

"You should not spend one more cent doing work on this project," he told Kerins.

Head of the Barbados Agricultural Society, James Paul, questioned why the developer would persist with a project which he claimed at least three Government agencies had expressed reservations about.

"It suggests to me an element of arrogance," he said.

Kerins later told the DAILY NATION the project was at an early stage, still awaiting approval by the Town Planning Department.

"Until Government responds, from the process of all the evaluations, it's not fair to beat up somebody that's just trying to put together a project for this island," he declared.

^v Nation Sunday Sun Newspaper – Barbados

Vendors to apply for permits Tuesday

April 30, 2006

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COME TUESDAY MORNING City **vendors** will be applying for permits. This is the next move which they have decided to take after police removed them from Bridge Street, the City, yesterday morning.

The members of the Barbados Association of Retailers and **Vendors** (BARVEN) said they want to be fully compliant with the law, and since new licences have not been issued for the last ten years, they will go together and apply.

Public relations officer of the association, Richard Scantlebury, said they met last Wednesday evening at the Clement Payne Centre and formed a broad-based committee with two representatives from each area of Bridgetown where **vendors** operate.

He said they met again on Friday but no clear plans were decided, However, after yesterday's action, they will meet at Cheapside Market on Tuesday morning and peacefully go to the Fisheries Complex to see the Superintendent of Markets to apply for permits.

Scantlebury said this was also a follow-up action after the removal from Swan Street, and the encouragement of the police to get permits.

"We are going for the permits. The perception is that **vendors** are lawless and that is not the case. Ten years ago they lapsed with the issuing of permits and the public was fed the information that there were none available," he said. He added that justice delayed was justice denied.

Meanwhile, Robert Maloney, who represents the **vendors** in Tudor Street, said people's lives were on hold because they could not sell.

"One young lady in her 20s with four children who sells dunks and ackees was crying to me saying she could not send school the children for two weeks and they can hardly eat," related Maloney.

He added that **vendors** are constantly moved from areas of the City for beautification but kiosks have never been set up not even for one vendor. (WB)

^{vi} Nation Newspaper – Barbados

Vendors being 'run out of town'

February 11 2006

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A Civil Society Response

by TREVOR YEARWOOD

AS CLOSE TO 100 mainly fruit and vegetable sellers prepare to set up shop off the Spring Garden Highway, the Barbados Association of Retailers, **Vendors** and Entrepreneurs (BARVEN) has taken Government to task over its policy on vending.

Government's failure to renew, or issue only few new vending licences for Bridgetown and its policy of confining **vendors** to buildings gave the impression that it had failed to take vending into consideration in the ongoing redevelopment of the City, BARVEN officials told the DAILY NATION yesterday.

"You have a situation since the '80s . . . where there has been a policy of not renewing licences for the City," President Alister Alexander said. "Yet some (**vendors**) can still get. Nobody knows the criteria how these licences are obtained.

"Effectively, if you are not renewing licences, vending would have to die."

Government was going ahead with the multi-million-dollar redevelopment of the City of Bridgetown, but it seemed that nowhere in there was any provision for small street **vendors**, charged BARVEN's public relations officer Richard Scantlebury.

The overall plan seemed to be to confine vending of fruits, vegetables and other items to the markets, but this had its own problems, including too small spaces and a failure to incorporate in the design and layout the views of the people for whom such structures were built, Scantlebury said.

"The average shopper prefers to pass and shop as they go," he said. "People like they got a phobia about going into buildings."

Alexander called for a national developmental policy on vending, saying Government needed to go beyond "just tolerating vending". He said **vendors** were not looking for a hand-out from Government. They were prepared to pay their own way, but needed suitable working conditions.

BARVEN also said that between 80 and 90 of its members expected to move to a site off the Spring Garden Highway, near the Flour Mill in the next three months where the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc (BTI). was building a series of booths for **vendors**.

The Spring Garden project would bring some relief to fruit and vegetable **vendors** and farmers who have been operating at the back of the Cheapside Market at the weekend.

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They are moving from there because of another BTI project -a high-rise car park, construction of which is to start soon. Scantlebury said while the Spring Garden **vendors** might lose some of the Bridgetown business, they should pick up good sales in this commercial area.

^{vii} Saturday Sun - Nation Newspaper – Barbados

Vendors told: Shut up shop!

February 11, 2006

LAWMEN HAVE STARTED to warn **vendors** on some streets in the City that their days are numbered.

Those vending along Swan Street, Bolton Lane and Bridge Street were warned Thursday and yesterday, that the streets were to be cleared by Monday because store owners are complaining about the obstruction they were causing.

Many of them told the SATURDAY SUN the situation was unfair because there were no other options and there was talk about permits but when they applied, none was ever issued.

Some of the **vendors** said they could retreat to their spaces within the various malls and stores in the City but vending was better on the street since this was where everyone passed.

Another area of concern is that with Valentine's Day just a few days away, to move them now would be detrimental as they would be stuck with stock brought in just for the occasion. (WB)

^{viii} Nation Sunday Sun Newspaper – Barbados

February 12, 2006

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Give vendors 'better deal'

by TREVOR YEARWOOD

POLITICIANS and the community of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have warned authorities to expect social problems to worsen if they put scores of **vendors** off the streets of Bridgetown's commercial area. They have called for an urgent dialogue on the issue between Government, **vendors'** representatives and other agencies.

Vendors, who showcase items including fruits and vegetables, spices, clothing, jewellery, postcards, toys, and fruit drinks, are bracing for tomorrow's crackdown on illegal vending on city streets, announced by the police on Friday.

The Barbados Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (BANGO), the People's Empowerment Party (PEP) and the opposition Democratic Labour Party's (DLP) prospective candidate for Bridgetown, Patrick Todd, criticised the police plan.

PEP spokesman Robert "Bobby" Clarke suggested the **vendors** could be accommodated temporarily at "the old Empire Theatre, which has been languishing, unoccupied, unused for more than 20 years".

BANGO'S Secretary General Roosevelt King asked: "Why can't we float something over the bridge where the **vendors** can go and interact with people wanting to buy vegetables, fruits and other items?"

Both King and Todd warned of impending problems. "You cannot just throw them (**vendors**) off the street," King said. "We are asking for trouble if we do that."

Todd, speaking in a personal capacity, said that if Government "simply throws the book at these people" it could face "negative behaviour". He said it was "incumbent upon the Government to urgently commit funds, not just to build boardwalks and marinas in Bridgetown . . . but well-equipped and spacious facilities for this sector, which is clearly growing".

While the vending system must be regulated, sellers "must not be forced to go into areas where there is no business [sales] to be done", Clarke told the SUNDAY SUN.