



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
TO THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
by the Honourable Jason P. Hayward, JP, MP
Minister of Economy and Labour
on the 15th September 2023

**Amendments to the National Training Board Act 1997 to
enhance Workforce Development**

Mr Speaker and Honourable Members,

Later today, I will be laying before this Honourable House amendments to the National Training Board Act 1997.

Mr Speaker, Amendments to the National Training Board Act 1997 would provide for a newly named National Certification and Apprenticeship Board that would strategically focus on skilled trades, certifications and apprenticeships. Bermudians must be given a fair shot at the opportunities that exist today. Preparing Bermudians with skills to enter the job market is a key step in getting our people employed.

Furthermore, given the need for people to become qualified to work in trades and other industries, it has become evident that the NTB's current functions do not allow it to provide the necessary attention to developing skilled tradespersons, the administration of national certifications or to promote the apprenticeship programmes.

Mr Speaker, the National Training Board (NTB), was established as a Quango in 1997 under the National Training Board Act and has played a pivotal role in overseeing trade apprenticeship training schemes. Indeed, it has contributed greatly to our national workforce development. However, in recent years, it has become evident that the legislation governing the Training Board does not adequately reflect the evolving governance and structure needed to function effectively.

Mr Speaker, regrettably, previous efforts made to enhance collaboration between workforce development entities and the business community have not been successful, and the NTB continued to operate without the desired clarity. Consequently, it has struggled to be effective in its role to provide advice to the Minister of Economy and Labour on Bermuda's workforce development

strategy and to administer national certifications or promote apprenticeship programmes.

In light of these challenges and the importance of aligning our workforce development system with the needs of our industries, the Bill I will be tabling today seeks to create the National Certification and Apprenticeship Board, which will operate alongside a separate, non-statutory National Workforce Advisory Board (NWAB).

Mr Speaker, The Ministry recognizes the importance of a Board responsible for certifications and training having clearly defined functions. This clarity of functions will enable the establishment and delivery of apprenticeship education programs, the issuance of national certification credentials and the governance of skilled trades in Bermuda.

Mr Speaker, considering the current state of unemployment in Bermuda, the work of the newly established National Certification and Apprenticeship Board is critical to enhancing apprenticeship programmes and national certification, in order to improve employment opportunities within our workforce. It is imperative that the Government works in harmony with workforce stakeholders, and the new approach will be instrumental in achieving this goal. In

addition to its current functions, the following will be added to its list of responsibilities:

- Producing a national register (central database) of tradesmen, both for designated and non-designated trades
- Draft a comprehensive Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition of Prior Learning (PLAR/RPL) policy to formally frame a process for this means of assessment; and
- Update and streamline the national certification process.

Mr Speaker, at this time I would like to thank all past members of the National Training Board and Occupational Advisory Councils for their hard work, dedication and support of the Department. I look forward to working closely with my esteemed colleagues and stakeholders as they assume their roles on the new Board and Committees to ensure Bermuda's workforce development strategy remains responsive, dynamic, and aligned with the needs of our community.

Thank you, **Mr Speaker**.