



## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

by

**Senator, The Hon. Owen K. Darrell, JP**

Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport

**Building a Better Bermuda by Promoting Cultural Heritage,**

**Tourism Development and Sporting Excellence**

24 July 2024

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**Madam President,** the Ministry is the steward of Bermuda's cultural heritage and leads in advancing amateur sport and developing policies for tourism. Our job is to celebrate and preserve our culture and heritage, and support programmes for athletes, artists and tourism-based activities.

**Madam President,** we recognize the importance of programs designed to assist in the development of our young people. Youth was a part of the Ministry for many years and during that time we developed many initiatives to support their growth and well-being.

**Madam President,** over the past several years the following initiatives and programs to support the development of our young people are as follows:

- a. The National Youth Policy 2021 -2026 was launched. It provides a strategic framework for addressing the needs and aspirations of young people aged 10 to 29, with a focus on six priority areas: education and training, health and well-being, civic participation, employment and entrepreneurship, culture and identity and safety and protection;
- b. The Youth Entrepreneurship initiative, was designed to offer training, mentorship and funding opportunities for young entrepreneurs who aspire to start and grow a business of their own;
- c. The Youth Parliament which gives young people a platform to debate and discuss issues of national and global importance, as well as to develop their leadership and communication skills, a project which is particularly close to my heart as I served as Senior Advisor to the Youth Parliament for over a decade;
- d. The Youth Community Action Programme, encourages young people to get involved in community service and social action projects that address local challenges and contribute to positive social change and builds individual character;

**Madam President**, the future continues to look promising for our young Bermudians. The ministry has plans to:

- a. Establish a National Youth Council, that will serve as a representative and advisory body for young people and facilitate their participation in decision-making processes;
- b. Launch a Youth Innovation Challenge that will invite young people to submit innovative solutions to address social and environmental issues in Bermuda and wherever possible determine how artificial intelligence and other technological advancements can promote their ideas;
- c. Expand the Youth Innovation Entrepreneurship initiative to include more sectors and industries such as technology, tourism and green economy;

- d. Strengthening the Youth Parliament by providing more training and resources for the member and increasing their engagement with the Government and other stakeholders;
- e. Enhancing the Youth Arts and Culture Programme by creating more opportunities for young artists and cultural practitioners to showcase their talents and access international networks and markets.

**Madam President**, the ministry values the rich and diverse cultural heritage of Bermuda and its role in shaping the island's identity in the global landscape. Our various initiatives and programmes available over the past several years offered an expansion of themes aimed to socialize the community in a positive way. Here are a few examples worth mentioning:

- a. The National Cultural Heritage policy which launched in 2021 as a groundbreaking government policy aimed at safeguarding the tangible and intangible heritage of Bermuda, such as historic buildings, monuments, landscapes, traditions, language, arts and crafts;
- b. The Creatives.bm Catalogue, launched in 2019 as an online hub showcasing Bermuda's vibrant creative community both locally and overseas, including musicians, visual artists, writers, filmmakers and designers;
- c. The International Gombey Festival Weekend continues to flourish after its official launch in 2017. The iconic folk dance and its connections to other traditions of the African diaspora featured local and international performers, workshops, lectures and exhibitions;
- d. The Bermuda Day Parade, that is decades old was revived in 2022 after a two-year hiatus due to the global pandemic. The support of this annual activity continues to be impressive and demonstrates the resilience and spirit of the community. Even the year it rained **Madam President**, our community did not disappoint onlookers and participants stayed the course to ensure the success of a cultural tradition;

Plans to broaden the scope of the ministry's cultural initiatives **Madam President**, include but are not limited to:

- a. Implement the National Cultural Heritage Policy that involves developing legislation, regulations, standards and guidelines for the protection and management of cultural heritage as well as establishing a National Heritage Council and a National Heritage Fund;
- b. Enhancing the Creatives.bm Catalogue, which involves increasing the features and functionality of the website;
- c. Developing and implementing the 'Maker Spaces' program which is a Throne Speech initiative. It is an initiative that provides artists, musicians, dancers and other creatives with dedicated space to hone their craft and create new works. The Maker Spaces will also serve as a venue for workshops, exhibitions and performances fostering collaboration and innovation among the creative community;
- d. Introducing new and enhancing established cultural events and experiences, such as Carnival in Bermuda, a jazz festival, a film festival, and the Bermuda Literary Festival, each of which is intended to showcase the diversity and vibrancy of Bermuda's culture and attract more visitors and media attention.

**Madam President**, the ministry proudly recognizes the importance of sport for promoting physical health, fostering community spirit and enhancing national pride. Initiatives to support sport in our environment are listed as follows:

- a. The National Sports Policy 2022-2027 launched in 2022 as a five-year promise to raise the value of sport in Bermuda and increase participation and eligibility in international competitions;
- b. The Sport Investment Program that was developed to provide a guidance on how the ministry invests in sport, based on principles of accountability, transparency, and performance.

- c. The Sport Recognition Policy which serves as a 'blueprint' for National Sports Governing Bodies on how to remain compliant and provides insight on how to become recognized.
- d. The Elite Athlete Sponsorship Initiative, launched in 2023 as an additional avenue for elite athletes to access funding to train or compete on the international stage. This initiative is intended to assist elite athletes who show commitment, promise and acumen in their respective sport, by providing them with financial support for their continued development as international representatives of Bermuda.
- e. The Flora Duffy Award, that was launched in 2022 designed to incentivize young athletes between the ages of 19 and 23 years who demonstrate excellence, dedication and leadership – named after Bermuda's Gold Winning Olympian and Triathlon World Champion Flora Duffy.

**Madam President**, regarding anti-doping in sport, Bermuda is a clean jurisdiction. To ensure that we maintain our full compliance with the World Anti-Doping Agency, and to ensure that our flag is flown at international sporting competitions, a new piece of legislation was enacted in December 2023 replacing the 2011 Anti-Doping in Sport Act.

**Madam President**, as previously mentioned, the future of sport remains promising for our athletes, and it is this ministry's intent to support them wherever possible. The initiatives I just mentioned will continue or be enhanced to promote success.

Madam President, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport is proud of the achievements and progress made over the past seven years. This statement only touches the surface. As we navigate through some continued challenges and opportunities ahead, we are committed to working with partners and stakeholders to continue Building a Better Bermuda by promoting sustainable initiatives and programs through cultural expression, sport participation and tourism enchantments.

Thank you, **Madam President**.

