



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

The Hon. Jason P Hayward, JP, MP

Minister for the Ministry of Economy and Labour

Bermuda and the UAE Sign Agreement to Advance Government Excellence and Technology Skills Development

Friday, 19 July 2024

Good morning, **Mr Speaker,**

I rise today to advise Members of this Honourable House of the Government Experience Exchange Programme Partnership Agreement recently signed between the Government of Bermuda and the Government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Represented by His Excellency Abdulla Lootah, Deputy Minister of Cabinet Affairs for Competitiveness and Knowledge Exchange, the signing between our nations occurred at the time of the UN's 2024 High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in New York at which the UAE was host country.

Mr Speaker,

This Partnership Agreement is the first government-to-government Memorandum of Understanding signed in nearly a decade.

This landmark collaboration underscores the Government of Bermuda's commitment to fostering excellence in governance and highlights the value driven by Bermuda's economic cooperation efforts.

The Government of Bermuda and the Government of the UAE share a belief in the importance of improving the delivery of government services and ensuring the upskilling of the public sector, and our people, and the Government Experience Exchange Programme is a UAE Ministry of Cabinet Affairs initiative to create a global model for improving government administration. It lays the foundation for the fulfillment of the UN's Sustainable Development Goal No. 17 which speaks to partnerships. The Programme encourages the creation of a global community of policy makers who seek to exchange experiences, build opportunities and promote development.

Mr Speaker,

Per the Agreement, Bermuda and the UAE will collaborate to exchange knowledge and best practices, with a focus on building institutional capacities and skills for the future.

Bermuda's participation in the Programme highlights the robust and deepening friendship between Bermuda and the UAE. We are grateful to His Excellency Abdulla Nasser Lootah for his unwavering support and enthusiasm in fostering this valuable and unique collaboration.

Mr Speaker,

The UAE government has developed a leading model for building human capacity and stimulating innovation within the public sector. This has led to better policies, smarter services and tangible benefits for the 36 participating nations – Bermuda is nation #37 – and, no doubt, it will do so for our society and economy.

The UAE is committed to sharing its own experiences in these initiatives with other agile nations such as Bermuda that prioritize future-readiness.

The areas of cooperation will focus on exchanging knowledge, experiences and best practices and on capacity building for public servants and coders through leadership programmes and government accelerators. Within the MOU there is flexibility for other areas of cooperation to be added as may be mutually agreed upon between the two Parties. The UAE's Government Experience Exchange Programme includes more than 100 areas of cooperation.

Mr Speaker,

Most immediately, the Bermuda Government intends to focus on capacity building for government leaders through the Executive Leadership Programme. This is a learning journey that encompasses modules on: Future Foresight Focussing; Leading the Future; Policy, Strategic and Performance Management; Digital Transformation; and, Agile Leadership, Leading in an Uncertain World.

The Ministry of Economy and Labour, through the Economic Development Department, is concentrating on the Million Coders Initiative. This seeks to empower youth with the language of the future and provide them with the right capabilities to be ready for future jobs and new opportunities through accredited training courses in programming.

Mr Speaker,

Critical to securing Bermuda's admission to the Programme were Premier Burt's meeting with His Excellency Lootah on his visit to Abu Dhabi in December 2023, followed by my meeting in Dubai in February 2024. These interactions have significantly bolstered Bermuda's profile and established a strong foundation for effective economic cooperation.

In conclusion, **Mr Speaker,** Bermuda's participation in the UAE's Government Experience Exchange Programme is a remarkable opportunity to leverage the power of knowledge exchange and advance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Bermuda Government.

The UAE's willingness to share the frameworks and expertise underpinning its leadership across so many government development indicators is commendable. Bermuda will benefit from this unique relationship of cooperation.

Thank you, **Mr Speaker.**