

**Greetings from His Excellency Ambassador Dr. Dwight C.R. Gardiner OBE on the
Occasion of the Caribbean Maritime University's 2025 Industry /Academic Conference**

Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, distinguished guests, fellow regulators, academic leaders, industry partners, and most importantly, the bright minds that are present in the room, good morning and welcome to the Caribbean Maritime University's 2025 Industry/Academic Conference: **“Embracing the Blue Economy: Navigating the Future Through Sustainable Practices.”**

Let me begin by expressing my thanks to the CMU President, Professor Andrew Spencer CD, for inviting me to deliver some brief remarks at this opening of this conference. It is both a privilege and a pleasure to address you today as we chart a course toward a resilient, responsible, and prosperous maritime region.

I must also acknowledge our co-captains for this voyage, Dr. Evette Smith-Johnson, and my dear friend Prof. Ibrahim Ajagunna, and our capable helmsman for this event, the Master of Ceremonies Mr. Archibald Gordon. I have full confidence that under their stewardship this conference will be a phenomenal success.

The diversity of the audience here today underscores the blend of policy, commerce, and scholarship that fuels our blue economy.

As we chart our shared waters, it is important to recognize that the blue economy spans far beyond a collection of marine resources to be exploited en masse. We are people of the sea and the ocean is the lifeline of our region's trade, tourism, energy, food and culture. As regulators, educators, and entrepreneurs, we share the responsibility to safeguard our oceans while unlocking their potential. Today's programme, from the very beginning through to the very last panel discussion, will showcase how cooperation between governments, ports, shipping lines, industries, and universities can accelerate innovation in green shipping and ocean stewardship.

Over the two days, we will be building bridges between industry and academia as you will engage in a palette of riveting panel discussions. with leading thinkers.

The rich agenda reflects our shared conviction that **“No single institution can realise sustainable maritime growth alone.”** By exchanging insights in panel discussions, virtual presentations, and

networking breaks, we will strengthen the bonds that will carry our region toward a cleaner and much safer future.

I will exit by saying this: **Let us purpose within ourselves to seize this moment to gain new knowledge, forge new partnerships, pilot transformative projects, and harmonise regulations that protect our coasts and empower our people.** I encourage each of you, whether you oversee port facilities, teach the next generation of maritime professions, craft national policies, or are just curious part-takers, to commit today to one concrete step that advances the blue economy.

Thank you for your dedication, your expertise, and your collaborative spirit. Together, we will navigate the challenges ahead and chart a sustainable course for Caribbean waters and communities.

Enjoy the conference, and I look forward to our collective progress.