



“LAYING A FOUNDATION FOR SUSTAINED SUCCESS”

Address by
Hon. Dr. Julian R. Hunte
President

Sagicor West Indies High Performance Centre Launch
The Error Barrow Centre for Creative Imagination
Cave Hill Campus
Barbados
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WICB – LAYING A FOUNDATION FOR SUSTAINED SUCCESS

This is an historic day. A dream has come true for many Directors past and present, for cricketers retired and present, and for fans longing for the glorious past of West Indies Cricket to return.

We have travelled a long road to reach this milestone. The dominance of West Indies cricket ended fifteen years ago – that long and admirable journey of pride and domination over all cricketing nations. Our successes on the field were in defiance of our limited GDP, population size and land mass – all those criteria that are used to assess the achievements of Countries. We ruled the cricketing world.

The challenge to West Indian dominance was met with the stark realisation that we had not prepared adequately during our years of success to meet the challenges we should have anticipated, and to sustain the advance of West Indies Cricket to a new level of excellence.

The past fifteen years have seen a steady loss of pride, dignity and status. We did not meet this challenge that was before us as we rested on our laurels of past success. Thus, the challenge to advance West Indies Cricket to meet the contemporary conditions is clearly before us – and we have undertaken the necessary actions to regain our competitiveness among the elite cricketing nations of the world. Our energies must be devoted to building on the rich heritage and excellence of the past, but just as importantly, to look ahead to what we must do to bring us forward to regain our excellence.

The launch of this High Performance Centre is another immediate action to prepare ourselves for the road ahead. It is not an isolated action. In November 2009, at a Special Board Retreat held in St. Lucia, Directors agreed on a number of actions to be pursued immediately by Management to address the shortcomings which have affected West Indies Cricket during the past fifteen years or so. These actions form the basis of our pledge for the future – the immediate establishment of the structures upon which success will be built and sustained. Therefore our work has been guided by the following actions:

1. Enhancing the institutional capacity of the WICB – We accepted that Management has been ineffective in meeting the demands of a modern day sports governing body. A Management Audit was undertaken previously and with the assistance of a Human Resource Consultant and the Human Resource Committee formulated a comprehensive Organizational Redesigning Plan. The Plan will be implemented from 1 July 2010 and will include a new structure with each employee given a new Job Description and appropriate placement. Changes will take place in staffing including the creation of posts with responsibilities for Player Relations, Sponsorship Management and Event Management and the appointment of new personnel to strengthen our department responsible for cricket operations.

In addition, we are about to undertake the development of an action plan that outlines our response to the changes in the international landscape and the implications for the future of cricket in the region. This will be a seminal action plan that will shape the future model for the administration and financing of cricket in the region. It is expected to cover all the critical areas of cricket.

We are also committed to examining ways in which we can improve the governance and administration of the affairs of the Board and other Committees to ensure, among other things, accountability and transparency.

I must also make mention of the West Indies Cricket Board's recognition of the need to build effective and meaningful relationships with all stakeholders of the game. It means that we must engage in a dialogue that presents to us an understanding of the expectations of stakeholders but likewise expresses our views on the roles and responsibilities of the WICB. This will be a delicate yet necessary process in paving the way for a successful future.

2. Generating the resources for the financing of West Indies Cricket - Critical for the implementation of any development plans and managing the operations of the Board is the availability of resources.

In January, the Board engaged a Marketing Consultant to assist Management in formulating proposals which could be presented to the market and commencing the efforts to build a Commercial Department that can adequately raise the resources required. The immediate result was the production of a publication titled "Transforming West Indies Cricket".

This document has served as the basis for frank interaction and discussion with potential sponsors for long term relationships. We are excited by the reaction to the document and our proposals, although we recognise that there is a lot of confidence building which has to take place to overcome past failures and disappointments.

The Board will soon make a major announcement on the arrangements for the broadcast of the Caribbean Twenty20 which will be held in July. For the first time our regional cricket will receive global coverage and I am certain that this will start a process of breaking down barriers to secure further sponsorships.

3. Cricket Development – if there is no product to sell then there can be no commercial programme to implement. There are four critical activities under consideration with our cricket development.

First: We need to get our senior team more competitive. The Board immediately sought to employ the best cricket coach to lead the development of our teams and coaches. We are proud to have engaged Mr. Otis Gibson and look forward to his continued efforts to change the mode of the team and the positive results this should soon bring. We are totally committed to making the resources available to make the team more competitive.

Second: We need to prepare the players on the fringes of international selection through the reactivation of the "A" Team programmes. We have all seen the immediate success of this action in the short time since it has been implemented. Whilst we are committed to the extension of the first class season that will be implemented as soon as it is affordable, we believe that this action is of greater priority.

Third: We need to prepare our next generation of international cricketers, those between 19-23 years. This is the reason we are here tonight – the establishment of the most advanced training programme in the region.

Fourth: The implementation of a talent development programme which, together with the Scotia Bank Kiddy Cricket Programme as our talent identification programme, will provide WICB with a clear player development pathway for 7-11 year-olds; 12-15 year-olds and 17-19 year olds.

Accordingly, in the next few weeks the WICB will announce a US\$2million grass roots and community coaching programme that will provide opportunities and a pathway for young people from the streets and community playing fields to Kensington Oval, Lords, Eden Gardens and the Wanderers.

4. Cricket Operations – this has been undoubtedly a major area of repeated failures and shortcomings. In addition, to the strengthening of our implementation capacity, the Board has introduced an Injury Management System that will incorporate every player from regional teams to the international team registering every medical condition, injury and rehabilitation programme. The system will offer a real-time, interactive and user-friendly resource that will manage the injuries and avoid the present situation of incoherence which exists. The system is already being implemented at the level of the senior team.

In addition, the Board is developing a Fitness Manual which will outline the standards and tests needed at all levels. All results will be entered into the System which will allow easy tracking of the fitness levels of each player. It is hoped that the fitness monitoring programme will be fully implemented in time for the 2011 First Class Season.

I mentioned earlier the post of Player Relations Officer. This will be a critical addition to our institutional capacity as the officer will be working with players to address issues such as anti-doping, anti-corruption and personal development issues. It is critical that the person be an ex-cricketer suitably qualified to be able to serve as an open resource to all players.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are clear in our vision, we are firm in our resolve, and we are committed to reviving our glory and a new and modern dynamic of West Indies cricket excellence. We are acting with firm deliberation, and with great urgency.

I am excited about the High Performance Centre. Let me be clear – it will not be the panacea for all our deficiencies. It will take more than a Centre to solve the deep structural problems we have faced. However, I am excited by the prospects offered by this Centre which I am confident will make an enormous contribution to our action plans as we move forward.

We are implementing a structure of support that will shape the next generation of West Indian players, that will offer preparatory camps for our representative teams before international engagements, that offer remedial programmes for our senior players to address deficiencies, that will train our coaches, our umpires, our video analysts, our administrators, our grounds men and our match referees.

The Centre must be about everything excellent in West Indies Cricket, it must be a statement of what our future will be, and it must represent the level of achievement that we must aspire to, for the development of our cricket.

I must express my sincere thanks to SAGICOR for the leap of faith in the West Indies Cricket Board and in the future of West Indies cricket. We simply could not have done it without your generous support. I trust when this period of our cricket is written, the name of SAGICOR will be etched with words of appreciation. I am also thankful for the support provided by the University of the West Indies especially the administration of the Cave Hill Campus under the leadership of Professor Sir Hilary Beckles. Professor Beckles has been a champion of the idea of an Academy system for the development of West Indies cricket and has been relentless in his effort to secure funding and a home for the Centre. The WICB will be eternally grateful for his efforts.

Let us make the High Performance Centre a place of collective endeavour where the Board, sponsors, government, fans and players can place their faith in the future of West Indies Cricket. Let us make the Centre a symbol of our desire to overcome our differences and invest in the possibilities. We owe this to the young people gathered here and to the future men and women who will enter the Centre.

So let us all work to ensure that this Centre becomes an inspiration to young people to strive to achieve for their own betterment and that of West Indies Cricket.

I thank everyone for being present and for continuing to display faith in West Indies Cricket.

I thank you....

HON. DR. JULIAN R. HUNTE
PRESIDENT
WEST INDIES CRICKET BOARD
CASTRIES
SAINT LUCIA
6/06/10