

NEWS

Rowley: Energy deal good for TT, B'dos

ENERGY cooperation between TT and Barbados is good for both countries, Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley said yesterday, as a memorandum of understanding was signed in Bridgetown.

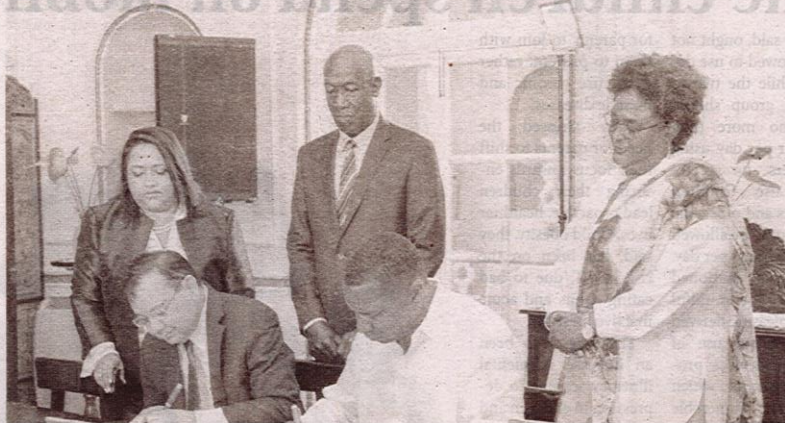
The non-binding MOU, he said, laid the groundwork for discussions on hydrocarbon exploration that could lead to an agreement and a treaty.

However, key to any hydrocarbon discoveries would be how it is monetised, and if found in Barbados, the country would benefit from TT's existing infrastructure, Rowley said in the presence of Barbadian prime minister Mia Mottley, as they witnessed the signing by Energy Minister Franklin Khan and his Barbadian counterpart Wilfred Abrahams.

"It is all good for Barbados and it is all good for Trinidad and Tobago," Rowley said, noting that the ongoing exploration would attract a certain level of interest from Bridgetown.

"But that would be stymied by the market conditions as to where any find on the Barbados side go, because if you do find hydrocarbon, particularly gas, from the formation offshore, for it to be invested in, in any big and serious way there has to be a way to monetise it and bring it to market."

Rowley said common sense would dictate that this market would be in TT "because our offshore infrastructure coming so close to Barbados as it would to bring the Trinidad gas to market, would give the Barba-



ON THE DOTTED LINE: Prime ministers Dr Keith Rowley and Mia Mottley observe as Energy Minister Franklin Khan (left) and his Barbados counterpart Wilfred Abrahams sign the MOU on energy cooperation in Bridgetown yesterday. PHOTO: BARBADOS PM TWITTER ACCOUNT

dos acreage an attraction that other acreages around would not have because you are close to the infrastructure that brings the gas to market."

In her remarks, Mottley said the MOU represents a "giant step" to secure her country's future.

"We have always been very clear that our maritime jurisdiction is what is going to help us secure our future," Mottley said noting "we are conscious that while Barbados is 166 square miles our maritime jurisdiction is 400 times that size."

"We know geographically that between our countries and Africa there is nothing but ocean and to that extent therefore the future augurs well for us on the eastern borders," she told the

signing ceremony. Mottley said that given the years of relationship between the two countries in the oil and energy sector, it made sense to pursue the initiative given her island's limited land size "and our inability to handle massive industrial development on shore without serious dislocation of our population".

She said also it made sense to cooperate with Port of Spain given the fact that Barbados is intent on being able to monetise its resources "so that we can secure the future of Barbadians to come, given also our determination and our recognition that it makes no sense to recreate when our family has already been in this business for more than a century and it is family

with whom he have cooperated from the day we opened Barbados National Oil Company."

Mottley said another factor in support of the agreement is BHP Billiton, which has acreages north of the median line in Barbados' waters and south of the median line in TT so that "it is the most natural fit for us to take this step".

BHP Billiton recently made gas discoveries in the north-eastern part of TT's maritime acreage and have drilled a number of successful wells, some of which are quite close to the Barbadian border.

Mottley said Bridgetown understands that "we are binding our two countries together even further, not for the benefit of those of us who are in office

today, but more so for those, who will come in the future, because we are securing the future by ensuring that the train that will flow will be able to benefit our citizens collectively."

She said the cooperation also underscores the importance of the Caricom Single Market and Economy (CSME) that allows for the free movement of goods, services, skills and labour across the 15-member regional integration grouping of which both Barbados and TT are members.

She said should the exploration be successful it would through the export of capital and through the savings instrument and other financial instruments, underscore the commitments made during the special Caricom summit in TT last December on strengthening the CSME.

"That the CSME framework is designed now to be able to put attractive instruments there for the savings of the region to be deployed in the interest of the region to create growth at the national level, the regional level but also to benefit individual citizens such that they become beneficiaries of the patrimony of the region."

Rowley emphasised the MOU would set out groundwork to encourage investors and should exploration begin, time would not be wasted on documentation and preparation for exploitation of the resources.

- reporting *Cana*
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