



# **Elevating Excellence in a Changing World**

Remarks by Governor Dr., The Most Honourable Kevin Greenidge to the  
**Barbados Association of Administrative Professionals**

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## Elevating Excellence in a Changing World

Good morning,

I want to be honest with you. When I received this invitation, I had a moment of hesitation. Not because the occasion did not matter to me, it matters enormously. But because I asked myself: what can I say to a room full of administrative professionals that they do not already know better than I do?

Then I thought about the people in my own office. The ones who have kept the Central Bank running when my schedule seemed impossible, who managed the complexity of what we were building long before the news releases went out. I thought about the people who made the impossible merely difficult, and the difficult appear effortless.

I accepted the invitation immediately.

The theme you have chosen, Elevating Excellence in a Changing World, is not a theme I read from the outside. At the Central Bank of Barbados, we have been on a deliberate journey to internalise excellence. Not as a target on a wall. Not as a slogan at a conference. As a way of operating. A discipline that shapes how we prepare, how we communicate, how we serve, and how we treat every relationship that passes through our doors. So, when I saw this theme, my first thought was: these are my people.

And I mean that quite literally.

### The People Who Pack My Parachute

There is an expression, sometimes attributed to the military, about the people who pack your parachute. The pilot gets the glory. The aircraft gets the attention. But the person who folded that parachute, carefully, precisely, out of sight, at four in the morning when no one was watching, that is the person your life depends on when it matters most.

I want to tell you plainly: the administrative professionals in my office pack my parachute every single day.

Let me make that concrete.

When the Central Bank set out to build BiMPay, the Barbados Instant Mobile Payment system, that did not happen because of a single policy decision from the top. BiMPay is not simply another app. It is national infrastructure. It is a payment rail on which financial institutions in Barbados can conduct online and mobile payments with true interoperability. Banks and credit unions can connect. Payments can

move instantly. Settlement can occur instantly. It opens the door to greater convenience, greater efficiency, and greater financial inclusion for both the banked and the unbanked.

Building something of that scope required coordination across every level of the Bank. Timelines shifted. Workstreams had to align precisely. Stakeholder engagements had to be managed with care and consistency. Documentation had to be accurate, complete, and traceable. And when things became complicated, and they always do, there were people behind the scenes who held the thread. Who reorganised, redirected, and kept the effort on course. In many instances, the professionals in my office were doing that groundwork, helping to solve problems, and making sure we kept going.

I do not take that for granted. Not for a single day.

So, I did not come here today to talk at you. I came to acknowledge you, to thank you, and to speak honestly with you about where we go from here. Because the road ahead will demand even more.

### **Change Is No Longer Coming; It Is Already Here**

We are living through a period of overlapping change, technological, economic, environmental, and institutional. It is not arriving one piece at a time. It is arriving all at once, and it is not waiting for us to be ready.

Technology is reshaping how we work, how we communicate, and how decisions are made. Artificial intelligence, automation, digital platforms, and new collaboration tools are already in our offices. They are on our phones. They are already part of how business gets done in Barbados.

But change is not only technological.

Here in Barbados, and across the Caribbean, we face realities that make the ground beneath us feel less certain every year. Climate vulnerability is not an abstract concept for us. It is our lived reality. A single hurricane season can disrupt operations across the entire island. A prolonged drought can strain the resources we depend on. Flooding can displace communities and test every system, every plan, and every protocol we have built.

And when that happens, when the crisis arrives, who keeps the operations running? Who reorganises the schedules, redirects the resources, and ensures the communications reach the right people at the right time? Very often, it is the administrative professional.

As small island developing states, we do not have the luxury of absorbing shocks the way larger economies can. Every disruption hits closer to home. Every pivot matters more. The same disruptions that ripple gently through larger economies can land here like a wave against rock, and we feel every one of them.

Then there are the economic pressures: rising costs, shifting trade dynamics, and the constant challenge of doing more with less. Add to that the pace of global uncertainty, geopolitical tensions, supply chain disruptions, financial market volatility, and we are reminded that events far beyond our shores still shape life within them.

In this environment, the ability to adapt, to pivot, and to remain steady while everything around you is shifting is not a bonus skill. It is one of the defining skills of our time.

## **Let Us Talk Honestly About AI**

Now, I know that when people hear artificial intelligence, the reaction in this room is not uniform.

Some of you are curious. Some of you are already experimenting with it. And some of you feel anxious. There is a knot in the stomach when you hear that this technology can draft correspondence, organise schedules, summarise lengthy documents, and manage data, tasks that have sat at the heart of your profession for decades.

That anxiety is legitimate. I am not going to stand here and dismiss it.

But let me tell you where I think this leaves you: in a stronger position than you may think.

AI is a powerful tool. But it is still a tool. It does not understand context the way you do. It does not read the mood of a room. It does not know that a particular board member prefers a certain format, or that a CEO needs five extra minutes between meetings because he is coming from a morning of back-to-back meetings, or that a particular stakeholder requires a careful and diplomatic touch. It does not exercise discretion. It does not build trust. It does not care.

What AI can do is lift some of the routine weight from your shoulders, repetitive drafting, data sorting, and the filtering of large volumes of information to find what matters. And when that routine weight lifts, you are freed to spend more of your energy on the work that genuinely requires a human being: judgment, relationships, problem-solving, and the quiet leadership that holds an office together.

However, we must engage with AI responsibly. We must understand what these tools can and cannot do. We must verify their outputs, because they do make mistakes. We must protect sensitive and confidential information. And we must ensure that the human being remains in charge of the final product. AI should enhance your work and elevate your outputs. It should never replace your thinking.

The professionals who will thrive in the years ahead are not those who avoid technology out of fear. They are the ones who learn to use it wisely, critically, and confidently. They will not see it as a threat to their role, but as an instrument that sharpens it. And in many cases, if you use AI well, it will not replace you, it will reveal the difference between those who think and those who merely process.

## **Excellence Evolves**

We often speak about excellence as though it is a destination, a standard you reach and then simply maintain. But excellence has never worked that way. It moves with the world.

Twenty years ago, excellence in administrative work meant impeccable shorthand, flawless filing systems, and mastery of paper-based scheduling. Those were real skills. They mattered deeply. But the world moved on.

Today, excellence means fluency with digital systems. It means managing virtual and hybrid meetings across time zones. It means understanding cybersecurity risks and helping to protect the information on which your organisation depends.

Tomorrow, excellence will mean something else again.

Malcolm Gladwell wrote about the 10,000 hours it takes to achieve mastery. But I want to extend that idea. Mastery is not a destination you reach once. In a world that keeps changing, mastery is a practice to which you keep returning. The professionals who continue to elevate their excellence will be those who stay curious, who keep learning, and who refuse to let their skills stand still while the world moves ahead.

Excellence in a changing world means being willing to learn, unlearn, and relearn, continuously.

## **Your Role Is Becoming More Strategic**

One of the most significant shifts I have observed in the modern workplace is this: administrative roles are no longer purely support functions. They are increasingly strategic.

You influence how information flows through an organisation. You help prioritise the demands on leadership. You function as a bridge between management and staff, between the institution and the public, between intention and execution. In many organisations, you are the institutional memory, the person who remembers what was decided, why it was decided, and what happened last time.

In an environment of constant change, new systems, restructuring, and evolving mandates, administrative professionals are often the ones who hold the thread of continuity. When everything else shifts, you are the ones who make the transition workable.

That is not simply support work. That is leadership.

And I would encourage every one of you to see yourselves in that light. If you still see your role as purely administrative in the old narrow sense, then you are already understating your value. The role has moved. The question is whether you have moved with it.

You are not there merely to respond to instructions. You are helping to shape outcomes. Own that.

## **Professionalism in Uncertain Times**

In uncertain times, and make no mistake, these are uncertain times, professionalism becomes a stabilising force.

Professionalism is reliability when things around you feel unreliable. It is discretion when information is sensitive. It is consistency when pressures mount and expectations shift.

People may forget the details of a hectic day, but they will remember how you handled it. They will remember whether they felt respected. They will remember whether they could trust the person on the other end. Very often, that person is you.

In a world full of noise and disruption, quiet and steady professionalism remains one of the most powerful things any of us can offer.

## **A Challenge to This Room**

Let me leave you not with a gentle suggestion, but with a challenge. Four things I am asking of you, and I use the word asking deliberately because this is not a menu. It is a standard.

First, retool. Make a commitment this year, not someday, to learn something new. Whether it is a digital platform, an AI tool, a project management system, or a data analytics skill, push yourself beyond what is comfortable. The world is not going to slow down to accommodate any of us. The best time to prepare for the next chapter was yesterday. The second-best time is today.

Second, stay current. Read. Ask questions. Attend workshops and webinars. Follow what is happening in your profession, not only in Barbados but regionally and internationally. The administrative profession is being redefined everywhere. You should be part of that conversation, shaping it, not watching it from the outside.

Third, be ready to pivot. Whether it is a new policy, a new system, a climate event, or a sudden shift in organisational priorities, your ability to adjust quickly and maintain standards while doing so is one of the most valuable things you bring to any workplace. Flexibility with quality, that is a rare and indispensable combination.

And fourth, mentor the next generation. This may be the most important of all. Look around your offices. There are younger professionals watching how you carry yourselves, how you manage pressure, and how you treat people. They are learning from you whether you intend to teach them or not. So be intentional about it. Share what you know. Support their growth. Encourage them when the work feels thankless.

The excellence we are talking about today does not live in one person. It is passed along. It is built through relationships, through patience, and through the willingness to invest in someone coming up behind you. That is how legacies are made. And that is how institutions stay strong.

Organisations will continue to change. Technology will continue to evolve. The climate will continue to test us. Global and local pressures will continue to reach our shores. The uncertainties will not resolve themselves neatly. But the need for skilled, thoughtful, and committed administrative professionals will not diminish. If anything, that need will grow, because the more complex the world becomes, the more we depend on the people who can hold things together.

I am reminded of Colossians 3:23: whatever you do, work at it with all your heart. That is not only spiritual counsel. It is also a philosophy of professional excellence. It is a standard that asks for your full commitment, not occasionally, not when it is convenient, but every day.

You are not simply keeping pace with change. You are the ones who help make change workable. When systems shift, when pressure rises, and when complexity increases, organisations rely on you to hold the line. That responsibility is not small. It is central.

You are the ones who translate vision into action, who hold the standard when it would be easier to let it slip, and who ensure the work gets done properly, professionally, and with care.

That, to me, is what elevating excellence means. It is not a slogan. It is not a line on a banner. It is a daily practice. A discipline. A choice made repeatedly. And from what I have seen in my own office, and in the work this Association represents, that commitment to excellence is alive and well in the administrative professionals of Barbados.

Thank you. I wish you every success in your careers and in the important work that lies ahead.

Happy Administrative Professionals' Day.