

REMARKS BY
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PRESIDENT, BARBADOS OLYMPIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

OPENING CEREMONY – 2015 CARIFTA SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIPS

BARBADOS AQUATIC CENTRE

SATURDAY, APRIL 4, 2015

The Honourable Stephen Lashley, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, Sir Austin Sealy, IOC Member based in Barbados ... I recognize the Honourable Ai-kerra Mis sick, Minister of Education, Youth, Sports and Library Services from the Turks and Caicos, Mr. Andrew Kirby, President of the Barbados Amateur Swimming Association (BASA), Mr. Anthony Selby, Secretary General and other Executive Members of the BASA Executive, Mr. Jerry Blenman, Interim CEO of the National Sports Council, swimmers, coaches, technical officials, ladies and gentlemen, it is indeed a privilege and a pleasure for the Barbados Olympic Association and myself to be involved in this ceremony, highlighting the opening of the 2015 CARIFTA Swimming Championships. Mr. President, I would like to congratulate your Association for again hosting this celebration of Caribbean youth. Indeed, these Championships have been the birth place of many of the Caribbean's leading swimmers and it is pleasing that in recent times, swimmers from our region have reached the podium at many international

competitions. The Central American and Caribbean Games last year in Veracruz, saw that the Caribbean contributed significantly to the swimming medal table.

My NOC is delighted to be associated both financially and otherwise with the organization of these Championships. It is events such as this that help us to achieve our mandate of facilitating and stimulating Olympic sport in this country. Your federation is one of the more efficient and better organized sports bodies in our country and this year will see my Association providing you with grants in excess of \$130,000.

President, I am very pleased to report that we have negotiated with the Pan American Sports Organization (PASO) to provide you with a special grant of US\$50,000 towards hosting the Championships. It is anticipated that these funds will reach us shortly and we trust you will find this financial injection to be helpful.

Let me say also, that in my capacity as Chairman of the Caribbean Association of National Olympic Committees (CANOC), I am delighted that this event, along with the CARIFTA Track and Field Championships, slated for St. Kitts during this week-end, will bring together young people from across the region, in healthy competition. Indeed, the genesis of these Swimming Championships was a multi-sport CARIFTA Games conceived by Sir Austin Sealy and it is my hope that in the not too distant future, we will see the rebirth of a multi-sport Caribbean Games which will provide an opportunity for the region's youth to assemble in a multi-discipline environment. Around the world, most regions celebrate their own games and the Caribbean is one of the few

geographical areas that have not yet conceived a regional games. We must make an all-out effort to ensure that this becomes a reality.

Minister, Sir Austin, Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to be included in today's proceedings. I welcome all of the overseas visitors to Barbados and invite you to visit our Olympic Museum located just next door and to also take to enjoy some of culture and cuisine for my homeland is famous.

It is my hope that you have a successful Championships and the competition may proceed in the true Olympic spirit of solidarity, friendship and fairplay.

Thank you very much.