

■ Carifesta support...

## CAF approves \$1.5m grant to Barbados

THE Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF) has approved grant funding of Bds\$450,000 (\$1.5 million) to help Barbados promote cultural tourism and its creative economy as it prepares to host Carifesta XV.

The letter of award was signed yesterday at the Carifesta Secretariat by Dr Shantal Munro-Knight, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office with responsibility for culture, and Dr Stacy Richards-Kennedy, CAF's regional manager for the Caribbean and representative in Barbados.

'Carifesta, which is returning after a six-year absence due to Covid-19, brings together artists, creators, performers and delegations from across the region to showcase the depth and diversity of Caribbean culture. The 2025 edition, themed 'Caribbean Roots. Global Excellence,' will serve as a platform to celebrate the region's creative industries, which are a vital component of countries' economies and an engine for sustainable and inclusive growth', a release stated yesterday.

CAF said by approving the grant, it is signalling its continued commitment to expanding the scale of its investment in the creative economy.

'The technical assistance project will support the showcasing of the Caribbean's distinctive and diverse expressions in food, fashion, music, dance, visual arts, and literature, and also provide a space for dialogue on the region's development challenges and opportunities through culture-driven exchanges. The multilateral development bank will also serve as the title sponsor for Big Conversations, a new initiative at Carifesta which features relevant dialogues addressing topics of Caribbean identity, resilience, and sustainability,' it stated.

'Culture and the diverse forms of cultural expression are at the heart of Caribbean identity. They also represent important drivers of innovation and entrepreneurship, as well as a catalyst for increased regional integration and intercultural exchanges,' said Richards-Kennedy.

'Carifesta provides an important platform to highlight the richness of Caribbean creativity and demonstrate how the cultural economy expands opportunities across the creative sector. By supporting this regional festival, CAF is demonstrating its continued commitment to working with our shareholder countries to strengthen the creative industries as drivers of sustainable economic growth. As a home-grown regional development bank that was born out of a fervent desire to advance regional integration efforts in Latin America and the Caribbean, CAF is particularly pleased that this grant will support the showcasing of cultural ambassadors and creative entrepreneurs from across the Caricom region, Latin America, North America and Africa,' Richards-Kennedy said.

Munro-Knight thanked CAF for its investment in the region's cultural and creative sectors, stating: