

GraceKennedy CEO to retire next month



GraceKennedy's group CEO Don Wehby

Jamaican conglomerate, GraceKennedy, yesterday announced the retirement of its group CEO, Don Wehby, effective February 14, 2025, which coincides with the company's 103rd anniversary.

Wehby, who is 61, will also step down from the group's board of directors.

He joined GraceKennedy in 1995 and was appointed group CEO in 2011. In a news release announcing the CEO's retirement, GraceKennedy said during his tenure, the company more than doubled in size with revenue moving from J\$58 billion in 2011, to J\$155 billion in 2023.

GraceKennedy said expansion through mergers and acquisitions has been a hallmark of Wehby's leadership, enabling the company to grow regionally and globally. Under his guidance, it has become one of the largest and most dynamic entities in the Caribbean, with operations spanning the Caribbean, North and Central America, the United Kingdom, and Europe, the group said.

"I am proud of the progress we have made during my tenure, and I am confident that the new leadership team will take GraceKennedy to even greater heights," said Wehby.

"I want to thank the board, my colleagues, and our customers for their support over the years," he added.

On October 7, 2024, GraceKennedy issued a notice advising that, effective October 9, Wehby would be taking a temporary leave of absence to focus on his health.

Frank James, current CEO of the company's Domestic Foods Division and former Group CFO, will assume the position of group CEO on February 14, 2025, and be appointed to the board on the same date.

James joined GraceKennedy in 2005 as vice president of Strategic Planning and Corporate Development. James quickly moved through the ranks, occupying senior roles in both the food and financial services divisions, before he was appointed group CFO in 2012.

He was also appointed to the board of directors that same year. In April 2019, James was appointed CEO of GK Foods Domestic, the largest division in the group of companies, where he has championed growth and efficiency, said GraceKennedy.

"I am honoured to take on the role of Group CEO and lead the GraceKennedy team," said Mr James. "We will continue to focus on delivering value to our customers, shareholders, and the communities we serve," he added.

Professor Gordon Shirley, chairman of GraceKennedy Limited, commented, "Don Wehby is an exceptional leader who sees opportunities in challenges and leads by example. We are grateful for his innovative spirit, impeccable work ethic and dedication to ensuring that the company continues to make a difference in the communities we serve. Don's leadership and vision has been instrumental in shaping the company into what it is today."

GraceKennedy has strong T&T links: the company is cross-listed on the T&T Stock Exchange; its food products are sold in supermarkets and groceries throughout the country; it operates a money transfer and cambio business with over two dozen branches in Tobago and Trinidad and the group launched a joint venture partnership with the Unit Trust Corporation that established three new mutual funds in Jamaica in 2023.