



## Media Coverage

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### Sinckler: Import waivers not routine

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by ANDI THORNHILL

THERE ARE NO LAWS granting sporting organisations automatic tax waivers on items they import.

Minister of Finance Chris Sinckler made that clear in the wake of the recent long delay in getting a new hockey artificial surface released from the Bridgetown Port as the agencies which brought it in sought to have duties and other payments waived.

The minister told SUNSPORT, in an exclusive interview, that such groups can only be granted what is known as a discretionary waiver.

"This is based on the situation and circumstances, the reasons and purposes that a request can come for. Some groups, unfortunately, have the belief that once they write the Ministry of Finance they should get a waiver but that's not true because it depends on if they conform to the laws pertaining to the authority

granted to the minister."

He referenced that the VAT Act does not give the finance minister permission to waive VAT.

"VAT can be remitted or refunded by the VAT tribunal which can make a request to the minister but it has to go through that particular process."

In seeking to clarify the procedures, he said there were other factors that constrained his actions.

#### Seeks advice

Sinckler also pointed out that whenever sporting organisations place a request for a waiver, his ministry sought the advice and input of the National Sports Council as was done with any other sector with similar requests. They are advised accordingly and comments are gathered.

"Sometimes it may go to other people because

it may affect other entities that may have an interest so we may have to seek additional comments and so forth. After this we look to see if it is consistent with the ministry's policies in relation to waivers and then a recommendation will come to me for approval or refusal based on the information provided and I will make a decision," he stated.

He said this was the process followed with the hockey situation through the National Sports Council "in the national interest given that hockey is considered to be a serious national sport that has the capacity to attract tourists and sporting teams coming here, so it lends to the development of the sport".

He stated that Government has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Brewster Trust and the Maria Holder Trust because of the nature, volume and value of what they do and their consistency.



CHRIS SINCKLER  
Minister of Finance



• "Under the CARICOM revised treaty, there are what we call ineligible items in the customs tariff, that is items ineligible for conditional waiver or discretionary waiver from the minister. A lot of that relates to things like apparel so when some sporting teams get donations from people outside the country or buy sports gear, a lot of that is not eligible for waiver because they are on the ineligible list if the items are purchased or procured outside of the CARICOM region. If they are in CARICOM they automatically come into Barbados free of duty because that's the agreement.

• "We have said to them the government will facilitate where it is able to do so legally, to help them to contribute to sporting and educational development by waiving duties and taxes on particular items they bring in, as long as they are distributed free of cost."

• "If you import first and the things on the high seas are landed at the port and the correct process takes longer than anticipated, it means your items are going to land and if you don't have the approval letter, that delays you are from getting the items out of the port and then you have port charges and you don't know what would happen in terms of any deterioration you may have in quality or whatever the case may be."