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Barbados to Start Issuing Medicinal Marijuana Cultivation License in February

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Medicinal Marijuana. Barbados, after five months, is finally ready to start issuing licenses to cultivators

BARBADOS — Barbados will start providing licenses to businesspeople interested in cultivating the drug for medicinal purposes next month. The announcement comes five months following approved legislation that legalized medicinal marijuana in the nation, and the licenses will be issued by the newly formed Barbados Medicinal Cannabis Authority.

That's according to Barbados Minister of Agriculture Indar Weir. "By February all of the necessary information should be in the public domain, so that the public will be aware of the process and what they have to do in order to be able to start to apply for licenses," Mr. Weir said,

speaking to Barbados Today (BT).

Even so, the minister suggested that the cost of the license might be beyond the reach of average Barbadians, even as he stressed locals would not be locked out of the industry. "Frankly, I don't know what the average man means; the average man cannot invest in Coca-Cola. Barbados's marijuana sector is not small business activity only, it calls for huge investment in research and development," Mr. Weir said.

Mr. Weir said with the law for legalized medicinal marijuana now established, the focus should be on what's needed to get the industry going, and not big business versus small business squabble.

"It takes a huge investment in manufacturing and even takes a huge investment in cultivation," he said. "We have to be frank about these things and face the reality where this industry is going, because if you have done any research on the industry, you would realize that it takes major investment to make it work.

Mr. Weir added, "There is always a place for the small man which would be facilitated by government who would create space for them and opportunities for funding."

According to BT, Barbados will adopt a tiered approach to cultivation and processor permits, ranging from Tier 1 for small-scale cultivation to Tier 3 for large-scale farms. The Medical Cannabis Industry Act allows medical cannabis to be prescribed by a practitioner to Barbadians or visitors to the island.

Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley has said the industry could prove to be lucrative for the nation if managed correctly.

"If we can in structuring out the medicinal cannabis industry as a new productive sector, manage the agricultural component, manage the manufacturing component, manage the tourism and hospitality component and manage the international business component then we will have in a total way be able to extract maximum value from this particular product which for the majority of our history was in fact legal and not illegal," she told lawmakers while the measure was making its way through Parliament.