

Leading not always easy, says visiting US expert

GOOD leaders know that bad situations need to get worse before they get better.

While this may seem like a bizarre assertion, President and CEO of Washington Consulting team and former assistant Secretary of the US Department of Transport Linda Washington, espoused this view as she delivered a lecture at the inaugural 50th anniversary leadership lecture at the Errol Barrow Centre for Creative Imagination on Monday night.

During an enlightening presentation, Washington said, "Even if it is going to get better, it is going to get tough, so beware. The central qualities of leaders are character, self-discipline,

wisdom and willingness to serve others. Be responsible for lives and livelihoods," she advised.

While highlighting the myriad of challenges that confront 21st century leaders, she said they can count on opposition to their vision of change.

"The road is fraught with volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity, surprises, changing role sets, exploding technology, information overload, resource limitations and the media's constant encroachment, all intertwined to produce problems and challenges with competing demands. It is not enough to pull the leader position alone, you must embrace a new attitude," she told the audience.



General Secretary of the Barbados Workers' Union Toni Moore (left) greets President and CEO of Washington Consulting team and former assistant Secretary of the US Department of Transport, Linda Washington, while Deputy Chief of Mission Laura Griesmer (background) looks on.

To this end, she suggested that leaders should ask the following questions: "What is your motivation for wanting to lead? Who do you want to be as a leader? What do you want to be known for as a leader? What would it take for this year to be your best leadership year?"

The inspirational speaker also told leaders that they should never be afraid of criticism. "A complaint shows ways that can be approved."

"The foundation of a building is the most important part of the building for it determines the size, shape and strength of the

structure. However, problems that can't be seen like cracks in the foundation are often the most dangerous. Issues must be rooted out and brought into the open. The first step is contemplation, second talking and planning, third is correction - fix it!" she said. (JH)