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WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

August 8th, 2023

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EQUITIES

Stock Ticker	Stock Information (as at August 4, 2023)	Comments
WISYNCO Wisynco Group Limited	P/E: 13.81x P/B: 3.18x Price: $17.54 Div Yield: 2.28%	**OVERWEIGHT** Throughout the pandemic, Wisynco has managed to improve its operational efficiency but given the effects of COVID-19 on industries such as tourism and education, the Company was unable to deliver significant revenue growth. Now, with tourism rebounding and schools operating at a greater level, Wisynco has married its improved operational efficiency with stronger revenue growth, allowing for significant net profit growth. As tourism is expected to continue growing towards its pre-pandemic level of output, we expect Wisynco to continue to perform well. Wisynco Equity Report
JMMBGL JMMB Group Limited	P/E: 8.97x P/B: 1.04x Price: $28.25 Div Yield 0.88%	**OVERWEIGHT** Given its relatively low P/E ratio and considering the Group's consistently strong performance throughout the pandemic, the market has been underpricing JMMBGL significantly relative to its local counterparts. JMMBGL's price has declined by 5.8% YTD which provides investors with an opportunity to acquire JMMBGL shares at a more attractive price. The long-term outlook for the company and the stock remains favorable, buoyed by an expanding regional footprint. In July JMMBGL closed on its acquisition of a commercial bank in the Dominican Republic (DR) which now enables the company to offer a full range of financial services in the market. The DR operations currently contributes 17% of net operating revenue and we will be keen to watch the effect of the expansion to JMMBGL's performance over the next few quarters. JMMB Equity Report
MASSY Massy Holdings Limited	P/E: 10.02x P/B: 1.19x Price: $98.23 Div Yield: 3.57%	**OVERWEIGHT** Massy Holdings Limited. (MHL, Massy), through its portfolio companies, engages in trading, manufacturing, distribution, and service industry businesses throughout the Caribbean region. The company operates through three portfolios: Integrated Retail, Gas Products, Motors, and Machine and two business lines: Financial Services, and Strategic and Other Investments. In financial year 2020, Massy transitioned from a Conglomerate to an Investment Holding Company. By so doing, Massy's strategy has changed, with the Group focusing mainly on its core portfolios. These core areas of the business represent Massy's competitive advantages, are well-positioned to scale, and are therefore expected to drive strategic growth going forward. Massy Equity Report

Ratings Definitions

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LASD Lasco Distributors	P/E: 9.45x P/B: 1.59x Price: $4.02 Div Yield 2.24%	**OVERWEIGHT** Lasco Distributors has continued its growth trajectory, displaying resilience throughout the pandemic, and we expect this to continue post-pandemic supported by the improving economic backdrop of the global economy. As continued domestic demand for goods and services remain strong, the company is also looking to strengthen its exports as well as continue to launch new product lines. However, this isn't without challenges as global supply shocks has affected LASD's gross margins. In response, management has prudently managed operational costs such that higher imported inflationary costs has not completely eroded the bottom line, resulting in continued growth. Lasco Distributors Equity Report
SCIJMD/SCIUSD Sygnus Credit Investments	P/E: 8.56x / 10.00x P/B: 0.66x / 0.77x Price: $11.98 / $0.09 Div Yield: 3.35% / 2.91%	**OVERWEIGHT** Sygnus' business model is built on providing capital and direction to the underbanked, targeting the middle market. To accomplish this, the Company has executed several capital raises involving equity, preference shares and debt raise. Sygnus has demonstrated their commitment to growth and being the market leader in the regional private credit space with their acquisition of a Puerto Rico-based, private credit firm, Acrecent Financial in Q3 of their financial year. This acquisition has significantly added to the group's income and overall profitability. The stock trades at significant discount relative to peers both from a P/E perspective and a P/B perspective. At present, given Sygnus' strong current and expected future growth, the market is pricing Sygnus at a steep discount to its book value per share. Sygnus Credit Investments Equity Report
TROPICAL Tropical Battery Limited	P/E: 12.83x P/B: 2.41x Price: $1.95 Div Yield 1.03%	**OVERWEIGHT** Tropical Battery has been aggressively pursuing revenue diversification strategies, to reduce its dependence on auto battery and accessory sales. This is evident by the company's recent launch of three new subsidiaries aimed at providing renewable energy solutions for commercial customers. In addition, the company recently implemented a new inventory management system that has yielded improved operational efficiencies in addition to targeted sales initiatives that have improved revenue growth. We believe that the Company will continue to grow as they build out new revenue lines, improve operational efficiencies and drive targeted sales initiatives. Tropical Battery Equity Report

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PROVENJMD/ PROVENUSD Proven Group Limited	P/E: N/A P/B: 0.83x / 0.77x Price: $22.51 / $0.15 Div Yield: 3.61% / 3.58%	**OVERWEIGHT** Proven has shown a decline in profitability throughout the current financial year, a performance driven by lower share of earnings of associates and higher operating expenses. The company continues to demonstrate its appetite for growth through acquisitions as evidenced by the recent 100% acquisition of Fidelity Bank (Cayman). The company has a history of acquiring companies with accretive value. We expect that profit margins will improve in the future as one-off spending related to recent acquisitions pass.
LUMBER Lumber Depot Limited	P/E: 9.29x P/B: 2.35x Price: $1.95 Div Yield 2.67%	**OVERWEIGHT** Lumber represents an option to gain exposure to the construction sector which has been a relatively resilient and fast-growing sector. With this sector tailwind, lumber has shown strong revenue growth since its 2019 listing and the financial year 2022 revenue and net profit are 10.1% and 26.8% higher than financial year 2021 revenue and earnings, respectively. We are still monitoring how the company progresses given the loosening of restrictions and continued growth in the construction sector. We also note that despite the growth it has shown over the last 2 years, the stock still trades at an attractive PE compared to Junior market peers. Lumber Depot Equity Report
LAB The Limners and Bards Limited	P/E: 44.75x P/B: 3.01x Price: $1.79 Div Yield 5.05%	**OVERWEIGHT** The LAB saw strong demand for its services throughout the pandemic, with revenue growth of 35% in FY2021. For the latest financial year revenue grew by approximately 10%, an indication of continued demand for the Company's services. However, net profit declined by 7% primarily due to higher administration costs, currency translation losses and losses on "SCOPE Caribbean". To date, SCOPE has not been profitable which has negatively impacted the Lab's net profit growth. This is not abnormal for a new business, and we expect this should turnaround as the business scales. The 2022 FY was the first full operational year for SCOPE, which saw take up of its services offered while it continues to explore additional revenue streams. With the LAB consistently positive operating cash flows and a current cash balance that is 1.64x larger than the Company's current liabilities, we believe the Lab is poised to invest its capital efficiently towards further growth. The LAB Equity Report

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JBG Jamaica Broilers Group Limited	P/E: 7.78x P/B: 1.63x Price: $34.46 Div Yield 1.94%	**OVERWEIGHT** JBG's financial performance has rebounded nicely from the lows seen in FY2020, driven by the recovery in the Jamaican economy and tourist arrivals, coupled with JBG's growing presence in the US market and the increasing production of the Best Dressed Chicken line of products. The loss making Haiti operation has been discontinued which should contribute to improved margins in the coming quarters. Positive results from expansion into the United States and recovery in Jamaican operations, along with stringent cost control have contributed to the surge in profitability in the first half of the 2023 financial year. Jamaica Broilers Group Equity Report
SEP Seprod Limited	P/E: 15.45x P/B: 1.80x Price: $70.44 Div Yield 2.13%	**OVERWEIGHT** Seprod saw its financial performance surge for the 2022 financial year, owing to the strategic acquisition of AS Bryden, with revenues and net profit growing by 82% and 93% respectively. Going into the 2023 financial year, we expect easing of supply chain pressures, stability in commodity prices, and further consolidation of profits from AS Bryden to further lift net profits. Along with new products, Seprod also plans to aggressively target growth in export markets and is currently in the process of making necessary investments to increase capacity of its margarine plant. Seprod Limited Equity Report
LASM Lasco Manufacturing	P/E: 8.69x P/B: 1.65x Price: $4.64 Div Yield 2.16%	**OVERWEIGHT** We expect that the Company's growth trajectory will be sustained, however, in the short term, the financial results have seen an impact from the overall macroeconomic conditions since the pandemic. Margins across the board have been compressed despite record profitability in 2022. Despite continued record tourism arrivals and growth in key sectors such as entertainment, steps need to be taken to restore margin progression. Against this backdrop it is notable that inflationary pressures and supply issues that plagued the company from 2022 to the first quarter of this year will likely begin to ease in the spring of 2023, suggesting a rebound in net profit growth for the company moving forward beyond FY 2023. Plans to further expand its geographical footprint by driving the contribution of export to its revenue will be value-added to the long-term sustainability of the Company's operations Lasco Manufacturing Equity Report

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GK GraceKennedy Limited	P/E: 10.33x P/B: 1.02x Price: $77.98 Div Yield 2.59%	**MARKETWEIGHT** For the year ended December 31, 2022, GK reported significant top-line growth, however, margin deterioration contributed to a decline in the bottom line. Revenues increased by 10.5% while profits saw a 15.1% decline of flat as operating expenses grew at a faster rate than revenues. The company cited challenges presented by high inflation globally, sustained supply chain issues, increasing interest rates, and foreign currency volatility as issues that have affected profit margins. GK continues to advance its merger & acquisition (M&A) strategy, after it increased its stake in Catherine's Peak Bottling Company Limited in the first quarter of 2023 to move its ownership stake from 35% to 70%, thus granting them a stronger position in the spring water market. The company continues to seek M&A transactions locally and internationally. These acquisitions stand to add more diversity and growth to the company's earnings. GraceKennedy Group Equity Report
MAILPAC Mailpac Group Limited	P/E: 15.58x P/B: 7.33x Price: $1.87 Div Yield 9.09%	**MARKETWEIGHT** During the peak periods of the pandemic, MAILPAC benefited immensely as online shopping became a larger share of shoppers' wallets. In large part, this period of heavy demand driven by pandemic restrictions has passed and while we anticipate online shopping will remain integral for the everyday consumer, the outsized growth we witnessed in FY2020 and FY2021 will not be repeated. Admittedly, the Company has a robust balance sheet with more cash than total liabilities which we believe places MAILPAC in a position to make growth-inducing investments. However, the current slowdown in demand and consequently revenue and profit growth underscores our MARKETWEIGHT recommendation Mailpac Group Equity Report
SGJ Scotia Group Jamaica Limited	P/E: 7.71x P/B: 0.98x Price: $34.48 Div Yield 4.06%	**MARKETWEIGHT** The greatest driver of profitability in FY2021 was the reduction of Expected Credit Losses (ECL) relative to the previous year as the economic backdrop improved. Scotia is not likely to have this benefit recur to the magnitude it did in FY2021. The group has made an accelerated effort to digitize its business in line with its digital strategy to drive efficiency and better service customer needs. SGJ is looking to further consolidate its operations and funnel investments in core operations through technology and talent, while also looking to enter new markets and launch new products. Scotia has two major positives. The first is that the current rising interest rate environment supports the Group's bank model, more so than other listed financial institutions. The second is that SGJ is a consistent source of relatively attractive dividends which makes the Company a good asset for investors with a clear preference for income. Scotia Group Equity Report

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FTNA Fontana Limited	P/E: 17.84x P/B: 5.24x Price: $10.88 Div Yield 1.84%	**MARKETWEIGHT** Fontana has been growing and expanding since listing on the junior exchange in 2019. The Company has plans to expand, which include a new outlet to bring its footprint to a total of seven locations. In its most recent quarter, Net Profit saw a 32.7% increase over the same quarter in the prior financial year. Further, the cost of sales has been impacted given the current inflationary environment and is likely to continue being affected in the near to medium term. However, the company continues to grow organically and is financially positioned to do so. Due to the current environment and increased finance costs, profitability could dampen in the near term but in the long term, the addition of its new outlet could support growth. On balance, the Company has both significant risks and the potential for upside, which underscores our recommendation. Fontana Equity Report
SVL Supreme Ventures Limited	P/E: 23.43x P/B: 12.83x Price: $27.73 Div Yield 3.35%	**MARKETWEIGHT** Supreme Ventures is the market leader in the lottery and gaming industry. The company has also in recent years embarked on an aggressive growth strategy through several acquisitions (Champion Gaming and Post To Post Betting). The company would have been impacted by the pandemic as the lockdown measures impacted its operations at Caymanas Park. With the easing of restrictions, the Company should benefit from an easing of lock down restrictions and a normalization of business. Despite this, in the medium term we note that the company now has competition in the lottery segment of the market which may negatively impact margins. The degree to which this might impede the pace of revenue growth will however depend on the take up of new games such as Scratchaz which, at present, seems popular amongst younger consumers as it is a new addition to the Company's product offerings. Supreme Ventures Equity Report
ECL Express Catering Limited	P/E: 20.43x P/B: 10.36x Price: $5.18 Div Yield: N/A	**MARKETWEIGHT** ECL has seen improved performance as the tourism industry rebound, following the pandemic, has been robust. However, the Company is not currently operating at pre-covid efficiency levels, as price increases due to the current global supply chain challenges have driven higher costs across all product categories. While we do expect the tourism industry to continue to recover, driving ECL's revenues to grow and likely surpass pre-covid levels by FY2023/FY2024, the inflationary pressures can not be ignored. Longer-term we do expect the company to reap the benefits of their expanded footprint within the Sangsters International Airport as well as the return to trend growth in stopover arrivals. ECL Equity Report

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VMIL Victoria Mutual Investments Limited	P/E: 7.22x P/B: 1.65x Price: $3.35 Div Yield: 0.00%	**OVERWEIGHT** Victoria Mutual has recently rebranded under the "VM Group". By association, there has been implications for VMIL. For example, the Company has been significantly more active in the capital markets through its investment banking arm. We expect continued growth in the investment banking space will add considerable value to the Company's bottom line which has already shown clear improvement throughout FY2021. VMIL Equity Report

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SOS Stationery & Office Supplies Limited	P/E: 20.36x P/B: 4.57x Price: $2.24 Div Yield: 0.89%	Stationery and Office Supplies presents investors with another option to benefit from the reopening of the domestic economy. A core segment of their business would have suffered from the lockdown measures and work from home, namely the sale of furniture and its SEEK line of books. However, during that period stationary sales have done well to fill that revenue gap. With the resumption of economic activity, the return to office and the expansion in the BPO sector, SOS might be a large beneficiary in 2022.
SJ Sagicor Group Jamaica Limited	P/E: 9.35x P/B: 2.09x Price: $44.60 Div Yield: 3.59%	Sagicor Group Jamaica Limited would have been adversely impacted by the pandemic even more so than the typical financial sector company due to their exposure to the tourism sector. This would have therefore led to sizeable impairment losses on their investment in associated companies (I.e., Playa Hotel and Resorts). For 2022 we therefore expect to see some amount of recovery as the group has disposed of their investments in Playa which will stem impairment losses while simultaneously still having direct exposure to travel through their US resort (The Hilton DoubleTree) while their banking services should benefit from a pickup in economic activity.

***The "Monitoring List" represents stocks that are on our radar as our initial expectation for these companies is positive. However, no official recommendation is presented as these stocks are still being evaluated.*

Unit Trust

Unit Trust Fund	02/08/2023	26/07/2023	Week/Week Return	Year-to-Date Return	1 Year Return	Yield
Capital Growth	74.99	76.07	-1.43%	-21.74%	-21.11%	-
Money Market	15.9883	15.9556	0.17%	2.88%	4.67%	4.78%
Income Portfolio	100.00	100.00	0.00%	-	-	5.62%
FX Bond Portfolio (US$)	1.3785	1.3798	-0.09%	2.80%	3.61%	4.95%
Real Estate Portfolio	12,704.06	12,689.44	0.12%	60.07%	234.86%	-
FX Growth Portfolio	0.8921	0.8992	-0.79%	5.49%	-2.31%	-
FX Income Accumulator	1.0034	1.0001	0.33%	0.21%	-	2.55%

“Someone's sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago.”

Warren Buffett

LOCAL EQUITY MARKET

For the week ending August 4, 2023, the local stock market, measured by the Combined Index, advanced by 0.31%. The Main Market Index advanced by 0.25%, the Junior Market Index advanced by 0.84%, and the JSE USD Equities Index declined by 1.39%. During the week, Margaritaville (Turks) Limited USD was the largest gainer, rising by approximately 25.14% to close at USD 0.11. Stationery and Office Supplies Limited was the biggest decliner, which fell by 24.58% to close at $2.24.

Large-cap stocks, reflecting those listed on the Main Market Index are underperforming on a YTD basis, declining by 8.38%, relative to its Junior Market counterpart which has declined by 1.11%

For the week ending August 4, 2023, overall market activity resulted from trading in 123 stocks of which 53 advanced, 56 declined and 14 traded firm. Market volume amounted to 209,558,716 units valued at over $624,231,003.83. Transjamaican Highway LTD 8% was the volume leader with 113,649,653 (53.69%), followed by Sagicor Select Funds Limited - Financial with 8,886,719 units (4.20%), and by Transjamaican Highway Limited with 7,560,911 (3.57%).

Revisiting relevant news during the week:

Carib Cement 6-month earnings fall
High cost attributed to a scheduled annual maintenance exercise done during the first quarter sent operational earnings and six months profit falling for cement manufacturer Carib Cement at the end of June.
Carib Cement 6-month earnings fall

Scotia 'go green' on new energy loan
Scotiabank is the latest financial institution to come to market with a new 'green' loan to propel increased investments in renewable energy, especially now as the globe moves to slow the pace of climate change.
Scotia 'go green' on new energy loan

GK to acquire contract manufacturer Unibev
GraceKennedy Limited (GK) has entered into an agreement to acquire privately owned Jamaican manufacturing company Unibev Limited.
GK to acquire contract manufacturer Unibev

SOS to distribute 3M International products
Continuing its impressive growth trajectory, Stationery and Office Supplies (SOS) is to begin distribution for 3M International in the local market by the last quarter of this financial year.
SOS to distribute 3M International products

BOJ green lights ISP, McKayla microcredit licences
The Bank of Jamaica (BOJ) has approved McKayla Financial Services Limited and ISP Finance Services Limited as the latest microcredit firms to be licensed under the new Microcredit Act, 2021 in the $40-billion industry.
BOJ green lights ISP, McKayla microcredit licences

FSC enhances capital adequacy framework for insurance companies
The Financial Services Commission (FSC) has updated and enhanced different capital adequacy metrics for the $517- billion insurance sector as it executes its new risk-based supervision framework.
FSC enhances capital adequacy framework for insurance companies

Index	04/08/2023	28/07/2023	31/12/2022	Week/Week	Year-to-Date
JSE Main Market	326,087.80	325,270.08	355,896.64	0.25%	-8.38%
JSE Junior Market	3,942.02	3,909.27	3,986.44	0.84%	-1.11%
JSE Combined Market	340,347.08	339,284.26	368,591.98	0.31%	-7.66%
JSE USD Equities Market	240.62	244.02	233.97	-1.39%	2.84%
JSE Financial Index	72.65	71.58	85.88	1.49%	-15.41%
JSE M&D Index	99.40	100.65	97.42	-1.24%	2.03%

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

U.S.

The major U.S. equity benchmarks started August with a down week after closing out a strong July. Stocks declined amid rising Treasury yields and an unexpected downgrade to the U.S. government's credit rating. The technology-heavy Nasdaq Composite suffered the largest losses for the week.

In a busy week for corporate earnings releases, investors were especially focused on results from mega-cap names Amazon and Apple, which reported earnings after markets closed on Thursday. Amazon significantly beat expectations, helped by strength in its core retail business, and the company's stock rallied more than 9% at Friday's open. Apple, meanwhile, traded down about 3% after a mixed report that showed strength in its services business, although iPhone sales disappointed.

U.S. government's credit rating downgraded

Fitch Ratings on Tuesday downgraded the credit rating of U.S. government debt from the highest level, AAA, to AA+, with the ratings agency saying its decision "reflects governance and medium-term fiscal challenges." T. Rowe Price traders noted that it was the first negative surprise that markets have had to deal with in some time, and some investors seemed to use the news as a good excuse to reduce riskier positions. S&P also has a AA+ rating on the U.S., following a downgrade in 2011.

Hiring slows from faster pace at start of year

The Labor Department's closely watched monthly nonfarm payroll report showed that employers added 187,000 jobs in July, about the same as June's downwardly revised 185,000. The past two months' data, while still showing health in the labor market, point to a notable slowing from the first five months of the year when the economy added an average of 287,000 jobs a month. The unemployment rate ticked down to 3.5% from 3.6% the prior month, while wages grew 4.4% over the 12-month period, unchanged from June.

In non-labor market news, the Institute for Supply Management manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index came in at 46.4, a bit lower than the 46.9 consensus and the ninth straight month under 50, the level that indicates contraction.

Europe

In local currency terms, the pan-European STOXX Europe 600 Index ended 2.44% lower. Higher U.S. bond yields and some disappointing European earnings reports deflated investor enthusiasm for riskier assets. Major country stock indexes also declined. Germany's DAX dropped 3.14%, France's CAC 40 Index lost 2.16%, and Italy's FTSE MIB slid 3.10%. The UK's FTSE 100 Index fell 1.69%.

BoE hikes interest rates, likely to keep borrowing costs higher for much longer

The BoE raised its key interest rate by a quarter of a percentage point to a 15-year high of 5.25%. It warned that rates were likely to stay high for some time, saying "the MPC [Monetary Policy Committee] will ensure that Bank Rate is sufficiently restrictive for sufficiently long to return inflation to the 2% target." The central bank predicted the inflation rate would fall to 4.9% by the end of this year, a faster pace than in its May forecast. BoE estimates for economic growth were little changed at 0.5% this year and next.

Eurozone inflation slows but economy rebounds

Annual inflation in the euro area slowed further to 5.3% in July from 5.5% in June but remained well above the European Central Bank's 2% target. Inflation also declined in Germany and France, the bloc's two largest economies.

However, the eurozone economy expanded 0.3% sequentially in the second quarter, after gross domestic product (GDP) shrank or stagnated in the previous two quarters. Germany's GDP was unchanged, while Italy's economy contracted by 0.3%.

Even so, forward-looking purchasing managers' surveys indicated a weaker start to the third quarter. The final reading of the composite index of business activity in services and manufacturing was revised slightly lower to 48.6 in July. For this indicator, readings below 50 signal contraction.

Japan

With global investor risk appetite dampened by a U.S. sovereign credit rating downgrade, Japan's stock markets fell over the week. The Nikkei 225 Index registered a 1.7% loss and the broader TOPIX Index was down 0.7%. This was despite the support provided domestically by a strong corporate earnings season, with many companies seeing output recover post-pandemic and benefiting from the weak yen and rising prices.

T.RowePrice

Index	04/08/2023	28/07/2023	31/12/2022	Week/Week	Year-to-Date
Dow Jones	35,065.62	35,459.29	33,147.25	-1.11%	5.79%
S&P 500	4,478.03	4,582.23	3,839.50	-2.27%	16.63%
NASDAQ 100	15,274.92	15,750.93	10,939.76	-3.02%	39.63%
FTSE 100	7,564.37	7,694.27	7,451.74	-1.69%	1.51%
Euro Stoxx 50	4,332.91	4,466.50	3,793.62	-2.99%	14.22%

ABOUT US

> **Barita Investments Limited**, is a publicly-traded company on the JSE, 74.3% owned by Cornerstone Financial Holdings Limited ("Cornerstone").

The Barita Group is made up of Barita Investments Limited and its subsidiary, Barita Unit Trusts Management Company Limited (BUTM). Founded by Rita Humphries-Lewin in 1977, Barita has the distinction of being one of the oldest stock brokerages in Jamaica. The Company is regulated by the Financial Services Commission (FSC), is a member of the JSE and is licensed as a Primary Dealer and Cambio Dealer by the Bank of Jamaica (BOJ or the Central Bank). In August 2018, Cornerstone Financial Holdings Limited (Cornerstone or CFHL) acquired majority shares in Barita and has supported the Company's mission and vision to be a premier investment force in Jamaica and the wider Caribbean.

OUR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Stock Market investments on any of the three regional exchanges
- Fixed Income Trading
- Investment Banking Services
- Unit Trust Investments
- Currency Trading
- Structured Products
- Retirement Planning
- Wealth Planning
- Market Research

BUTM currently offers six (6) unit trust products spanning fixed income, equities and real estate and is recognised as a strong player in the middle market retail segment and a leader in unit trust performance.

Barita serves its clients island-wide through its Head Office in Kingston and branches in Mandeville and Montego Bay with a team of 163 members across its operations island-wide.

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