



**HONORABLE ASOT MICHAEL**  
**Minister of Tourism, Economic Development, Investment and**  
**Energy of Antigua and Barbuda**  
**WELCOME REMARKS**  
**Team Wadadli - Talisker Whisky Challenger**  
**Wednesday, February 10, 2016**

His Excellency Sir Dr. Rodney Williams, Governor General of Antigua and Barbuda,

The Honorable Gaston Browne, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda,

The Honorable E. P. Chet Greene, Parliamentary Representative for the St. Paul's Constituency,

Cabinet Colleagues,

Representatives of the St. John's Hospice,

Distinguished guests,

Esteemed members of the media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Afternoon and warm greeting to all.

The winds of change are blowing refreshingly over Antigua and Barbuda, bringing new and memorable nautical experiences to these welcoming shores and safe harbour.

For the first time ever, Antigua through Team Wadadli entered the Talisker Whisky Cross Atlantic Challenge. The team did so with the conviction that they would dare to row with determination, and to row with purpose.

They have rowed with such purpose that they have rowed themselves into the annals of rowing records, and so will always have a special place in the nautical history of Antigua and Barbuda. To be certain that hospitality begins at home, we cherish this moment in our history when we can welcome home Antigua and Barbuda's Team Wadadli.

Our brave quartet of - Nick Fuller, Peter Smith, JD Hall, and Archie Bailey - regardless of the directions of the winds, have now shown to the world that Antigua and Barbuda has the courage for challenge and a collective tenacity to overcome adversity.

Not one of us should underestimate what we have been privileged to witness today.

We have seen unfold, before our very eyes, a heroic display of courage, endurance and determination.

These four brave Antiguan put their very lives at risk to participate in the hardest rowing event in the world.

Significantly, three of them are over 50 years old, and one them is not yet 30.

In Team Wadadli's first outing, Antigua and Barbuda now has the distinction for producing a new world record with the oldest person to ever row across the great Atlantic. With Peter Smith doing so at the enviable age of 74, he deserves our rousing commendation.

Starting in the Canary Islands in mid-December, they rowed, in their tiny boat, for 3,106 miles (Or 5,000 kilometres) across the mighty Atlantic Ocean to finish at English Harbour here in Antigua.

Along that dangerous journey, they encountered many hazards and perils.

Among those hazards and perils was a hurricane, so close as to toss their small boat alarmingly in the middle of a stormy Ocean.

Those, who followed the epic journey of Team Wadadli on the Internet, remember well the fear that gripped us all that they might not survive.

Yet, these four men fought on, determined to stay in the race and to complete the mission on which they had embarked. And what was that mission?

It was the most generous and selflessness of all undertakings.

It was to risk their lives to attract financial support for the St John Hospice.

What could be more noble a cause than this?

These four men offered up their lives for the benefit of persons who have been diagnosed with a terminal illness.

They wanted to ensure the patients at the Hospice, peace, calm and dignity.

Ladies and Gentlemen, here is a roll call of honour:

Dr Nicholas Fuller (67)

Peter Smith (74)

Archie Bailey (50)

John D Hall (29).

Let their names be emblazoned in the pantheon of Antiguan heroes.

For that is what they are.

They are intrepid adventurers.

And, what a magnificent adventure it has been for men who had never before attempted to row a boat in a vast and turbulent Ocean.

They put their lives at risk for others. In the course of doing so, they brought pride, honour and fame to our country, Antigua and Barbuda.

We thank them for their courage, endurance and determination.

Our words of congratulation perhaps will be insufficient for embracing Team Wadadli with the deserving laurels of what can only be described to be a unique achievement.

Yet, it is with our presence here to welcome them home, that the Government and people of Antigua and Barbuda shower Team Wadadli with praises.

They have championed a cause; they have demonstrated grit; and by dint of their skills and perseverance have ably demonstrated the true spirit of competition.

Those winds over the Atlantic brought new opportunities for us as a nation; each endeavouring, all achieving.

As the Minister of Tourism, I say: Raise the standard! Raise it boldly! You are true patriots of this twin-isle paradise.

Our Nation is rightly proud of you.

Team Wadadli, the entire nation salutes you. What you have done is a remarkable feat for Antigua and Barbuda. It demonstrates our collective capacity for overcoming challenge to reap mutual benefits of combining our love for Sports and Tourism!

We thank God that you have come home alive and well.

And, now let us celebrate your great accomplishment.

Thank you.