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KINGSTON, June 10 —: PROVEN's Christopher Williams says private equity will be key in business recovery during this pandemic. Williams was speaking yesterday at the first of a webinar series titled, *Building the Economy: funding through Alternative Investments*.

The series is organized by JVCapital, a unit of the Development Bank of Jamaica, and yesterday's programme was titled: *ENTREPRENEURS: Why you may need Equity Financing now and how to get it*.

"What this crisis is showing us," says Williams, "is that we need to have that support system called equity because it allows you the opportunity to take a breath, absorb the new normal and adjust to it without collapsing your business." Williams said it was clear that after 200 years of debt financing the Caribbean needs to look at other options. Williams is also Chairman of the Caribbean Alternative Investment Association (CARAIA).

Williams, Sandra Glasgow and Leo Williams were panellist on the webinar, hosted by Audrey Richards, Project Coordinator for JVCapital. Glasgow is Co-Founder & Manager of FirstAngelJA, and Leo Williams is Chief Executive Officer of SEAF Caribbean SME Fund.

The webinar examined and explained how entrepreneurs can use alternative investments to finance their business and help grow the Jamaican economy. The first episode was streamed live on Facebook and YouTube and had an engaging audience that asked pertinent questions about equity financing.

"Private equity is like taking an elevator ride," said Leo Williams. He explained that investors will get on at the ground floor, assess a business with a potential to grow, become aligned with the goals of the principals, and help grow the business into a sustainable entity before getting off once the elevator has reached the top.

Sandra Glasgow explained the role of angel investors at the earlier stages in a business' development. "It's important that Jamaica is building an equity financing ecosystem," said Glasgow, "so that there will be opportunities to provide financing at various stages of the business lifecycle."

She said more education, training and mentoring is needed at the university level to get potential entrepreneurs to fully understand what it is to run a business. "Entrepreneurs would also do well to attend investment ready workshops so they can adapt their business model to the new normal to make it more appealing to investors in the future."

There are 7 episodes in the **Building the Economy: with funding through Alternative Investments** series, which ends July 21. Topics will address all the asset classes under alternative investments.

“We at the DBJ through the JVCAPITAL are proud to be bringing this series of webinars to our stakeholders, Jamaicans and the wider virtual audience. It is important now more than ever, that we share knowledge, start the conversation with Jamaican businesses, the various instruments other than debt/loans that are available grow and finance their businesses be it early stage, growth, mature or mega infrastructure projects,” states Audrey Richards, Project Coordinator JVCAPITAL, DBJ.

The series of webinars are supported by the DBJ and the Caribbean Alternative Investment Association (CARAIA).

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