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***“Continuing the Successes of Our Sporting Policy
&
Expanding Global Governmental Promotion and Marketing of Entertainment”***

Salutations and Thanks:

Mr. Speaker, I am most grateful to once again address this hallowed House. I have faith in God, faith in Jamaica, and faith that all members here present have as his or her priority, the best interest of Jamaica at heart, though we may disagree on matters of policy and practice from time to time.

Mr. Speaker, my confidence is in no small part due to the portfolios which I hold for the Opposition on Sport and Entertainment. Both are key areas of Jamaica's Creative Industries and historically carry more consensus than disagreement among the members of this body.

It is my hope that this spirit of cooperation will continue, as sport especially, should never be tainted by divisive political posturing. Athletes expect and deserve united leadership that is supportive and elicits national pride as they compete both at home and abroad.

Mr. Speaker, it was an honour to serve for four years as Minister with Responsibility for Sport. During my tenure, I was able to marshal the many gains that were made in sport development by the last Administration. Some of the achievements are still in the implementation stage and most, I am happy to say, garnered bipartisan support. Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the legacy of accomplishments that we were able to pass on to the current Administration and, in this regard, I gratefully recognise the collaborative efforts and contributions of my fellow colleagues.

I thank my colleagues on this side of the House, headed by the Leader of the Opposition, The Most Hon. Portia Simpson Miller, for their continued confidence in me.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge the continued support of my family, the members of my constituency, Councillors, workers, community leaders, volunteers, donors, Ministers of Religion, teachers and members of the business community. Each of you contribute in significant ways to building this great nation, Jamaica land we love.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN SPORTS

Mr. Speaker, let me first address issues of vital importance on the subject of sport, uppermost in many minds as the Rio Games draw nearer.

The National Sport Policy 2013

Mr. Speaker, during my tenure, we completed the important task of providing for Jamaica a National Sport Policy. This Policy was the driving force behind all our efforts, in terms of sport infrastructure development, athlete well-being improvement and the advancement of policy issues ranging from safeguarding our children in sport and maintaining a dope-free sporting environment. The National Sport Policy informed all decisions and I trust it will continue in this role for the present Administration. An initial review of the Policy will be due soon. I expect that this Administration will ensure that the monitoring and evaluation process is pursued vigorously, as an up-to-date Policy is vital to our sporting development.

POLICY SHIFTS

- **The High School Sport Infrastructure Improvement Project (HSSIIP)**

Mr. Speaker, we have come to recognize that our High Schools bear the brunt of our sport development and as such, the High School Sport Infrastructure Improvement Project, initiated by the previous Administration, achieved some landmark objectives. The project was born out of the need to change the focus of the Sports Development Foundation beyond constructing community playfields, many of which are poorly managed, and to expand its role into the even more critical area of improving the sport infrastructure in our high schools. The project also had the major spinoff effect of combating the policy of student-athlete transfers to the schools with better infrastructure. Indeed, as planned, it

will allow more students to truly “*grow where they are planted*”, not just in academics but also in sport.

Mr. Speaker, based on the results of Champs 2013, we designed and implemented a programme of infrastructural development in high schools, drawing schools from the top and bottom of the performance table as well as schools located in the Sugar Dependent areas covered by EU funding. The aim was a, “not just for you alone but for the development of all in your region” approach.

Consulting with stakeholders including the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Agriculture, the Sports Development Foundation, the Social Development Commission, on behalf of the communities, and ISSA, we developed a way forward in the upgrading of sport infrastructure in 24 High Schools. Mr Speaker, in Phase 1 of the project, some 250 Million Dollars was sourced and invested.

Mr. Speaker, most notably, out of first phase of this project, we had the historic establishment of the first synthetic running track in a Jamaican High School at Calabar. This is also the first such track to be laid at any high school in the English-speaking Caribbean. The track was completed at a cost of 66 Million Dollars which included significant contributions from the school’s alumni association and friends of the institution. This momentum must be continued. During my tenure, several High Schools had placed on record their interest in having major sport infrastructure improvements at their institutions to include synthetic running tracks. We hope that this Administration will seek to facilitate this policy direction.

- **Funding of Sporting Bodies**

Mr. Speaker, the more we can support our athletes in training the better will be the results across sporting disciplines. The fact that many of our athletes have overcome disadvantages in the past and succeeded beyond our wildest imagination does not mean that we must continue with less than best practices in the future. As such, last year we worked with the Ministry of Finance to obtain a budgetary allocation of \$70 million to offset costs to national associations and federations for the use of the facilities at the Independence Park Limited in preparing for international competition. Mr Speaker, I implore this Administration to ensure that such a fund is sourced annually and expanded where possible.

- **The Jamaica Athletes Insurance Plan (JAIP)**

Mr. Speaker, the implementation of the Jamaica Athletes Insurance Plan is a game changer which once again shifted our focus on how we address improving the well-being of our national athletes who bring such glory to Brand Jamaica. I am particularly proud of the creation of this ground-breaking initiative, launched in January of this year to provide insurance coverage to approximately 1,300 national athletes, 517 female athletes and 806 male athletes, from across 28 sporting disciplines. Funding commitments in excess of \$70 million per year have been secured for three years from the SDF, the CHASE Fund, the TEF, and the NHF. The programme, being new, needs close monitoring and the current Administration must seek to secure the funds to allow this programme to remain sustainable beyond year three and expand its reach beyond the provision of these services.

The Guardian Life Insurance Company will provide group health coverage, while Allied will provide group life and personal accident coverage through Sagicor. The plan also extends our partnership with the national sports associations and

federations which have committed to supporting the Jamaica Athletes Insurance Plan by contributing five per cent to the cost for their participating member athletes. The Plan includes health screening as well as preventive and remedial health care.

Mr Speaker, this may be the single most significant action by government in support of sport development and the enhancement of the well-being of our athletes.

MAJOR SPORT INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Speaker, many will recall that of the cricketing nations in the region, Jamaica was the only country that was unable to host international level night cricket prior to 2014. The planning, commissioning and implementation of the project to place modern lighting at Sabina Park, allowing night cricket to be played at this facility was a monumental feat. Indeed, this was a project crucial to Sabina Park's continued viability as a historic regional landmark. We again thank the Government of India and the Tourism Enhancement Fund for the crucial support in making this project possible.

Mr. Speaker, several other national infrastructure projects were completed over the last four years to include the replacement of the playing surface and the upgrading of the seating stands at the Leila Robinson Netball Courts, the replacement of the 52 year-old filters at the National Stadium pools, the laying of a synthetic turf at the Mona Hockey Field, and the replacement of the G. C. Foster College synthetic running track. All of these projects were done as a result of a government making good on its promise to make significant investments in the development of Jamaica's sport product.

- **National Sport Museum**

Mr. Speaker, it gave me great pleasure to finally secure the land and receive budgetary support for the construction of our first National Sport Museum, after many years of unsuccessful attempts.

I cannot overstate how important this project is to the Business of Sport and to the growth of Sports Tourism. Just last year, the Portia Simpson-Miller led Cabinet approved \$39 million to support the development of the National Sport Museum, which is to be located next to the Bob Marley statue, across from the National Stadium. This Museum will engender pride and provide historical information to our citizens, especially our children, while attracting great interest from overseas visitors who wish to glean information about our sporting history and our sporting stars like, Usain Bolt, Donald Quarrie, Allan “Skill” Cole, Merlene Ottey, Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, Veronica Campbell-Brown, David Weller, Lindy Delapenha, Herb McKenley, Arthur Wint, Deon Hemmings, Mike McCollum, Michael Holding, George Headley, Stafanie Taylor, Alia Atkinson and a host of others. I am offering full bi-partisan support to move this project forward. I hope you will share my passion and enthusiasm for this project and that you will have the same regard for its importance.

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

- **The Anti-Doping in Sport Act**

Mr. Speaker, in the last Administration we led a speedy and well thought out repeal of the previous Anti-Doping in Sport Act and enacted the new Anti-Doping in Sport Act 2014.

Despite our sometimes differing views, both sides of the House supported the passage of the new Act and its provisions. The new Act has not only ensured that

Jamaica is WADA compliant but it has gone a far way in deflecting international accusations aimed at Jamaica and Jamaica's athletes. The passage of the Act has proven to be timely, especially in light of the current global revelations regarding anti-doping in Russia and other areas. The banning of Russia from participation in the 2016 Olympic Games indicates just how crucial these steps were in showing our commitment to preserving integrity in sport and our determination to prove that our athletes are clean.

While we await the outcome of the hearings relating to an Adverse Analytical Finding for one of our most outstanding athletes during the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, every effort must be made to ensure continued rigorous education and testing to discourage and uncover any athlete who may make the wrong choice and choose to gain an unfair advantage over his or her opponents through doping.

- **Strengthening of JADCO**

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to know that my successor is not facing the same challenges I encountered when I took office in 2012, **also** an Olympic Year. Thanks to our partnerships with UNESCO, the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport and the CHASE Fund we were able to place JADCO in a position of having:

- improved urine testing;
- introduced blood testing;
- increased budgetary allocations;
- for the first time, a fully-serviced website;
- a fully-equipped staff with an increased complement of Doping Control Officers;

- stronger education and training programmes at both the junior and senior levels.

Mr. Speaker, let me impress upon this Administration the importance of continuing to secure the gains made over the last four years and the need to ensure that further strides will be made. Of particular importance to us on this side of the House will be the introduction of two new pieces of legislation.

- Firstly, legislation on the **Safeguarding and Protecting of Children in Sport**. Consultation commenced during the previous Administration to look at this issue. We know that this is a hotly debated issue around the world. The truth is Mr Speaker, we do not produce any of the banned substances and supplements in Jamaica and so when a junior athlete returns an Adverse Analytical Finding, we need to know who is responsible for getting it to the athlete and what are the sanctions for those who provide these substances. We stand ready to offer our support.
- Secondly, we wish to see the advancement of the dialogue around the introduction of legislation to strengthen Jamaica's commitment on preserving integrity in sport, especially as it relates to **Match-fixing and Illegal Gambling in Sport**. This may not be perceived as a problem at this time, however we need to be proactive especially, as gambling in sport has become a big part of the Jamaican landscape. Prevention is better than having to cure. The Opposition offers its full support.

Mr. Speaker, we are extremely proud of our work in sport during the last administration. Sport is a major engine in Jamaica's development, as it engenders

social cohesion, national pride and economic growth. Supporting sport is not a choice, but a necessity of any modern society and certainly of one as rich in sporting achievement as Jamaica.

ENTERTAINMENT

Mr. Speaker, as I assume the responsibility of being the Opposition's voice on the Entertainment portfolio, I do so with an appreciation of Jamaica's leadership in world culture, in music, dance, theatre, cooking, literary arts, fashion and most other aspects of the global entertainment sector.

Mr. Speaker, entertainment is well recognized as having the capacity to contribute substantially to economic diversification and growth, particularly in developing countries. Studies consistently show that the Creative and Cultural Industries have proven to be remarkably resilient in times of economic downturn, suffering less severe declines and recovering more rapidly than other sectors.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN ENTERTAINMENT

Mr. Speaker, the previous Administration made significant strides in advancing Jamaica's entertainment sector. Through the identification and establishment of suitable Entertainment Zones an important method for strengthening the sector was implemented. The goal of entertainment zones is to facilitate development of the entertainment sector by establishing permanent and semi-permanent, multi-faceted entertainment in secured and controlled environments with facilities for shopping, dining, cinema, music, and art. Against this background, the previous

Administration commenced work with the KSAC and the JCF to test a pilot entertainment pop-up zone in designated parking lots in Downtown Kingston.

Mr. Speaker, too often as representatives of the people we are bombarded with questions and complaints regarding an unfair permit process for hosting events in communities. Mr. Speaker even the set ups are not off limits. Instead of seeking to deprive entrepreneurs of well needed income we must provide sound structures geared at enhancing this industry.

Mr. Speaker also of note were two creative initiatives, Arts in the Park and 90 Days of Summer. Arts in the Park has served to expose new and upcoming talent in the creative industries to international booking agents and intermediaries. The 90 Days of Summer which was launched in July 2014 was designed to capture, in creative and dynamic ways, the essence of Jamaica in terms of its culture, music, film and other entertainment offerings. Both initiatives have showcased Jamaica's varied entertainment brand, while activating public spaces and increasing the linkages between the tourism, entertainment, craft and retails sectors. This strategy remains particularly important for tourism product diversification and economic empowerment.

Mr. Speaker, the Portia Simpson Miller-led Cabinet, also led the way by approving the amendment to Section 5 of the Noise Abatement Act in order to facilitate extensions for permits issued by Parish Extension Committees so that certain types of entertainment activities would be allowed to continue beyond 2:00 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, we are used to hearing queries about how we locate and identify our entertainers. During the previous Administration, a Registry of Entertainers was developed with well over 200 practitioners currently registered.

Marketing Entertainment

Mr. Speaker, we have begun to find better ways to market our music and culture to the world. Cultural tourism must be developed and expanded way beyond its current level. If the Japanese can come here and win World Dancehall Queen Competitions then we should be attracting more Japanese tourist, especially cultural tourists.

Community tourism presents opportunity to develop local resources and talents, and make the concept of tourism a reality at the community level for Jamaicans from Negril to Morant Point.

Road Shows

Mr. Speaker, I believe as a country we should establish at least four variety shows to go on the road globally every day of every year. In my mind there is no doubt that a show with vintage artistes, current acts, dance, drama, fashion and poetry would attract large audiences in the cosmopolitan centres of the globe and possibly even larger audiences in places like Africa, New Zealand, Australia and Hawaii. Let us continue the work of the previous Administration by promoting Jamaica and Jamaica's entertainment offerings with energy and passion.

Mr. Speaker, currently, Record Companies have switched their focus back to live shows. They recognise that with the internet, profits from music sales are down and they see that profits from live shows are up. Last year, Billboard Magazine listed Taylor Swift as the top earning music performer. Swift earned US\$7.2M from sales, US\$41.1M from publishing, US\$564,000 from streaming and a whopping US\$61.7M from live touring. This shows where the money is now, in live shows.

Our live shows are as good as any other nation world-wide. We must continue to expand our promotion of live shows. Let's take full advantage of Downtown Kingston, the north and south coasts and western Jamaica.

Royalties and the Copyright Act

Mr. Speaker, I know that a lot of hard work has been done by many members of this Honourable House in order to amend the Copyright Act. The prevalence of copyright material, available free on the internet has eroded the ability of our copyright owners to collect commensurate income from their creative endeavours. However, we cannot relent in our efforts to protect the intellectual property of Jamaicans.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Speaker, as our leaders and other stakeholders look for answers to the spiralling moral descent we have been witnessing, I believe that we must become more proactive in our response. The youth of Jamaica need to be lured away from the get-rich-quick thinking that is so pervasive in the land. Among other things, they need to be involved in wholesome, positive activity that will harness their energies and creativity. Government, with the help of civil society, must get serious about tackling the problem by planning and funding programmes that will inspire young people to want to earn success.

Mr. Speaker, let us view Sports and Entertainment as vehicles to create peace, foster unity, develop talents and eliminate differences. We could begin with better funded sport programmes in every primary school and utilise trained

community-based volunteers as coaches and trainers. Training would not only involve the mechanics of sport but also messages designed to stress the importance of hard work, respect for authority, respect for rules, perseverance, team work, honour and integrity.

Mr. Speaker, the talent which abounds in Jamaica is immense. Every youth believes he is a potential star. That confidence in self is not lacking. Perhaps we need to seriously look at how we channel this talent and confidence. In my constituency, I am establishing a recording studio and I believe there is great need for many more throughout Jamaica. I meet a large number of young adults who are aspiring singers and song writers. Let us give them the chance to grow. Why not an institution for recording and song writing? Would that help to elevate the level of Jamaica's music as well?

Long gone are the days when parents would bash children because they wanted to pursue careers in sport and entertainment. As this nation grows, let us create the room for our people to grow in a structured way. Mr. Speaker, let us discuss these and other ideas in a bi-partisan forum for Jamaica's sake before we lose another generation to crime.

Thank you and may God bless this Honourable House, this sport and entertainment-loving nation and all its people.