

# Unemployment at Record Low 9.6 Per Cent

**P**RIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness says Jamaica's unemployment rate has declined to a record low 9.6 per cent, as at the end of January 2018, down from the 10.4 per cent outturn for the October to December 2017 quarter.

**“Unemployment rate among male youth fell by 4.7 percentage points.”**

The figures, provided by the Statistical Institute of Jamaica, (STATIN) also show that the unemployment rate of 9.6 per cent in January 2018 was a decrease of 3.1 per cent when compared with 12.7 per cent in January 2017.

The Prime Minister made the announcement during the launch of Workers' Week and National Labour Day activities for 2018, at the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) on May 1.



**Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness addresses the launch of activities marking Workers' Week and Labour Day 2018, at the Office of the Prime Minister on May 1.**

Mr. Holness said of note is the decline in youth unemployment, which fell to 23.8 per cent as at the end of January 2018, down from 31.7 per cent for the corresponding period last year.

He further pointed out that

the unemployment rate among male youth fell by 4.7 percentage points to 20.4 per cent, while citing the 4.9 per cent decline in the female rate from 17 per cent in January 2017 to 12.1 per cent as at January 2018.

Meanwhile, Mr. Holness also reported significant investments and development interest in business process outsourcing, tourism and hospitality, services, mining, construction and civil development.

## US\$950 Million for BPO and Tourism Projects

THE GOVERNMENT has programmed capital expenditure of approximately US\$950 million on business process outsourcing (BPO) and tourism projects, through Jamaica Promotions Corporation (JAMPRO), for the 2018/19 fiscal year.

This was disclosed by Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries Minister, Hon. Audley Shaw, while delivering the opening 2018/19 Sectoral Debate presentation in the House of Representatives on May 1.

Mr. Shaw said US\$850 million is earmarked for tourism, for which current investments will add another 2,100 hotel rooms and generate nearly 8,000 additional jobs.

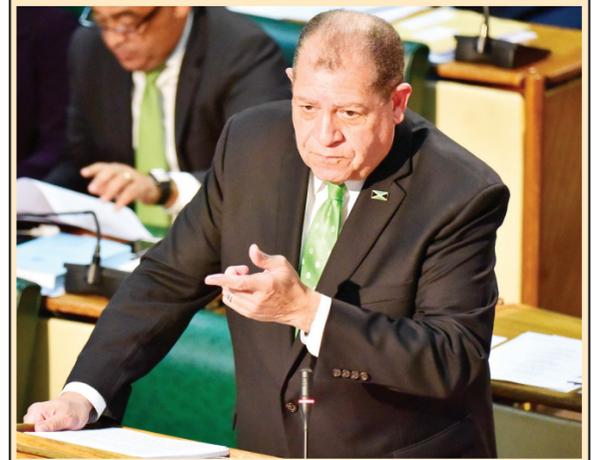
He advised that US\$100 million is programmed for the BPO sector, which will see the creation of 6,000 more jobs.

Mr. Shaw said preliminary figures indicate that JAMPRO achieved capital investment of US\$604 million during 2017/18, resulting in the creation of 13,274 new jobs for the period.

Meanwhile, the Minister advised the House that JAMPRO's office in New York is being reopened.

Mr. Shaw, who will formally reopen the office on May 14, indicated that he will also use the opportunity to meet with several key investors.

He further advised that the Jamaica Investment Forum will again be hosted in Montego Bay in June.



**Minister of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. Audley Shaw**

## Labour Day National Projects in St. Ann and St. Catherine

The St. ANN'S BAY Infant School in St. Ann, and Cumberland Health Centre in St. Catherine are the National Projects for Labour Day on May 23.

Both Labour Day and Workers' Week were launched on May 1, by Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness at Jamaica House.

The activities, to be held under the theme – 'Ramp it Up... Fix it Up', will focus on constructing ramps in schools to enable physically challenged persons to access these buildings, and installing additional facilities at health centres to enhance the environment for medical staff and clients.

The Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, which is spearheading the coordination of activities, has partnered with the

Ministries of Education, Youth and Information; Health; Local Government and Community Development;

and Labour and Social Security, as well as Municipal Corporations islandwide to get the work done.



**Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (left) and Education, Youth and Information Minister, Senator the Hon. Ruel Reid (right), share a light moment with Opposition Senator, Dr. Floyd Morris, during the May 1 launch of activities for Workers' Week and Labour Day 2018 at the Office of the Prime Minister.**

The Prime Minister, in his address, underscored the importance of Labour Day, which, he noted, is used by communities to engage in developmental activities, including: physical enhancement, fostering a spirit of volunteerism and promoting social cohesion through improved community planning.

He urged civic-minded Jamaicans to "carry forward the spirit of volunteerism and service (and) allow it to become part of everything you do and a fixture in your daily lives."

Persons and organisations are being urged to register their projects on the Ministry's website at [www.mcges.gov.jm](http://www.mcges.gov.jm), and the Jamaica Information Service website at: [www.jis.gov.jm](http://www.jis.gov.jm).

## Seven Kingston and St. Andrew Constituencies to Receive Solar Lanterns



**Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (centre) and Science, Energy and Technology Minister, Dr. the Hon. Andrew Wheatley (third left), examine solar lanterns at a press conference held at the Office of the Prime Minister on April 30. Also examining the lanterns are persons representing the various constituencies.**

SEVEN CONSTITUENCIES in Kingston and St. Andrew are to benefit from a pilot programme that will result in solar lanterns being distributed to replace open flames used as sources of light in vulnerable communities.

They are Eastern St. Andrew, East Rural St. Andrew, South St. Andrew, West Rural St. Andrew, East Central St. Andrew, East Kingston and Port Royal, and

St. Andrew West Central.

The pilot programme is the result of instructions given by Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness to the Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology and one of its agencies, the Petroleum Corporation of Jamaica, following a series of fires.

"Effectively, this is what it amounts to the Government giving a subsidy in solar technology for households

that are deemed to be energy poor," the Prime Minister said at a ceremony to hand over the lanterns to Members of Parliament, at his Devon Road offices in St. Andrew on April 30.

Mr. Holness informed that a study will be commissioned from the project to examine its usefulness as an island-wide project.

At least three bulbs per household will be distributed

during the pilot phase of the project.

Mr. Holness acknowledged that this short-term response by his Administration is only the beginning and does not constitute the "entirety of the Government's response" to dealing with the issue of open flames being used in vulnerable households.

The 5,040 lanterns have been procured from Nokero International Limited, headquartered in Denver, Colorado, in the United States at a cost of US\$44,380.

## Tertiary Grants Available for Children of Public Sector Workers

THE MINISTRY of Finance and the Public Service is inviting public sector employees to apply for tertiary education grants for their children.

The grant, which is to assist with tuition fees only, will cover 80 per cent payment, up to a maximum of \$150,000.

To benefit, the public-sector employee must be permanently, temporarily or contractually appointed, for at least two years with the Government of Jamaica.

Eligible students must have been accepted or are pursuing a local, full-time accredited associate or bachelor's degree programme at any tertiary institution registered by the University Council of Jamaica (UCJ).

Additionally, the student must be under 25 years old, unemployed and have a

minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0.

Application forms, which can be accessed from the Ministry's website, must be certified by and sent through the human resources department of the respective ministry, department or agency (MDA) to the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service.

In addition to the application form, employees must submit an employment letter; an acceptance letter for new students; a progress report for continuing students; a copy of the student's birth certificate, reflecting the name of the parent making the application; as well as the tuition cost for the programme of study, which can be a printout from the institution's website.

## Labour Ministry Team Visits Denham Town ZOSO



**Parish Organiser for Kingston at the National Council for Senior Citizens, Marcia Edwards (right), interacts with Denham Town Resident, Rosalyn Lewis, during the Labour and Social Security Ministry's visit to the community on May 2 to showcase and increase access to its services in the area declared a Zone of Special Operations (ZOSO).**

