

Jamaica Ready to Deal with Impact of COVID-19

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness says Jamaica is ready to deal with any impact that could result from the potential outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) locally.

Speaking at a meeting of the National Disaster Risk Management Council at Jamaica House on March 5, Mr. Holness said the Government is always in a state of readiness and preparedness for eventualities.

"It is not only when there is a disaster or a looming disaster that our disaster risk management system is operational. Our disaster risk management system is always operational. There is always a level of planning, there is always a level of response," he assured.

The Prime Minister noted that while the COVID-19



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness highlights a point while addressing a meeting of the National Disaster Risk Management Council, at Jamaica House on March 5.

threat is "a serious situation that requires diligence and an elevated sense of caution", there is no need for panic.

"There is no doubt in my mind that the human and technical capacity exists to overcome this threat. We will overcome the threat, and so there is no need for panic and savagery and baseless behaviour," he said.

Mr. Holness pointed out that the Government is aware that the virus is a threat and has therefore been putting measures in place to prevent the virus from getting on to Jamaica's shores.

He noted that this prevention strategy, which includes putting in travel restrictions, was necessary to protect the citizens of Jamaica, as the country is not in a position to close its borders.

SOEs Eroding Gang Influence in Communities

COMMISSIONER OF Police, Major General Antony Anderson, says implementation of the states of public emergency (SOE) is creating space for the police to erode the influence of gangs in hotspot communities.

Citing the example of Salt Spring in St. James, he noted that the community, which was once the base for a violent gang, has been transformed and members of the security force can now move freely throughout the area.

He said that through a process of engagement and social interventions involving various stakeholders, the relationship between the residents and the police has significantly improved.

"Nowadays, you have police officers travelling in their private cars, in uniforms and people are waving at them; that's the change in Salt Spring. We are using the State of Public Emergency to do a series of normal law enforcement activities to create the change and engagement with communities," he added.



Commissioner of Police, Major General Antony Anderson, addresses a forum organised by the Caribbean Policy Research Institute at the Terra Nova All-Suite Hotel in St. Andrew on March 4.

Commissioner Anderson was speaking at a forum organised by the Caribbean Policy Research Institute (CAPRI) at the Terra Nova All-Suite Hotel in St. Andrew on March 4.

Meanwhile, he said that the police force is being equipped to operate more effectively.

"A lot of the technologies that we are putting in place are going to allow us to deal with things like mobility, communications and the behaviour of gangs," he noted.

Government and World Bank Sign Agreement for REDI II

THE GOVERNMENT and the World Bank have signed a US\$40 million loan agreement for implementation of the second phase of the Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI II).

Around 70,000 people are expected to benefit from investments in productive activities, training, and capacity building, with inclusion of youth and women as a priority.

The agreement was signed by Minister of Finance and the Public Service, Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke, and World Bank Country Director for Caribbean Countries, Latin America and the Caribbean Region, Tahseen Sayed, during a ceremony held at the Ministry's Heroes Circle offices on March 3.

The objective of the project is to enhance access to mar-



Minister of Finance and the Public Service, Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke (left) and World Bank Country Director for Caribbean Countries, Latin America and the Caribbean Region, Tahseen Sayed, display the US\$40 million loan agreement for the implementation of the second phase of the Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI II), during a signing ceremony held at the Ministry's Heroes Circle offices on March 3.

kets and to climate-resilience approaches for targeted beneficiaries.

The project will improve access to markets and resilience to climate change for around 200 agricultural and rural tourism micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

Around 70,000 people are expected to benefit from

investments in productive activities, training, and capacity building, with inclusion of youth and women as a priority.

The Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF) will implement REDI II on behalf of the Government of Jamaica. In his remarks, Dr. Clarke noted that the project is

geared towards increasing the viability of rural agriculture and the linkages between rural agriculture, tourism and community-based tourism activities.

He also added that the programme will deepen the availability of attractions that are community-based, including assisting with the development of new trails and gastronomical experiences.

Church Corner Landfill in St. Thomas to be Relocated

MINISTER OF Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie, says land has been identified to relocate the Church Corner landfill in St. Thomas, while an alternative location is being sought for the Doctors Road disposal site in Portland.

He was speaking on March 3 at the Standing Finance Committee of the House, whose members were reviewing the 2020/21 Estimates of Expenditure.

The disposal sites are being relocated in light of stakeholder concerns over the potential environmental and health hazards both facilities pose at the present locations.

The Church Corner landfill is within proximity to

the Morant Bay roundabout and Bustamante Bridge in St. Thomas, while the Doctors Road site is located relatively close to prime resort property in Portland.

Mr. McKenzie said the National Solid Waste Management Authority (NSWMA) has paid a deposit on the land to which the Church Corner landfill will be relocated, adding that negotiations to conclude the purchase are "well advanced".

Regarding the Doctors Road disposal site, Mr. McKenzie cited challenges identifying a suitable alternative location within Portland.

He advised, however, that "we still are exploring finding alternative locations".

PM Breaks Ground for Port Royal Street Coastal Revetment Project

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, on March 3, broke ground for the commencement of the Port Royal Street Coastal Revetment Project, which will be undertaken at a cost of approximately \$950 million.

The project aims to create protective infrastructure that will safeguard the Port Royal Street corridor, downtown Kingston, against the adverse effects of natural disasters and climate risks.

It will incorporate work along the coastline from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade building to the Rae Town Fishing Village and will include construction of a one-kilometre composite seawall and armour stone revetment structure; upgrading of drainage; and rehabilitation and raising of one kilometre of the existing roadway.

Also to be undertaken is construction of a 4.7 metre-wide boardwalk to improve aesthetics and promote recre-



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (third left) breaks ground for the commencement of the Port Royal Street Coastal Revetment Project, downtown Kingston, on March 3. Also participating in the ground breaking (from left) are Mayor of Kingston, Senator Councillor Delroy Williams; Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister, Hon. Michael Henry; Chairman, Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF), Dr. Wayne Henry; Caribbean Director, World Bank, Tahseen Sayed; and Managing Director, JSIF, Omar Sweeney.

ational activity along the shoreline; and an 80-metre fishing beach for fishermen, who currently berth their vessels along the shoreline.

Prime Minister Holness said the project "marks another milestone in Jamaica's sustainable development and

the positioning of Kingston as a resilient city".

He noted that the intervention will secure the Port Royal Street corridor and protect critical infrastructure along the coastline from the impacts associated with sea-level rise and coastal erosion.

PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS FROM GETTING SICK

wash your hands with soap and water:

- after coughing or sneezing
- when caring for the sick
- before, during and after you prepare food
- before eating
- after toilet use
- when hands are visibly dirty
- after handling animals or animal waste

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Adapted from the World Health Organization

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