



## **Ministry of Local Government and Community Development Sectoral Debate Presentation 2012/13**



### **A MISSION WITH A VISION: COVENANT FOR TRANSFORMATION**

**Presented by:**

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and Community Development**

**Gordon House**

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#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- The Almighty, for His Grace and Mercy toward me

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- Opposition Spokesman on Local Government, Mr. Desmond McKenzie, MP
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- Mayors, Councillors, and staff of the Local Authorities
- **International Development Partners and Donor Agencies-**
  - United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
  - The European Union (EU)
  - Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC)
  - Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF)
  - Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
  - The Canadian Urban Institute (CUI)
  - The WorldBank,

## **INTRODUCTION**

Mr. Speaker, when I was directed by the Most Honourable Prime Minister to undertake this most significant portfolio, I immediately understood the magnitude of the work ahead. Since 1993, The Peoples National Party administration had embarked on an ambitious programme of Local Government Reform, which has since been hailed as an international best practice.

We recognize that despite the promises of the previous administration, very little was achieved, as far more needed to have been done based on what they had indicated and within the timeframes that they had articulated as the major plans to '*complete*' the reform of local government.

Had we followed that path, the critical and meaningful opportunities for full participation and buy-in as to its relevance, role, purpose and contribution to the Nation's development would have been missed.

Mr. Speaker, as most of us are aware, local government was established very early after the British assumed administration over Jamaica, having been introduced as far back as the 17<sup>th</sup> Century; it is only factual to state that this structure has been integral to Jamaica and it has served this country through all of its evolutionary processes.

Mr. Speaker, it is also an irrefutable fact that the Peoples National Party Administrations over the years has always held the most progressive track-record when it comes to local government; we have always defended, upheld and promoted this sphere of governance as the purest form of political representation as it is the closest to the people and supports true participation in how communities and Parishes direct their affairs.

## **The Constituency of South West Clarendon:**

**Vision:** Mr. Speaker, my constituency is one which I am proud to serve; I owe a debt of gratitude to my constituents, workers, executive, Councillors and well-wishers. I remain their humble and relentless servant as I continue to do my part to make their lives better.

Mr. Speaker, based on its geographical location and its developmental potential; I assert that **Clarendon is the centre of Jamaica.....and we can all agree that Jamaica is the centre of the world!**

In crafting this Vision, we must first recognize the tremendous resources and spatial planning advantages presented by our wide expanses of agricultural land, strategic deep-water port facilities and even non-traditional Tourism resources such as the Milk River Bath that need to be leveraged in Jamaica's development.

An important element in all of this is to position Jamaica and South West Clarendon in particular as the leading producer of Bio-fuels

and alternative energy an essential ingredient in propelling Jamaica into first world nation status.

Pivotal to this Vision of Clarendon as the epi-centre of development, linking the parishes Manchester, St. Catherine, St Ann is the development and expansion of Vernamfield; to take advantage of its strategic location and proximity to port resources to create a Multi-Service, Multi-modal Cargo, Travel and Maintenance Hub for Jamaica and the Caribbean. This is of extreme strategic importance to the Nation's economic development.

## **Vernamfield Development**

Mr. Speaker, it is my intention to fully support the focused and deliberate re-development of Vernamfield into a world-class Aviation Services Facility as neither of our current commercial airport facilities are able to support the growing demand for a strategic multi-service cargo, travel and maintenance hub in this hemisphere.

The Member from Central Clarendon will agree that the concept of the development of the “Vernamfield Aviation Park” is long overdue; Mr. Speaker, Jamaica is strategically placed to service the increased movement of cargo that the expansion of the Panama Canal will bring through the Americas by 2014. The ships are significantly larger, and the cargo-handling and transshipment are requirements more demanding and complex; highlighting the natural resource blessing that God has given us in Jamaica, to take advantage of these significant opportunities to become a major player in world trade

and propel local economic development and Jamaica's economic growth.

It is time for Jamaica to realize this awesome potential to become a major player in the US Sixty-Billion Dollar (US\$60B) air cargo industry.

It is time for Jamaica to expand its Large Cargo Operations, both by air and by sea. **In the Aviation Business we can focus on Maintenance, Repair, Overhaul, Stripping of Aircraft and Parts Sales from special facilities in our Aviation Center, that can quickly be deployed anywhere in the world at a moments notice from our Vernamfield Airport. Military Aviation also opens up tremendous possibilities for us to expand this business and strengthen linkages to our economy.**

**Plans for the Vernamfield Hub also make provision for General Aviation Services and offer a Transport Training Facility, to add value to our business proposition, and to attract investments.**

**Integral to this strategic multi-modal approach is the development of a Logistics and Export Processing Zone. This innovation is a critical success factor in expanding exports and strengthening our Balance of Payments; and will be supported by a state-of-the art Agro-Processing and Clearing facility to increase our competitiveness.**

Mr. Speaker, the economic impact on Jamaica's development is significant, as the expected employment generation is conservatively estimated at around 9,600 jobs with contributions to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the range of US\$20 million dollars and potential tax revenues of \$160 million dollars in the short term. In the long run, these developments will add Billions and Billions of foreign exchange and local dollars to Jamaica's economy.

Mr. Speaker, developments of this nature require large inputs of capital; which must come from what is now commonly referred to as 3P investments or Public Private Partnerships (PPP), which is a

modality used all over the world to attract significant resources into large-scale developments that Governments are not themselves able to finance directly. The pool of money we can potentially tap into to implement this development is enormous. Indeed, it is the form of investments used to successfully develop Highway 2000, so we have some experience in Jamaica. This evidenced of the unmistakable vision of the previous Peoples National Party Administration to ensure that the national goal of the creation of Highway 2000 was implemented and the presence of this highway development now gives rise to the awesome possibilities attached to the developments in mid-island.

Attracting 3P investments is a topic that the Minister of Finance has wisely addressed; as a critical mechanism to mobilize both local and global private capital to finance infrastructural development; and Units to facilitate this financial mobilization have been created in the Ministry of Finance and at the Development Bank of Jamaica. Important State agencies such as JAMPRO will play a critical role in

determining success in attracting and facilitating mega investments in these facilities.

Mr. Speaker, this Administration will move decisively to support this initiative as we have made a covenant with the people to grow ourselves out of debt, and this is a major and sustainable step in that direction. Indeed, it is time to go forward with this important development!

Mr. Speaker, the value proposition here is that potential investors can seamlessly insert us in their Supply Chain and gain efficiencies and unique competitive capabilities globally; by making an investment in our multi-modal air and port developments.

But I would be remiss of me not to include one of the things that Jamaica is famous for in attracting both visitors and investors and that is the hospitality industry. It is not just sea, sand and sunlight (all of which are in South-West Clarendon) but also the warmth of

the wonderful people of Jamaica and the tradition of care-giving. But I must draw to your attention Mr. Speaker, something unique to Clarendon which is the famous **Milk River Bath**.

Mr. Speaker, the Milk River Bath is one of Jamaica's hidden treasures and is world renowned for its supreme healing properties. In fact, it is said to have one of the highest radioactivity levels of any mineral bath in the world, which is positively associated with its beneficial effects. Analysis of this mineral spring shows it is more radioactive than the leading European spas, Baden in Switzerland and Karlsbad in Austria.

Interestingly, scientific research proves that Milk River Bath is

(3) times as active as Karlsbad, Austria.

(9) times as active as Bath, England.

(50) times as active as Vichy, France.

(54) times as active as Baden Switzerland.

It is time to focus on re-development of the Milk River Bath and Spa and leverage this as an integral asset to the expansion and growth of south-coast tourism and Health Tourism.

In terms of other constituency matters, I would like to highlight but a few major initiatives, these are:

- The construction of 120 houses for sugar workers
- The refurbishing of Tollgate, York Town and Waterwells  
Community Centres with support from the on-going European Union (EU) sugar protocol project
- We have started and will complete the Jacob's Hut to Milk River Bath main road in this fiscal year
- We will continue to patch and rehabilitate several roads across the constituency.

Mr. Speaker, now to direct portfolio matters we have embraced and bought into the Vision 2030 Development Plan and have aligned Local Government, Community Development and Governance at the local level within this Plan. Mr. Speaker there have been several consultations that have taken place with people from all walks of life in our various communities and parishes Island-wide, the recent one being the Parish Visioning Symposia. The contributions made by the people have been taken into consideration to build on the platform for action in shaping the destiny and development of our local parishes for the next 18 years. This is in keeping with the National Vision to make

*“Jamaica, the place of choice to live, work, raise families and do business”* by the year 2030.

Mr. Speaker, my parliamentary colleagues, and people of Jamaica we have experienced it, we have seen it in this country and all over the world, that, “Without the people we have no vision” and as the good Book says, “Without a vision the people perish”. We are on a

mission with a vision covenanting with the people to build effective local governance as the foundation for good governance in Jamaica. We know that “...good governance can only be achieved when [our people] are empowered on a broad basis to participate meaningfully in the making of decisions which affect their lives, property, interests and communities. This is the critical building block to successful nation building...” PNP Manifesto, Dec 2011

Mr. Speaker we are on a Mission with Vision: Covenant for Transformation mindful that we are operating, doing business and delivering services to our communities within the tight local government budget. Within this fiscal landscape then we must covenant with the people and strike the balance with rising public expectations and increasing public needs and the services we deliver. In this covenant relationship for transformational governance in our communities and in our parishes, it requires transforming our approach, re-thinking the role, responsibilities and re-alignment of treatment and collaborative relationships

between central and local government and how we engage the people through Accountability Agreements. Mr. Speaker we all have to play our part in advancing this transformation that will result in good governance at the local level. Such a transformation requires getting some little things right, a paradigm shift in our thinking, changing perceptions and changing behavior, image building and re-branding, managing our resources efficiently and obtaining value for money while providing the services to our people in order to achieve greater efficiencies, economies of scale and a performance based culture.

We are *pursuing* a Vision where local government is seen as, “*The premier government organization ... that facilitates the development of communities that can deliver sustainable first world services through modern, participatory, autonomous and adaptive systems, for the benefit of all citizens*”.

Mr. Speaker we are committed to Covenant for Transformation and we will be vigorously pursuing in a credible and rigorous manner

**the MAIN PILLARS IN THIS COVENANT FOR  
TRANSFORMATION THAT WILL SUPPORT THE SUBSTRUCTURE  
AND THE SUPERSTRUCTURE OF GOVERNANCE AT THE LOCAL  
LEVEL**

**Pillar 1:**

**Revitalization of Governance at the local level**

Mr. Speaker having re-established the Ministry of Local Government & Community Development (MLGCD) we are now re-positioning it to re-focus on the important role that our communities play in all aspects of national development.

**We are covenanting with the people** to revitalize Local Governance in order to transform the relationship between citizens and government at the local level.

This revitalization pillar is anchored by the following:

**Building the enabling and relevant Legislative Framework**

Mr. Speaker you will agree that the Local Authorities (LAs) must operate within a framework of service delivery and other responsibilities of parish government that is fully supported by laws, which empower those responsibilities.

In this regard, we remain fully committed and are fast tracking the Entrenchment of Local Government in the Jamaican Constitution in the fiftieth (50<sup>th</sup>) year of our independence. Already, in order to fast track this commitment to the Jamaican people, the Ministry of Justice has issued drafting instructions to the Chief Parliamentary Counsel and we await the draft Bill.

The Strategic Laws covering Local Governance, Local Governance Financing and the management of Human Resources in Local Government are to resubmitted to Cabinet shortly and this Cabinet

will give it due consideration it deserves. We are promoting a transformed approach and renewed thinking of the relationship between local government and central government. Both levels of government will covenant with each other to enable transformation and greater autonomy of our communities and local authorities. We will aggressively work towards the promulgation of the three pieces of strategic laws

### **Institutional Strengthening**

We intend to enhance the capacity of Local Government institutions, including Local Authorities. The recently concluded Organizational Review by Price Water House Coopers will be used as a template for Local Authorities to develop the most relevant structure for effective service delivery and will include the strong focus on a shared services approach for agreed responsibilities. We have already met with Dr. Hutchinson of the PIOJ and his team and we will be exploring the possibility of undertaking a study to analyze the optimal range and scale of functions and services provided by the

local authorities based on applicable technologies, economies of scale and delivery modalities.

Such a study, Mr. Speaker, could serve to inform the ongoing process of local government reform.

This revitalization pillar is bolstered by:

### **Financing & Financial Management platform**

The Financing of Local Authorities bears a critical relationship with their ability to deliver effectively, services demanded by citizens.

One of the steps that we intend to take in establishing a financial base for Local Authorities is the review of the Parochial Revenue Fund, which is dedicated to the financing of LAs and to expand it to include other revenue sources.

In this regard, it is equally important that LAs demonstrate accountability and transparency in their financial management. We are already taking steps and will continue to enhance financial

management systems in the LAs with particular focus on audit capacity and policy.

## **Pillar 2:**

### **Re-energize citizens and communities involvement, participation and empowerment at the local level**

Mr. Speaker in this Covenant for Transformation, the voice of the people must be the base and guiding principle by which we make decisions and establish institutions. In this regard, it is important to constantly assess how these institutions are functioning and how they can be enhanced in meeting the objectives of the democratic process.

We have utilized the Report on the Review of the Portmore Municipality in re-engaging stakeholders of the Municipality in a series of focus group discussions, prior to engaging the wider Portmore Community on the recommendations contained in that Report.

We are on the Mission to strengthen our citizen participatory mechanisms. We are covenanting to reposition and strengthen our community structures through covenanting with the Community Development Committees, Development Area Committees, and the Parish Development Committees with the continued strategic support of the SDC and to put on firm footing, their primary relationship with the Local Authorities. For the first time we have in the Estimates of Expenditure an allocation for the PDCs.

Their role of being the primary representatives of civil society at the local level will be reflected in the proposed Local Governance Act.

Mr. Speaker, our Parish Development Committees the PDCS have played an integral role in broadening the decision-making process and mechanisms of inclusiveness at the local and community levels.

Despite the meagre resources, the PDCs have been bolstered through various initiatives and partnerships.

Also, PDCs have benefitted from technical assistance through short and medium term agreements with several International partners such as the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the European Union (EU) and the Canadian Urban Institute (CUI). Of note, the Canadian Urban Institute has been doing tremendous work with both the Manchester and St. Elizabeth PDCs in the area of sustainable development planning, environmental protection, historical tourism and organizational development and capacity building exercises. It is expected that the CUI will be expanding this initiative in the next phase to other Parishes.

As we progress with the Revitalization of the Local Governance process, the Ministry will be leading the review of the status and reach of the PDC system shortly to ensure that those that are

organizationally challenged are brought in-line with stronger PDCs such as Clarendon and Manchester; also, to ensure that there are stronger and more sustainable linkages between the Ministry, the Local Authorities and the PDCs in tandem with the new proposed Local Governance Act.

Mr. Speaker, our new local governance paradigm requires broader, more meaningful and sustainable partnerships, our PDCs are therefore critical to the efficiency, expansion and effectiveness of this thrust. As Minister, I pledge to do all I can to support the continued momentum of the PDCs and enable greater synergies with PDCs, SDC and the Local Authorities which will result in ***the empowerment of citizens in communities, and the enabling their participation in an integrated, equitable, sustainable National Development Process***

**Mr. Speaker, I now turn to the work of the Social Development Commission:**

The SDC's core outputs are focused on a strong community governance mechanism, reliable disaggregated data to produce community profiles and community priority plans and programmes that identify needs, the required partnerships for success and the most suitable environment for quality service delivery. Also central to the focus of the organization is the reform of local governance and its entrenchment in the constitution.

The SDC has had notable achievements in transforming the Jamaican landscape through milestones reached in the respective core output areas. As a platform for the Local Government Reform process in Jamaica there are 4,637 active Community Based Organizations (CBOs); 415 active Community Development Committees (CDCs) representing 53% of 783 communities; 44 active Development Area Committees (DACs) accounting for 61% of 73 Development Areas; and 11 or 85% active Parish Development Committees (PDCs).

Communities are also benefiting from increased capacity for development planning through project development and

implementation. Data show that in 2011/2012 more than J\$275 million was accessed by communities for various small projects at the district and community levels as a result of SDC's intervention.

Over the next three years the SDC will build on these successes by maintaining a positive approach to development where citizens have a right to enjoy a good quality of life. In this regard, I am above all pleased to mention three of the initiatives that will be undertaken by the SDC.

The first initiative is aimed at strengthening the capacities of civil society organizations to participate in the development process at all levels. To this end a Capacity Development Grant facility will be established to provide financial and technical support to community organizations. This facility will come on stream in November 2012, in Local Government and Community Development Month.

In support of our people centered approach to the of development a Community small projects grant facility will also be established to

provide financial support for projects or programmes submitted through the community priority planning process. This facility will also come on stream in November 2012. It is anticipated that approximately 200 communities should benefit from funding support under the following areas within the first year of the programme to include:

1. Economic enablement
2. Improved educational outcomes – emphasis on communities with the schools with the lowest mastery levels of grade four literacy tests
3. Environmental awareness and protection
4. Healthy Lifestyle and good practices
5. Youth inclusion

**Mr. Speaker, the SDC must continue to mobilize communities and by extension, the Jamaican people around a better quality of life for all. Therefore, the SDC must relentlessly and uncompromisingly promote equality of opportunity and**

**universal quality education as a tool of liberation and empowerment.**

**Pillar 3:**

**Improving and maintaining acceptable Service Delivery standards**

This pillar is anchored in a mission with a vision that will promote technology driven solutions that will result in the delivery of better quality and more customer focused services.

**The Jamaica Fire Brigade**

We commit to re-focus on Modernizing and supporting a well-equipped and highly trained Fire Brigade that is dedicated to delivering quality service. Mr. Speaker, I want to express my deepest gratitude to the Commissioner and hard-working men and women of the Jamaica Fire Brigade who, despite the constraints perform above and beyond the call of duty.

## **Board of Supervision:**

Mr. Speaker, the Board of Supervision, is the agency in my Ministry that has the sole purpose of overseeing, monitoring and collaborating on matters relating to our less fortunate brothers and sisters. In this regard, this entity conducts its activities mainly in relation to five programmes:-

1. Homelessness (Street People) Programme
2. Institutional Care in our Infirmaries
3. Assistance to other indigent persons to include education and care of poor children and social housing

I'm also happy to advise this Honourable House that since January of this year, the board has completed two operational audits in Portland and St. Ann respectively; two officers within the Poor Relief System were sponsored by the Board to pursue a geriatric training course; a management training course commenced in March for Inspectors of Poor & Matrons of Infirmaries to enhance their skills. Mr. Speaker I take this opportunity to thank wholeheartedly,

the Poor Relief Officers, Matrons and workers in the Infirmaries for their sterling work under sometimes difficult conditions

### **Solid Waste Management**

We are on the Mission to keep our country, our cities towns and communities beautiful and in an acceptable state of cleanliness through the work of the National Solid Waste Management Authority (NSWMA).

As is widely known, we inherited an underfunded and heavily indebted NSWMA with broken-down compactors, broken-down heavy equipment, unacceptable management of our waste disposal sites and little-to-no enforcement of the NSWMA regulations.

Also, owing to the recent unfortunate occurrences at the Agency Mr. Speaker, it is clear that significant organizational restructuring is urgently needed to ensure higher standards of accountability, transparency and regain public trust.

Mr. Speaker, I pause here to inform you of the budget for public cleansing per month across the Island; this is allocated to the Parks and Markets companies through the NSWMA; Funding for public cleansing and garbage disposal are to be primarily met from the proceeds of property tax and Allocations from the Parochial Revenue Fund (PRF) to the National Solid Waste Management Authority (NSWMA) is currently one-hundred and fifty million dollars \$150.0M each month, as such:

- Metropolitan Parks & Markets = **J\$83,693,982**
- North Eastern Parks & Markets = **J\$20,103,089**
- Western Parks & Markets = **J\$19,721,046**
- Southern Parks & Markets = **J\$26,481,883**

In this regard Mr. Speaker, I really want to use this opportunity to appeal to all Jamaicans, to **STOP** littering and throwing waste from the windows of our cars and throwing garbage wantonly in our

gullies and water-ways; for far too long we have taken the environment for granted it is full time now that we stop this indiscipline!!!!

I appeal to all Jamaicans, let us covenant to discard our waste in a more conscientious and responsible manner, we have a duty to succeeding generations to be the proper stewards of our Nation through developing a new attitude cleanliness and by partnering with the NSWMA in changing this behaviour.

### **National Heroes Park**

Mr. Speaker, the National Heroes Park refurbishment is a priority of this Ministry. It is Kingston's largest open space which embodies our country's rich history, culture and identity as a people. The redevelopment of the National Heroes Park has for many years been retarded. However in this the 50<sup>th</sup> year of our independence we are

covenanting with various stakeholders private sector, TEF and others to transform this national treasure.

We commenced refurbishment of the Park on Labour Day and we are currently improving the irrigation system and general landscaping and looking to establish a monument for those who died in the fire at the Eventide Home.

#### **Pillar 4:**

#### **Building Resilient Communities**

#### **NATIONAL BUILDING BILL**

Mr. Speaker we are committed to provide a modern legal framework for the effective regulation and management of buildings and building related activity, to ensure safety in the built environment and the promotion of sustainable development.

With the change in Administration, I have reviewed the Bill and have settled some policy issues, a new Submission will be made shortly to

the Legislation Committee over my signature and I have requested that the matter to be placed on the Agenda of the Legislation Committee which will consider the Bill as tabled in Parliament.

The development of a modern legislative framework is particularly urgent and relevant in view of the critical need to reduce the vulnerability of the built environment to the ravages of natural and man-made disasters.

The Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management has embarked on a Landslides Mitigation Project which will reduce the risks and impact of disaster on our communities including buildings on gully banks. The aim is to build a disaster resilient nation through Comprehensive Disaster Management training, public education and awareness.

Disasters undoubtedly affect all aspects of Jamaican life, as each year many communities continue to be affected by natural hazards such as flooding, drought, earthquakes and landslides.

Within our most vulnerable communities, these events result predictably, in significant losses in production and economic viability, leading to diminished resources which rapidly promotes the cycle of poverty.

Mr. Speaker, I want to stress the point that it is essential that communities become enabled to assist themselves by engaging practices geared toward lessening potential losses and while building greater awareness of the consequences that natural hazards may have upon their respective communities.

We are on a mission to strengthen the capacity for an effective Parish Response.

In this regard, we are moving aggressively to ensure the promulgation of the **National Disaster Risk Management Bill** that

will provide a modern legal framework for the effective regulation and control of activities to ensure public safety and welfare, minimize damage due to natural or man-made hazards and promote sustainable development.

This, Mr. Speaker includes establishing **'No-Build Zones'** so as to finally ensure that building on the banks of gullies, waterways and rivers becomes a thing of the past.

## **Pillar 5**

### **Community Empowerment: Local Economic Development**

#### **Vibrant and diversified rural areas**

One of the proven successful interventions, which impact communities and their economic development, is the direct approach of intervening at the community level through Local Economic Development (LED).

The LED concept is extremely relevant and important in Jamaica today, as economic growth and job creation is recognized the country makes foremost imperative. LED will make a signal contribution to achieving this imperative through its unique ability to identify and mobilize local physical and human resources, assets and unique opportunities that exist within localities and communities and which can contribute to economic growth and job creation. LED will also ensure that Local Authorities and their partners work in close collaboration with national agencies and programmes to achieve that the optimum results from such programmes. LED is also critical to improving social and economic conditions in Jamaica as it will facilitate economic growth and job creation in every nook and crannies of the country, thus reversing the very skewed pattern that has characterized previous development paradigms, with development being confined to a few areas in major cities and towns or selected enclaves, while bypassing most rural areas and inner-city communities.

The Ministry of Local Government and Community Development will therefore move to aggressively implement its LED programme during this financial year. This entails the following:

- Identifying pilot parishes in which this programme will be first implemented,
- Appointing, training and deploying LED Facilitators in each pilot parish
- Assisting each pilot parish to formulate appropriate plans and strategies for the roll-out of LED in their respective parishes
- Forging close collaboration with my Ministry, the SDC, the Local Authorities and key Ministries and Agencies with which my Ministry and the local authorities will have to network in implementing LED.

Chief among these are the Ministries of Agriculture, Tourism and Investment, Industry and Commerce, as well as relevant

private sector bodies such as PSOJ and the Alliance of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.

The capacity of Local Authorities, along with their local partners such as PDCs, will be strengthened to enable them to better support MSMEs and community-based economic enterprises in their jurisdictions; create a more favourable climate to attract new investments and encourage the expansion and viability of existing business; as well as to collaborate with national agencies and programmes to see how best such programmes can be adopted, applied and supported in their respective parishes.

## **The Caribbean Local Economic Development Programme (CARILED)**

Jamaica's adoption of LED will benefit from significant support from the Caribbean Local Economic Development Programme (CARILED), which is a CAD\$ 23.2 million, six year project which support the adoption of Local Economic Development (LED) in the 14 member states of CARICOM. It is funded by a CAD\$18.9 million contribution of from the Government of Canada and in-kind contributions amounting to CAD\$ 4.3 million from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and other partners. The Project was conceptualized, developed and pursued through the stages of approval process by a partnership that included the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Caribbean Forum of Local Government Ministers (of which Jamaica is the Chair and Secretariat), the Caribbean Association of Local Government Authorities and the Commonwealth Local Government Forum. This partnership also shares in the responsibility for execution of the Project.

Mr Speaker, just last week, in Port of Spain, Trinidad, the Project Steering Committee (PSC) of CARILED, of which I am the Co-Chair along with CIDA, gave approval for the Project Implementation Plan (PIP) and Budget.

Therefore, CARILED will initially be operationalized in 7 countries in the region, of which Jamaica is one. The Project will enter its implementation phase as of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2012.

## **Pillar 6:**

### **Promoting Energy Efficient Solutions**

#### **Alternative Energy Solutions**

The local government fraternity like most organizations in Jamaica is challenged by the escalating cost of electricity which is threatening to affect the level of service they provide. In order to

maintain and improve these levels of service, Local Authorities have to explore new ways to significantly lower electricity costs.

Consequently, the Ministry which has oversight responsibilities for local authorities has embarked on the implementation of a number of energy saving solution measures which include:

- a pilot project with Green RG to do the following:
- Retrofit over Five Thousand (5,000) street lights with solar/Led lighting
- Retrofit four Local Authorities facilities including Parish Council buildings, infirmaries, markets and the Ministry's offices with Solar/LED lighting
- financial support for councils' programmes on energy efficiency measures; and
- participating in the Government's National Energy Efficiency programme.

## **Street Light Audit**

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development in conjunction with the Local Authorities will commence a joint street light audit with the Jamaica Public Service Company Ltd. has commenced. The objective of this audit is to ensure that Local Authorities objectively know what they are paying for and get value for money. Additionally, it is intended to achieve the following:

1. A realistic determination of Council's monthly obligation to JPSCo.
2. Finalize accommodation of additional street lights within their jurisdiction.
3. Conclusively determine the number, type and location of street lights

Mr. Speaker, for the last fiscal year we paid approximately \$2.3 Billion dollars for streetlights and given the changes to fuel rates, for this fiscal year, this will escalate beyond \$2.6 Billion if prudence is not exercised in the management of this service.

Here we have to promote a paradigm shift in thinking and expectations- as we all cannot get a streetlight at our gates.

Information garnered from the audit will place Local Authorities' in a better position to make critical cost-effective decisions when addressing street light issues. The repairs process would also be greatly improved as they would now have data to verify JPSCO's reports on street light repairs.

**Waste to Energy initiatives:**

Mr. Speaker, I must here also inform this Honourable House that The NSWMA has signed an MOU with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for funding the expansion of a composting facility to make it more efficient and to increase output.

The partnership will provide the NSWMA with machinery and equipment valued at US\$400,000 which includes employment opportunities for over two-hundred (200) persons.

Despite the foregoing, as it pertains to managing our solid waste, it cannot be business as usual. We therefore must embrace proven technology to develop waste to energy systems. This will reduce our high import bill, and reduce our large and unwieldy waste footprint while providing sustainable jobs for the Jamaican people.

In that regard, and because we are practicing joined-up government, Minister Paulwell and I have established an Inter-Ministerial Task Force on the management of waste disposal and waste to energy development.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to advise that within this fiscal year, we will be announcing a request for expressions of interest for investors in the development of waste management sorting-centres and the creation of waste to energy plants in at least three (3) urban areas.

## **Property Tax**

Property Taxes continue to be the primary source of financing for property related services particularly solid waste management and street lighting. However, while the costs for the provision of these services have been increasing tremendously over the past few years and despite the improvements in compliance and the revenues derived from Property taxes, there is still a serious deficit in the costs of these services and the revenues (from Property taxes) to cover these costs.

For the fiscal year 2012/2013 the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development intends to realize property tax revenues in the region of Two Billion Seven Hundred Million Dollars (J\$2.7B). This, Mr. Speaker will be utilized to cover property related expenses with emphasis on:

- **Solid Waste Management and**

- **Street Lighting**

During this financial year the Ministry will be partnering with the National Land Agency and Ministry of Finance to complete the long overdue property revaluation exercise. The results of this project will be implemented in the fiscal year 2013/2014.

Additionally, the Ministry will collaboratively work to improve the compliance rate from the current 51% to a more acceptable level of 65% in the first instance. The strategies to be employed to achieve this compliance target are:

1. A Strong public relations programme
2. Community interface via citizen association meetings, seminars etc.
3. Strengthening of the legislative framework
4. Court actions
5. Local Authorities house to house calls

Mr. Speaker, it cannot be disputed that Property taxes are the largest source of revenue for local authorities and the main areas on which this revenue is utilized are core functions of the Local Authorities. Therefore, we ask that you covenant with us and pay your property taxes as the amount collected will affect the local authorities' ability to manage solid waste at an acceptable standard and place street lights in areas where citizens are at risk.

## **Pillar 7:**

### **Increasing Transparency and Accountability**

Mr. Speaker, there have been some gains made as evident in the reduced audit queries and findings from audit reports, resulting in fewer appearances at Public Accounts Committees (PAC) and more compliance with procurement and other financial and accounting procedures more Councils receiving favourable grades based on results of assessment done by the Office of the Contractor General.

Mr. Speaker, while these gains have been made, we need to increase transparency in the operations of the Local Authorities and Agencies of this Ministry, this Administration's deems this of paramount importance.

We will be working closely with the Local Authorities and Agencies to post contract awards on their websites so that not only the Ministry can monitor the implementation but you the citizens in the

various communities to ensure that we receive undisputable value for money.

We are on a mission to root-out any form of corruption and the very perception thereof in portfolio Agencies and Local Authorities.

Mr. Speaker, it is also our intention to enhance the capacity of Local Public Accounts Committees, whose role will also be included in the Local Governance Financing Act.

As a continuous strategic action of the Ministry, we are assessing and managing risks. We will be using the recently completed Price Water House Coopers Study to assess and strengthen the procedures and personnel in our Local Authorities and Strengthen the role of the Local Public Accounts Committees.

## **Pillar 8:**

### **Greater levels of partnership and collaboration**

We aspire to greater levels of partnership between our Ministries Departments, Agencies Central and Local Government, Voluntary Sector and other partners as well as our International Partners and the Private Sector.

Mr. Speaker, I specially make note of **United Nations Development Programme** in Jamaica (UNDP) which has continued its partnership with the Ministry through the “**Enhancing Civil Society Participation in Local Governance**” Project which seeks to address the subject of community safety and security as an emerging issue in local governance. It promotes a distinct partnership between the Local Authorities, Civil Society particularly the PDCs, the Jamaica Constabulary Force , the Jamaica Fire Brigade, the Social Development Commission and other key stakeholders.

The project began in April, 2011 and has since been working with six pilot parishes which are:

St Catherine

Clarendon

Manchester

Westmoreland

Trelawny and St. Mary

Mr. Speaker, the main aim and outcome of the project is to support the creation safe and secure communities based on the establishment of Parish Safety and Security Committees in the aforementioned local Authorities with a view to expanding the best practices to all other Parishes in due course. We have to recognize that we are all impacted by crime and violence and the active participation and intervention of Local Government is an absolute necessity in creating safer communities across the Island.

The **Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation** (CFTC) has provided grant funding through the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) to assist with the strategic orientation of the Local Authorities under the theme “Consolidating the New Local Governance Paradigm: Challenges, Opportunities, and imperatives for the next three years” this Mr. Speaker, provides us with a great opportunity to engage our new Councillors and new Council Administrations in the renewed thrust in the revitalization process.

The programme is being implemented on a regional basis over a two-day period for each region. The subjects cover a range of issues including Local Economic Development, Community Safety and Security, The Local Authority as the Government of the Parish and Communications Marketing in the new Local Governance Paradigm.

As a matter of fact, as we speak Mr. Speaker, there is a session under-way in Montego Bay for the Parishes of Westmoreland, Hanover, St. James and Trelawny. The CFTC has also committed to fund a medium term programme that will support a more direct,

deliberate and concentrated effort on capacity building, operational efficiency and broader accountability and transparency in Governance at the local level.

Mr. Speaker, I express my profound gratitude to the CFTC for this contribution to our development process.

### **Pillar 9:**

#### **Image Building and Re-branding**

We are covenanting to build an image of Local Government that runs contrary to any view that the system is inefficient and not accountable in delivering high quality services.

We are on a mission to transform the image and to institutionalize a culture of not only ensuring access to information by the public, but a culture of openness and accountability.

We also aim to foster and embrace world-class customer service and professionalism in our local authorities and agencies

## **Conclusion**

Mr. Speaker, as I close, I am proud of where Local Governance is headed, the team I have the fortune to lead is highly competent and capable of implementing these higher standards of excellence in this new paradigm.

These are exciting times Mr. Speaker as we view local governance as a major plank of national development, the expansion of new concepts, programmes and projects will see the greater demand of local services and the greater inclusion of our citizens in crucial decision-making process.

Mr. Speaker, we promise to be rigorous and focused in our approach to fulfilling our Covenant, we will be embarking on these Pillars for Transformation which will be goal posts that we shall use to anchor the revitalized local governance system.

Mr Speaker, I stand here in this Honourable House convicted in my position that Local Governance is one of the main catalysts to take

Jamaica forward and develop our nation around the progressive partnerships for development as we articulate and advocate for meaningful and evidence-based sustainability in the revitalization of the governance arrangements at the local Level.

The Local Authority has to be regarded and respected by all of us as the **Government of the Parish and I intend to make this happen; my team at the Ministry, the Councillors and the Administration in each Parish are committed to this goal.**

Therefore Mr. Speaker, I encourage all of us to become part of the process as citizens, as clients and customers, as change-agents, as local representatives and advocates for good governance and sustainable growth and nation-building.

It is time for transformation and change and realization of the dream of our founding fathers to include the people in our democracy. **Now is the time to place Local Government in the heart of development!**