

# PM Holness Addresses Summit of the Americas

## Gov't to Boost Public-Private Partnerships

**P**RIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness says the Government is continuing to focus on building greater public-private partnerships (PPP) as it works to achieve economic growth.

"PPPs have emerged as an important commercial modality to secure economic growth. The mutual benefit that public-private partnerships offer is of great value," he said.

The Prime Minister was speaking at the Third Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Summit of the Americas in Lima, Peru on April 13.

He noted that a robust PPP allows for unlocking the value of assets; reducing debt; and the mobilisation of direct investments in the economy.

This partnership, he said, is crucial as the Government works to quicken the pace at which it delivers jobs, improves infrastructure, and increases training opportunities that match labour market demands.



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (centre) and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Senator the Hon. Kamina Johnson Smith (left) are briefed by Peruvian official, Minister of Economy and Finance, David Tuesta Cardenas, upon their arrival in Peru on April 12 for the Summit of the Americas.

In recognition of the significant role PPPs play, Mr. Holness said the Government is cognisant that it "must act as the enablers of growth by making it easier to do business, supporting private sector, lead entrepreneurship and partnering with the private sector for greater utilisation

of public assets and provision of public goods and services."

The summit is the first stop on a week-long working visit. Prime Minister Holness is scheduled to attend a special session of the African Caribbean and Pacific Committee of Ambassadors.

He will also be in attendance at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Summit in England, from April 16 to 20.

During the visit he will also meet with current and prospective investors, as well as the Jamaican Diaspora in Belgium, France and the United Kingdom.

## Jamaica's Tourism Booming

MINISTER OF Tourism, Hon. Edmond Bartlett, says Jamaica continues to see major growth in tourist arrivals, with stopover and cruise-passenger arrivals standing at approximately 1.3 million for the first quarter of 2018.

The January to March arrivals represent over 80,000 more visitors to the island than the corresponding period of 2017, an increase of 6.6 per cent.

This is a continuation of the record-breaking performance of the sector last year, where total arrivals eclipsed the four million mark, reaching 4.3 million and foreign exchange earnings of approximately US\$3 billion.

Minister Bartlett said that provisional data for the first week of April show a 14.1 per cent increase in

stopover visitors over the same period last year.

"No doubt, a large percentage of the 51,384 visitors that graced our shores that week came for the island's carnival celebrations," he said.

He was speaking at the launch of the Airbnb Kingston Host Club at Devon House in St. Andrew on April 10.

Airbnb is a respected community marketplace for people to list, discover, and book exceptional accommodations across the globe.

Clubs will help to further strengthen the programme's presence in Jamaica by empowering hosts with the tools and resources needed to effectively organise themselves. They also present opportunities for hosts to share their experiences, best practices and contributions to the wider community.



Minister of Tourism, Hon. Edmond Bartlett (left), in discussion with Head of Public Policy for Airbnb's Central America and the Caribbean operation, Carlos Muñoz, at the launch of Airbnb's Kingston Host Club at Devon House, St. Andrew on April 10.

## 60-Day Extension of Mount Salem and Denham Town ZOSOs

THE ZONES of Special Operations (ZOSOs) in Mount Salem, St James and Denham Town in West Kingston will be extended by a further 60 days.

The House of Representatives, on April 11, approved two Resolutions for the extensions, which were moved by Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness.

Mr. Holness said the extended periods are necessary to enable transformation

of the communities through intensified delivery of social services as well as giving the State the ability to continue to take back full control of the areas.

This will be the fourth extension for the Mount Salem Zone, the first to become operational on September 1, 2017, while it will be the third for Denham Town.

Prime Minister Holness told the House that the

Denham Town ZOSO has transitioned into the third and perhaps the most challenging segment, which is the build phase.

As such, he said, "we need to assure the residents that during this period and moving forward, the... joint forces will continue to provide an effective presence to prevent the return of criminals and their influence."

With respect to Mount Salem, the area has already

undergone three extensions to facilitate development through the 'Clear, Hold and Build' strategy and is currently undergoing increased social intervention activities under the build phase.

Some of the social intervention strategies being implemented include: infrastructure improvement projects, skills training and entrepreneurship grants.

## Tree Planting Exercise at Chedwin Gardens



Minister of Science, Energy and Technology, Dr. the Hon. Andrew Wheatley (left), plants a tree with student, Teygan-Taj Williams (centre); and Manager, St. Catherine 4-H Clubs, Elaine Campbell, at the launch of an Environmental Programme at Chedwin Gardens Basic School in St. Catherine on April 11. Standing (at left) is Principal of Chedwin Gardens Basic School, Novlette Williams.

## Gov't to Speed up Processing of SEZ Applications

THE GOVERNMENT is targeting a reduction in the timeline for processing Special Economic Zone (SEZ) applications to 60 days by 2019, with further reductions in subsequent years.

Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Hon. Daryl Vaz, made the disclosure at a Blockchain Design Workshop organised by the Jamaica Special Economic Zone Authority (JSEZA), at the Jamaica Civil Aviation Authority (JCAA) offices in Kingston on April 11.

He said the JSEZA, the agency mandated to manage and regulate SEZs, is undertaking work to achieve the target.

The current timeline for the processing of applications without pre-approvals is 120 days.

Minister Vaz said that aggressive goals have also been set for other types of applications, such as those with pre-approvals.

He noted that the improvement in the turnaround time is expected to result in easier and faster

company registration and growth in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

Other benefits include attracting more companies to the SEZs, with the attendant implications for job creation; growth in exports as a result of production output; improved country recognition; and improvement in Jamaica's international ranking for doing business, as well as growth in gross domestic product.

One of the methods the JSEZA is seeking to employ is the blockchain model, which is regarded as a leading business innovation platform.

The Minister pointed out that enterprise blockchain technologies are perfectly positioned to address many of the challenges currently faced by the JSEZA in its endeavour to reduce the SEZ application cycle time.



Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Hon. Daryl Vaz (right), speaks with General Manager, Caribbean Region, International Business Machines Corporation (IBM), Jason Nestor. Occasion was a Blockchain Design Workshop held at the Jamaica Civil Aviation Authority in Kingston on April 11.

## \$150 Million Allocated to Repair Markets

MINISTER OF Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie, says the Government will be pumping \$150 million into improving the aesthetic appeal of markets across the island.

He said the investment "represents one of the highest expenditures... over the past five years on markets across the country" and charged vendors to take care of the improved facilities that will be provided.

"We have listened to them about the problems they were having with leaking roofs and unsanitary conditions. Now, there can be no more excuses when... we spend the money to upgrade and make the markets acceptable," he noted.

The Minister was speaking at the official opening of a transportation centre and breaking of ground for a new market in Clark's Town, Trelawny, recently.



Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie (centre); Mayor of Falmouth, His Worship Councillor Colin Gager (left); and Member of Parliament for Northern Trelawny, Victor Wright (right), participate in the breaking of ground for construction of a new market in Clark's Town, Trelawny, recently.

In addition to the repairs to be carried out, a number of new markets will be built.

Minister McKenzie informed that a \$54 million contract has been signed to construct a new market in Port Maria, St. Mary, while work on the Black River market in St. Elizabeth will be

completed at a cost of \$15 million.

Also, approximately \$10 million has been allocated to assist with the completion of the new Falmouth market.

The facility, which is slated to open later this month, will replace the old 'Bend Down' market.

## Santa Cruz Health Centre of Excellence Gets \$2 Million Worth of Equipment

THE GOVERNMENT has provided \$2 million worth of medical equipment to the Santa Cruz Health Centre of Excellence in St. Elizabeth, which will enhance health-care services to citizens served by the facility.

The items include a standby generator, phlebotomy chair, diagnostic set for eyes and nose, electrocardiograph (ECG) machine, and a refrigerator for storing specimen and vaccines. The centre will also receive a cardiac monitor.

The provision, under the Public Sector Transformation and Modernisation Division

(PSTMD) of the Office of the Cabinet, is part of efforts by the Government to revolutionise service delivery across the public sector.

It follows a customer-service assessment of the health sector, which was completed between 2014 and 2015.

All Type 3 facilities that fall under the St. Elizabeth Health Department are slated to receive proper directional signage. As a best practice, customer-service desks will be posted in all facilities and customer representatives will be made easily identifiable with marked vests.

Speaking at the hand-over ceremony at the health

centre on April 10, Principal Director of the Modernisation Implementation Unit in the PSTMD, Wayne Robertson, said the Unit will continue to strengthen public institutions to make them more efficient and effective in delivering services to the public.

He underscored the importance of the health sector in helping to achieve Jamaica's growth agenda, and encouraged the Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA) to do its part in maintaining the equipment while the PSTMD continues to transform the sector.