

Ja Negotiating Joint Commission Agreement With T&T

JAMAICA IS negotiating a Joint Commission Agreement with Trinidad and Tobago with the objective of developing a mutually beneficial cooperation programme.

This was disclosed by Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness as he addressed the 37th regular meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), held in Georgetown, Guyana, from July 4-6.

“We intend to undertake similar initiatives with other Member States,” Mr. Holness said.

He noted that strengthening bilateral relations is an important element of the regional relationship and, as such, should receive more attention from CARICOM members.



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (back row – 4th from right) shares a moment with other CARICOM leaders at the 37th CARICOM Heads of Government meeting held in Georgetown, Guyana, from July 4-6.

“We believe that bilateral consultations, supported by additional effort in the institutions of our Community, can make the movement of labour, equal with the movement of goods, extending the progress and benefit of the integration effort,” Mr. Holness said.

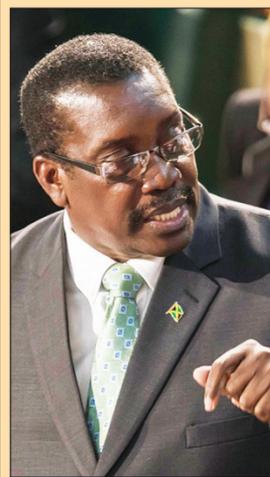
The Prime Minister noted that Jamaicans have been expressing concerns about increased denial of entry to other jurisdictions and also questioned treatment meted out to them at ports of entry.

“These must be urgently addressed in a meaningful

way, otherwise the economic sense of CARICOM becomes increasingly questioned. We have begun to discuss the matter bilaterally and we are encouraged by the level of understanding and responsiveness to our concerns,” he pointed out.

Big Investment in National Security

OVER THE next three years, the Government will make the largest investment in the National Security apparatus, as it seeks to reduce crime.



Minister of National Security, Hon. Robert Montague, highlights a point while making his contribution to the 2016/ 17 Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives on July 6.

“Never before will so much be invested in ensuring our peace and safety. We are not talking millions, but billions,” said the Minister of National Security, Hon. Robert Montague.

Speaking in the 2016/ 17 Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives on July 6, the Minister said the investment is neces-

sary as “we want a safer Jamaica, safer communities and safer homes”.

“We know our needs and while our international partners can, have and will assist, as an independent sovereign nation we must lead the way. We must put our money where our mouth is. Crime is our problem. We must begin to take the hard tough choices to deal with it,” he emphasised.

Meanwhile, the Ministry is putting in place a broad-based committee to be chaired by Lecturer at the University of the West Indies, Dr. Orville Taylor. It will involve civil society, the media, trade unions, academia and other sector interests.

Mr. Montague said the committee will provide guidance on policy, set standards and evaluation benchmarks and give general guidance on National Security.

“One of their tasks will be to set a timetable on all the recommendations that have been made over the last 20 years, for implementation. The Evaluation Centre in the Ministry is already compiling all the studies,” he informed.

Project HOPE to Assist Poor and Vulnerable

STATE MINISTER for Economic Growth and Job Creation, Hon. Everald Warmington, has announced the introduction of the Housing, Opportunity, Prosperity, Employment (HOPE) Programme, which will provide a one-stop shop for Government’s social intervention programmes.

Mr. Warmington, who was making his contribution to the 2016/17 Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives on July 6, said HOPE will incorporate several programmes/initiatives that are being undertaken by various Ministries/Agencies.

These include: Production Incentive Programme; Short-term Poverty Alleviation Programme; small business loans; public assistance grants; Urban Renewal Housing Programme; infrastructure development programmes; and the Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF).



State Minister for Economic Growth and Job Creation, Hon. Everald Warmington

The programme, Mr. Warmington noted, will offer Members of Parliament (MPs) an efficient system in streamlining programmes for constituency development.

“The HOPE Programme will offer a range of services to its targeted beneficiaries as well as opportunities for the submission of project proposals from MPs, community-based organisations

and participating agencies,” the State Minister said.

It will provide social assistance and social services to the poor and vulnerable; grants for micro income-generating activities; and specific and diversified loan products.

The HOPE Programme replaces the Jamaica Emergency Employment Programme (JEEP), which was conceptualised to provide short-term employment, particularly for persons at the lower socio-economic level.

“JEEP (will) be subsumed under this new thrust. Six phases of this programme have already been completed. We are now going to be moving into a seventh phase,” Mr. Warmington explained.

The State Minister said that the Government will be spending \$708.7 million on this phase, noting that each MP will be allocated \$10

million for projects in their constituency.

“A further \$157 million will also be spent on special projects to include things such as manhole replacement and sidewalk rehabilitation that are submitted by community based groups,” he said.

PM Meets With Jamaicans Living in Guyana



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (centre) interacting with Jamaicans living in Guyana on July 7, during his visit to the country for the CARICOM Heads of Government Conference which was held from July 4-6.

\$30M Loan Facility for Small and Medium Sized Manufacturers

SMALL AND medium-sized manufacturers are to benefit from a \$30-million loan facility established by the EXIM Bank of Jamaica in collaboration with the Jamaica Manufacturers’ Association (JMA).

The facility enables JMA members to borrow a maximum of \$1.5 million to purchase equipment and raw materials, among other operational inputs.

Entities must be in good standing with the JMA, be tax compliant, and in operation for a minimum of two years to be able to access the funds, which have a maximum three-year repayment timeline.

They will also benefit from technical support that will be provided by EXIM’s Business Advisory Services Unit.

The JMA-EXIM Loan Facility was launched during

a brief ceremony at the Bank’s Hope Road head office in Kingston on July 5.

EXIM Bank’s Managing Director, Lisa Bell, said the new loan product aims to level the playing field between large and small manufacturers by making working

capital more accessible, serviceable and affordable to more small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

She committed to lobbying for an increase in the loan fund “if we see that our small manufacturers are truly benefiting”.



EXIM Bank Jamaica’s Managing Director, Lisa Bell (2nd left), responds to a question during the launch of the Jamaica Manufacturers’ Association (JMA)-EXIM Loan Facility on July 5. The launch took place at EXIM’s head office on Hope Road in Kingston. Listening (from left) are EXIM’s Chief Loan Administration Officer, Charles Lewis; JMA President, Metry Seaga, and Executive Director, JMA, Imega Breese McNab.

Five Agro-Economic Zones to be Established

THE GOVERNMENT is looking to establish up to five agro-economic zones, which will provide farmers with a reliable market for their produce, and contribute to the reduction of praedial larceny.

Work is underway in Spring Plain, Clarendon, for the renovation of a warehouse to house the first zone, through a public-private partnership.

Minister without portfolio in the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. J. C. Hutchinson, said the zones will be equipped with cold storage facilities, abattoirs, and wholesale outlets. They will also offer grading, packaging, processing and drying services.



Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. J. C. Hutchinson

He said that the facilities would be publicly or privately owned and operated. Mr. Hutchinson, who was making his contribution to the Sectoral Debate in the House of Represent-

tatives on July 5, explained that all the produce from farmers will be taken to the zones by refrigerated trucks, registered for the purpose.

“With this structure, the farmers will have a steady market for their produce, which would encourage (them) to expand their production, and entice new entrants to the agricultural sector,” he said.

To participate in the zones, farmers have to be in organisations, and these bodies will assist in marketing the produce and also provide an avenue for seeking funds from international agencies for the development of their communities.





PREVENT MOSQUITO BREEDING

It's Everybody's Responsibility







DISPOSE OF GARBAGE PROPERLY



COVER ALL CONTAINERS



PUNCH HOLES IN TINS

ADVT.