

Special Economic Zone Regulations for Parliament Soon

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness says regulations will be brought to Parliament in two weeks to bring to life the Special Economic Zones.

Mr. Holness, who was addressing the opening of the inaugural Jamaica International Exhibition (JIE) Trade Show at the Montego Bay Convention Centre on June 1, said while the regu-

lations have been long in coming, the Government must “strike the right balance.”

“The legislation and the regulations will be business friendly. However, we will also have to meet all the good governance requirements to ensure that our business is in line with our obligations for anti-corruption, for ensuring that

our financial sector is solid, and for ensuring that we cannot be penetrated for terrorism or used for other nefarious activities,” the Prime Minister emphasised.

Mr. Holness said the zones will represent a significant enhancement to the country’s industrial infrastructure, noting that as part of the integrated development strategy, areas around the zones will be developed for commercial, residential and recreational activities.

Special Economic Zones represent a wide variety of geographically-demarcated areas that offer simple and efficient business regulations and procedures to investors.

The Special Economic Zone Act has effectively



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (right) greets Past President of the Jamaica Manufacturers' Association (JMA), Brian Pengelley, before the start of the inaugural Jamaica International Exhibition Trade Show at the Montego Bay Convention Centre on June 1. Others (from 2nd left) are: President, JMA, Metry Seaga and Chief of State Protocol in the Office of the Prime Minister, Ambassador Elinor Felix.

repealed the Jamaica Export Free Zones Act, making way for the designation, operation and management of Special Economic Zones.

1,185,700 Persons Employed as at January

THE STATISTICAL Institute of Jamaica (STATIN) is reporting that 1,185,700 persons were employed as at January 2017, an increase of 21,900, relative to January 2016.

The figure, contained in the Labour Market Survey for the month, represented a further decrease in the unemployment rate, which stood at 12.7 per cent.

This was 0.6 per cent lower than January 2016 and a 0.2 per cent decline over October 2016.

Director General of the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), Dr. Wayne Henry, said an examination of the employed labour force by sector showed that 10 of the industry groups recorded higher employment levels.

These include construction, up 14,200 persons; real estate, renting and business activities, inclusive of business process outsourcing, up 13,400 persons; and agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing, up 6,700 persons.



Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) Director General, Dr. Wayne Henry

He was speaking during the quarterly media briefing at the PIOJ’s New Kingston head office on May 29.

The Director General said the overall labour force increased by 16,300 persons to 1,358,300 as at January 2017, and this was attributable to several factors.

These, he pointed out, include an increase in the working-age population, 14 years and older, by 4,400 persons; and a contraction in the number of individuals outside the labour force by 11,900.

Gov’t Provides \$17.5M to Assist Farmers Affected by the Beet Army Worm

FARMERS IN South Manchester and South St. Elizabeth who have been affected by the beet army worm have benefited from

\$17.5 million in support from the Government.

The farmers have lost some 150 acres of scallion, tomato, cucumber, callaloo,

onion, and beetroot to the pest.

“We are assisting them with everything to get them back on their feet,” said Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. J.C. Hutchinson.

“This includes plant material; spray equipment; soil preparation, which includes plowing up of the land to remove the cocoons; seeds; fertilisers; and mist blowers, weed whackers, and other equipment to maintain the crop,” he informed.

He was speaking at the handover of the items at the New Forest/Duff House Water Users Association office in Manchester on May 31.



Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. J.C. Hutchinson (left), and President of the New Forest/Duff House Water Users Association, Conrad Murray, examine spray equipment during the handover of plant material and equipment to farmers on May 31.

The Minister noted that the Association will have responsibility for the equipment, and the president of the entity will monitor their use.

Mr. Hutchinson said the Ministry will also be facilitating training and public education in the areas of land preparation and mulching, to mitigate any further outbreak of the beet army worm.

He commended the Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA) and the Ministry’s Research and Development Unit for the work done in bringing the situation under control, and urged the farmers to do their part by adhering to the practices imparted.

Gov’t Taking Further Steps to Curtail Gender-Based Violence

THE MINISTRY of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport is taking further steps to curtail the troubling prevalence of gender-based violence, inequality and discrimination.

Portfolio Minister, Hon. Olivia Grange, says the interventions include the development of a budget for the new National

Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender-based Violence, and the appointment of a Council to oversee its implementation along with the National Policy for Gender Equality, 2011.

She was making her 2017/18 Sectoral Debate presentation in the House of Representatives on May 30.

Ms. Grange said the Action Plan provides a platform for an integrated, multisectoral approach to address the critical issues and challenges impacting victims, perpetrators, and witnesses of acts of violence.

“Under the Plan, we are proposing the establishment of a minimum of three Regional Emergency

Centres within the next two to three years for women fleeing violence and unsafe living conditions,” the Minister said.

She announced that the budget and implementation plan have been prepared and submitted to Cabinet and are being deliberated on by the Human Resource Committee.



Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, Hon. Olivia Grange, holds a copy of the Jamaica 55 official guide, during her contribution to the 2017/18 Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives on May 30.

Justice Ministry Receives Anti-Trafficking in Persons Bus



Head of the Counter-Terrorism and Organised Crime Investigation Branch, Assistant Commissioner of Police, Clifford Chambers (left); Minister of Justice, Hon. Delroy Chuck (2nd left); Minister of National Security, Hon. Robert Montague (2nd right); and Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Justice, Carol Palmer, receive the Anti-Trafficking in Persons bus at the Ministry’s Constant Spring Road Offices on June 1.

ADVT.

Devon House Launched as Jamaica’s First Gastronomy Centre

TOURISM MINISTER, Hon. Edmund Bartlett, says the Devon House gastronomy experience will be expanded to include a self-service kitchen, farmers’ market and food shops.

He made the announcement while launching the heritage site, located on Hope Road, St. Andrew, as the island’s first gastronomy centre on May 29.

Devon House Gastronomy Centre includes the world-famous Devon House I-Scream Store; the Grog Shoppe, which offers an extensive list of Jamaican and international cuisine; bars, cafés, a bakery, pizzeria, and steakhouse, among others.

He informed that at the stand-alone, self-service kitchen, visitors will have the opportunity to cook



Minister of Tourism, Hon. Edmund Bartlett (right), looks through the Devon House Gastronomy Passport, which provides information on the restaurants, bars and cafés at the site. Occasion was the launch of Devon House as the island’s first gastronomy centre on May 29. Others (from left) are Director of Tourism, Paul Pennicook and Chairperson of the Gastronomy Tourism Network, Nicola Madden-Greig.

their own meals after purchasing produce, meats and condiments from the farmers’ market to be located in proximity to the kitchen.

At the food shops, visitors will pay for, then sample, a selection of the island’s cuisine, while enjoying local wines and rums.

Mr. Bartlett noted that the overall aim is to establish Jamaica as a prime gastronomy destination.

“This is so that the world can come here to sample all types of foods. One of the things we know is that people travel to eat. In fact, the international gastronomy market is approximately US\$150 billion. Eighty-eight per cent of the people who travel the world, travel primarily for food experiences,” he noted.

Minister Bartlett said gastronomy tourism provides an opportunity for Jamaica to add value to the tourism sector by diversifying the product.

He said the move will also create new economic activities for locals, reduce unemployment, generate more income, and enable the country to retain more of the tourism dollar.