

SECTORAL PRESENTATION 2014-2015

PRESENTED BY HON. DR. WYKEHAM MCNEILL, MP

MINISTER OF TOURISM AND ENTERTAINMENT

MAY 27, 2014

Theme: Tourism: Delivering on its Promise of Opportunities and Growth

Salutations

Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege to be elected as a representative of the people. I therefore begin by thanking God for blessing me with the health and strength to fulfil the role.

It is an additional privilege to serve in the capacity of Minister of Tourism and Entertainment, I thank the Most Honourable Prime Minister for placing her confidence in me as Minister.

I also thank you, Mr Speaker, the Clerk and the committed staff of this Honourable House for the valuable role you play in so ably steering our nation's parliamentary affairs.

I also wish to thank my immediate family: my dear wife Sheila, our two children, my mother and my sisters for being the wind beneath my wings over the years. Thanks also to my personal staff, Janice Allen, Pollyanna Brown, my driver and my security detail.

Thanks also to my colleague ministers, their staff and agencies, especially those whose work directly impacts the tourism sector.

Permit me also to say thanks to my colleague MPs. We all work together in the best interest of Jamaica, even if we view things from different perspectives. And I pay respect to the member opposite with responsibility for tourism, Mrs. Shahine Robinson, and thank her for her conscientious engagement with the task assigned her.

The sector has been experiencing success, this is due in no small part to the diligent work of our tourism industry partners and the industrious efforts of the team I have the pleasure of leading.

I want to extend my thanks and sincere appreciation to my Minister of State, Damion Crawford.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my Permanent Secretary, Mrs. Jennifer Griffith; the chairpersons of the respective agencies within the ministry, their board members and their executive directors.

You may be aware that the Director of Tourism, Mr. John Lynch will demit office at the end of May, after five and a half years in that capacity. On behalf of the Ministry, its agencies and the industry as a whole I take this opportunity to extend our appreciation for his exceptional service throughout the years at the helm of the Jamaica Tourist Board. He has served the organization well and has made a sterling contribution to the development of the tourism sector and brand Jamaica overall. We wish him success in all his future endeavours.

Mr. Speaker, I want to specially thank the President of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association, Mrs. Evelyn Smith and her executive for the cooperation and support that they have provided over the last year.

Finally, and certainly of equal importance, a special thank-you to my constituents in Western Westmoreland, Mayor Bertel Moore, the Councillors and my management team. I am most grateful for their loyal support over the years.

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SECTOR HIGHLIGHTS

Mr. Speaker, Jamaica has been blessed with spectacular beauty, hospitable people, and a vibrant culture. These together have combined to help us create a successful tourism industry. Today the industry plays a crucial role in our economic and social development providing employment to some 33,000 persons in the accommodation sector and thousands more indirectly.

Jamaica has long been recognised as a leader regionally and worldwide. Once again, our international stature has been acknowledged with our election to chair the prestigious Executive Council of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). I will assume this office effective September of this year. The Executive Council is comprised of ministers of tourism from 32 member states from all the continents of the world. This is a significant development for Jamaica and represents a first for the Caribbean, another example of Jamaica punching above our weight in a highly competitive arena. We will therefore be influencing the strategic activities of the UNWTO and helping to shape policies that will impact the world's tourism industry.

Tourism has consistently been the largest earner of foreign exchange in our economy. Its contribution to the combined value of all the goods and services produced in our country each year is significant. The tourism economic impact study for the Ministry completed last year concluded that, taken together, the direct, indirect and induced contributions of tourism to Jamaica's GDP in 2010, was 11.7%.

All of this paints a picture of a robust tourism industry in Jamaica, one that delivers significant economic value for us.

Mr. Speaker, last year was a landmark one for us, as we welcomed a record 2 million stopover visitors.

As a performer in this highly competitive industry, we have continued to attract both substantial local and foreign investment. This comes from both the public and private sectors.

Mr. Speaker, we have become aggressive in developing new markets, from which we have attracted greater airlift to Jamaica. We have also re-invigorated our marketing efforts in our traditional markets, and prospects for the year ahead are good.

Performance

Mr. Speaker, we have just ended our winter tourist season in a growth position. Preliminary figures show an increase of about 2% in stopover arrivals over the same period in 2013.

In addition and more importantly Mr. Speaker, we are seeing a number of positive industry trends.

Firstly, over the last year our occupancy rates increased significantly, by 9.1% in all categories of properties.

This is influenced by a number of factors, including:

1. We are getting longer stays from the stopover visitors, in particular the European market
2. More Jamaicans vacationing at home as the industry is more aggressively courting the domestic market

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, there is another very encouraging development, in that concurrent with these increased occupancies, room rates are up. As a matter of fact our largest tour operator to Jamaica has confirmed that our average daily rate is up by some 13- 15%.

Last year, we had a really good summer with growth of 3.6% helped significantly by increased visitor arrivals out of Europe. Mr. Speaker, we are poised for continued growth.

Jamaica is being transformed into a year-round tourism destination taking the place of what was traditionally a very seasonal industry. This transformation will create increased job opportunities and greater job security for our workers.

What I want to emphasise is that while the winter remains the period of highest occupancies and the best rates, it is the growth of summer arrivals that is ensuring we have a stronger year-round performance.

The figures illustrate what I mean. For winter 2013 visitor arrivals averaged 178,000 per month while for the summer the average was 162,000 per month. A far cry from the extreme of peaks and valleys of the past.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue our push to build a year-round sector through strategic marketing efforts and diversification.

Source Markets and Airlift

The US, Canada and UK/Europe continue to be our major source markets. Over 80% of our stopover arrivals come from continental North America.

We get 12% of our stopover arrivals from UK/Europe. This is why we continue to aggressively diversify into new markets.

Mr. Speaker, this year we have been very successful in increasing airlift to Jamaica and have enough air seats to ensure a great summer.

During this period we have approximately 2 million seats out of our main markets, 1.4 million out of the US - an increase of 11%, 260,000 out of Canada- a 21.6% increase and 165,000 out of UK/Europe - up about 10%.

US

Mr. Speaker the US is still our main market and over the past few years although we have had growth we believe that we can do better and will be paying particular attention to this market.

The good news is that Southwest Airlines, the largest domestic US carrier, with connections to most cities in America, will be operating flights into Sangster International Airport on July 1 replacing its subsidiary, Air Tran. This will bring exciting new opportunities for penetrating the US market even further.

Canada

In terms of Canada, this is our second largest source market and we are again poised for growth out of this market.

Last year in the winter season the failure of Thomas Cook, a major tour operator, precipitated a decline in Canadian arrivals to the entire region.

We in Jamaica lost over 40,000 seats and our winter arrivals out of Canada were down 12.3%. However in the summer of last year we were able to recoup and received additional airlift from our partners at Air Canada (Rouge) Sun Wing and West Jet and had an excellent summer which wiped out the decline. We were therefore able to end the year a mere 1% down over 2012. For the early part of this year we are up nearly 5% and are once again showing growth out of the Canadian market.

UK

We began to experience a resurgence out of the UK in 2013, after four years of decline. Increased demand for travel to Jamaica has driven a 70% increase in airlift from the UK over the last two years.

Mr. Speaker, we are pleased that a more equitable method of calculating the UK's Air Passenger Duty (APD) had been instituted and this (APD) we are confident will give further momentum in that market.

Last year we had growth of 4.7% and the early figures for this year, up to February, show 9.2% growth which confirms the rebound in this critical market.

Europe

Mr. Speaker, Europe has been performing well, having faced the worst economic challenges in recent years.

Munich became the newest German gateway to Jamaica, beginning in November 2013 and will be an important gateway for potential visitors from the south of Germany, German-speaking Europe and Eastern Europe.

Russia

The Russian market was a major breakthrough for Jamaica. Since it started in January 2013 it has delivered nearly 14,500 visitors with over 12,000 last year alone, a more than 600% increase over previous years.

So successful was the new service that the tour operator had applied to provide scheduled service. However, current events in the Ukraine have given pause to those plans. We have continued to have dialogue with the operators and are hopeful that this situation can be resolved and that we will see a return to service from this important source market.

Scandinavian Initiative

Mr. Speaker, direct flights to Montego Bay out of Stockholm, Sweden began in winter 2013. We started getting two flights, one from Thomas Cook and one from TUI. This has been of particular significance because it is a fourteen day rotation generating individual stays of said length. This year we will see the addition in November of two new gateways, Helsinki and Copenhagen and due to this we confidently expect growth from these Scandinavian markets.

Cruise

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to cruise tourism. Cruise passenger arrivals in Jamaica is projected to increase to a record 1.4 million passengers this calendar year. The first four months of this year have shown an increase of 3.6%, representing an impressive recovery from a decline of 4.2% last year.

We expect cruise arrivals to continue to escalate with the arrival of the largest of Disney's ships, the Fantasy. This, in addition to MSC's Divina, will be calling throughout the summer.

Similarly, at year end 2014 there are going to be three cruise ships which will home port in Montego Bay. They are the Louis Crystal, the Aida Bella and the Thomson Dream. While home porting there the Thomson Dream will also call on the port of Falmouth on the final night of each cruise, allowing Jamaica to get two calls from this cruise ship. Mr. Speaker, all this means that cruise passengers will fly into Montego Bay and board the ship there to commence their vacation.

Mr. Speaker, home porting will create more opportunities for local businesses as these ships will require produce as well as goods and services which can be purchased locally. Also the visitors will need to fly into the airport in Montego Bay and this will generate more airlift. In the case of the Thompson Dream, TUI will add four additional flights out of the UK to service this ship. The other great possibility is the tremendous opportunity for sail and stay, as historically passengers coming this distance for a cruise, up to 30% of them stay for a stopover vacation in the home port country.

Visitor Experience

Improvements at our Airports

Mr. Speaker, our airports are an enduring impression of Jamaica and we must ensure the experience is as pleasant and positive as possible. This applies equally to our own people.

On recognizing this Mr. Speaker, on assuming office, one of the first things I did, along with the Minister of National Security, was to establish a committee charged with developing strategies to improve efficiency, reducing waiting time and ensure that the experience is as memorable as possible. from all the relevant agencies to improve efficiency and visitor experience at our airports.

The members include representatives from the two main international airports, the Passport Immigration and Citizenship Agency (PICA), JHTA, the Civil Aviation Authority, as well as personnel from both Ministries.

I must emphasise, Mr. Speaker that I am very pleased with the success we have achieved to date at both our international airports.

We have been able to do away with outgoing immigration checks.

I am pleased to advise that the improvements in the passenger experience have received international recognition.

Only recently Montego Bay's Sangster International Airport was recognized for improvements at the facility and received the first place award in passenger processing from the Airports Council International.

Sangster International Airport was also placed among the top five airports in the Airport Service Quality (ASQ) Survey for the last five years. This achievement earned it a place on the Director General's Roll of Excellence of the Airport Council International for 2014.

But there is more work to be done Mr. Speaker. We now have to tackle the issue of reducing the processing time for incoming immigration.

Hence, the TEF has committed an additional \$200 million over the next five years to facilitate the introduction of new technology and to re-engineer the operations at immigration.

Work is also ongoing to simplify the customs and immigration forms. That process will soon be completed.

Mr. Speaker, Jamaica is among the countries which are leading the charge in enhancing visitor experience and efficiency at airports. Just last week the United States announced that it will be taking similar steps.

Like Jamaica, the USA will also be establishing an interagency team to focus on improving the entry process and reduce waiting time for international travellers.

Visa facilitation

Mr. Speaker, similarly visa facilitation is an important part of improving our competitiveness. Over the years our experience has demonstrated that in order to increase our visitor arrivals and improve our competitiveness we must ensure easier access into our country. To date visa requirements have been relaxed for nationals of some 30 countries.

As a result we have seen increased arrivals from several Latin American countries. Likewise, the Russian market has seen immediate, strong response.

We anticipate that this will also give significant impetus to opening up the Chinese market, which is the world's leading source of outbound travellers for recreational purposes.

Creating an Inclusive Industry:

Harassment

Mr. Speaker, countries compete aggressively to attract visitors as it is anticipated that with the arrival of the visitors there should be significant economic benefit to the local economy.

However, there is still an outcry by the communities surrounding resort areas that they are not seeing the benefits.

We have to ask why? There are a number of reasons, but I believe that two are critical: first there is the physical environment and the second has to do with the experience that visitors are having while here.

Product development improvements across the island aim at enhancing the physical environment. However in terms of the experience, the feedback from our visitors and partners is that there is too much harassment.

If our visitors don't feel free to move around un-harassed, to enjoy the Jamaican ambience, freely as they want, then very soon there will be a decline in business and arrivals to our ports.

However, all evidence indicates that control of harassment will lead to an increase in arrivals and business.

Often when we speak of tackling harassment it is sold as a fight against the average man, but it is actually a fight for the 'small man'. There will be more business and it will spread much further, as people feel more comfortable moving around freely to venture into the various communities.

Complaints about harassment are widespread, from both cruise ship and stopover visitors. Hoteliers and business people at all levels throughout the resort communities have complained about the problem.

And the question can again be asked, why do more of our visitors not venture out of the hotels or off the ships? We have to control harassment in Jamaica if we are to realize the true potential of tourism in terms of consistently increasing our visitor arrivals and the benefits to Jamaicans. We want the visitors to not only come on the ship but to come off the ship and walk around and experience Jamaica. We want the visitors who come to our hotels to come out of the hotels and visit our restaurants and attractions.

Mr. Speaker, the government will lead a collaborative effort drawing on past experiences and best practices. This will entail government ministries and agencies, law enforcers, the judiciary, community organizations, tourism stakeholders, private and public sector interests. This effort will introduce and enforce measures to curtail and ultimately eradicate this problem.

An important part of the programme will be a public relations campaign and training, which will be implemented this year.

Water Sports

Mr. Speaker, an equally important issue is the matter of ensuring the safety of locals and visitors who seek to enjoy our beautiful beaches. The Ministry has been actively engaged in the oversight of the water sports activities in Jamaica. The Ministry intends to

table the water sports policy as a green paper shortly. It will address and provide a framework for the management of all water sports in Jamaica. However a major part of that policy concerns motorized water sports and within that Personal Water Crafts.

The management of Personal Water Crafts (PWCs) commonly called "jet skis" has received very deliberate attention in recent times and the policy will treat with these and other concerns.

Measures to address safety concerns regarding the use of personal water crafts (PWCs) have been put in place. They include the suspension of all PWC operations islandwide and a ban has been placed on the importation of PWCs into the island. These measures were applied as a result of three accidents involving PWCs between August 2013 and January 2014.

Consequently, a PWC Task Force was established and it has been actively engaged in determining the parameters under which PWCs will be able to operate. The task force is being guided by the Maritime Authority of Jamaica and TPDCo, with enforcement by the Marine Police Division. Clear rules and regulations have been established for the operation of PWC's both commercially and privately. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) PWC's must have the appropriate decals affixed or be liable for seizure by the authorities.
- b) All operators of Commercial PWCs must receive training in the operation of the vessel
- c) PWCs should enter and leave the shore using the designated launch area at a slow speed of 3 knots
- d) Occupants of PWCs must operate at least 200m from the shore
- e) Commercial operators must meet all requirements for licencing, including insurance in order to be eligible for a JTB water sports licence

Mr. Speaker, advertisements were recently placed in the media to advise all owners of PWCs ("jet skis") who are desirous of becoming eligible for a licence to operate their PWCs commercially that they must have them registered with the Maritime Authority of Jamaica (MAJ) by May 21, 2014.

While it must be emphasised that registration does not guarantee that a licence will be granted, owners must have registered their craft by that date.

Mr. Speaker, with these procedures now in place, the Task Force has recommended that the operators at the UDC beach in the Ocho Rios Bay are ready for re-opening for commercial PWC activity, as a test. As such operations may resume on Monday, June 2.

The Marine Police has indicated that they are sufficiently resourced with vessels and personnel to ably enforce regulations in the bay upon resumption of commercial activities.

If the Ocho Rios Bay commercial PWC operations are successful, they will provide a template for guiding commercial operations in other resort areas.

The Task Force is now looking at the other areas and the operation of 'jet skis'. The ban on importation will remain in place until further notice.

Maximising benefits:

LINKAGES

Mr. Speaker, when we took office, we indicated that one of our priority policies was to broaden and deepen the linkages between tourism and other sectors.

Arising from this and the recognition of the potential of the sector to generate more business locally, the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment established a Tourism Linkages Hub programme.

The objective is to strengthen commercial relationships between owners and operators of facilities within the hospitality industry

and those within the productive sectors in the areas of agriculture, manufacturing and entertainment.

Agro

Buyer-seller meetings, expos and other events are among the strategies used by the Linkages Hub to stimulate the distribution of manufactured goods and agricultural produce. So far, several Agro-Tourism Farmers' Markets have been staged in Negril and Montego Bay in close collaboration with the Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA), Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA) and other key stakeholders.

While this initiative is still in its embryonic stages, I am pleased to inform this honourable House that there have been several positive outcomes including contractual arrangements between farmers and hotels to supply produce on a weekly basis.

Manufacturing Sector

Another indication of the benefit of the strengthened relationships is the participation of members of the JMA in the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) Caribbean Travel Marketplace in January. This provided them with the opportunity to network with local and regional players in the hospitality industry resulting in several benefits to the local manufacturers.

I am happy to inform this House that arising from these initiatives, local suppliers have secured contracts for providing furnishings for a number of properties.

Beyond these initial successes, Mr. Speaker, the Hub is actively engaging hotel purchasing managers to identify specific needs, seeking to create direct buyer/supplier linkages in partnership with the JHTA; Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MoAF) and the JMA.

To satisfy the need of local suppliers and buyers for accurate market information, a detailed study is being commissioned to determine the potential demand for local goods and services within the tourism sector. Funding for this six month project has

been received from the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF). The total cost of the project is J\$8.7 million dollars.

The findings of the study and other helpful information to buyers and suppliers will be made available on-line through a web portal that is maintained within the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment's website.

Again, I am moved to thank all the participants in the process, which has produced a bonding between sectors in pursuit of the mutual benefit of greater and improved linkages between these vital sectors of our economy.

Investment

Mr. Speaker, tourism is well established as a leading source of investment in the Jamaican economy. Historically, activity in the industry has been concentrated in hotels and other forms of accommodation. But now significant investment activity has expanded into other areas such as attractions, transportation and other sub-sectors. As a result we have developed world class attractions and modern transportation to serve the industry. This has contributed to the broadening of the industry's economic impact.

Mr. Speaker, even as we continue to promote investments in new resorts we are placing equal emphasis on the modernization and expansion of existing properties. This is crucial if our industry is to raise the quality of its product and sustain its competitive advantage. Indeed Mr. Speaker, the volume of investment dollars currently being spent by new operators who are undertaking modernization projects, is on par and in some cases exceeds that on new developments.

Three such cases are the Royalton White Sands in Trelawny, the Azul Sensatori in Negirl and Hyatt Ziva in Montego Bay. In the case of Hyatt Ziva over J\$9BN is being spent on a major upgrading and expansion by over 200 rooms of that resort.

Royalton White Sands began operations in December. Azul Sensatori was formally opened a few weeks ago with its expansion expected to be completed by the end of this year. Work is proceeding rapidly to allow for the opening of Hyatt for the coming winter season and importantly with additional new rooms. In the meantime, Braco which will be operated by Melia Hotels & Resorts, is slated to be in operation by early 2015.

Mr. Speaker, the recently passed Omnibus Incentive Legislation for the first time, provides a standardized framework for the transportation and attraction sub-sectors. Unlike the accommodation sub-sector, which was covered by law, these subsectors were entirely at the discretion of the Minister of Finance with all the uncertainty that such an arrangement involved.

This more settled environment will encourage investment in attractions and in transportation services to meet international standards.

“Shovel-Ready” Project

Mr. Speaker, as my colleague Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce has explained, there is an initiative that will expedite the processing of investment in Jamaica. Jointly the TEF, JAMPRO, the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA), the Urban Development Corporation (UDC) and Commissioner of Lands have developed a “Shovel-Ready” Project Initiative that by pre-packaging a number of investment opportunities, will streamline and expedite the process of investment in Jamaica.

The project will target local and foreign investors. In its pre-promotion phase, the project will prepare a number of sites by: -

- obtaining tacit development approvals
- conducting carrying capacity studies
- assessment of appropriate land utilization and
- installation of preliminary infrastructure

In its post-promotion phase, after an investor has been identified assistance will be provided with land acquisition, concept design,

planning and approvals, environmental permits and building approvals.

We are confident, Mr. Speaker that this will add further momentum to the flow of investment into our economy. We expect it to further encourage investment in hotels and attractions in Jamaica.

Timeshare

Timeshare is yet another facet of the industry with potential to attract investment and steps are being taken to broaden the variety of accommodation and investment opportunities in our tourism sector.

The term "timeshare" was coined in the United Kingdom in the early 1960s; expanding on a vacation system that became popular after World War II in Europe. Vacation home sharing, involved four European families that would purchase a vacation cottage jointly, each having exclusive use of the property for one of the four seasons. They rotated seasons each year, so each family enjoyed the prime seasons equally. However, few families vacation for an entire season at a time; so the vacation home sharing properties were often vacant for long periods of time.

Enterprising minds decided to go one step further and divide a resort room into 1/50th ownership, having two weeks each year for repairs and upgrades, and charge a maintenance fee to each owner.

Since then Timeshare has been well established internationally as a driver for tourism in destinations that have embraced it.

Today a Timeshare Vacations Bill for Jamaica has been tabled before this House. It has taken a while on its journey here, but I am pleased that it has now arrived.

The bill is designed to formally introduce the option of timeshare vacation schemes into Jamaica's product offering. We are confident of being able to attract the world's most experienced

timeshare operating brands to our tourism industry and, by doing so broadening our country's international appeal.

Timeshare has been shown to have many positive economic impacts in areas where it has been developed. Owners of time in a residential unit tend to vacation for a week or more at a time in groups of two or more. Timeshare owners become constant repeat visitors and behave more like members of the local community, in that they shop for groceries, dine out often and use local services more directly than hotel guests.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that at last timeshare vacations stand to become part of our tourism product mix. This has very positive implications for generating new economic opportunities for Jamaicans in many areas of enterprise.

Product Development

Mr. Speaker, may I remind this Honourable House that the Tourism Enhancement Fund was mandated by the Master Plan for Sustainable Tourism Development to ensure that all areas with major tourism potential are assisted in realising same.

In doing so, we have sought to ensure that Jamaica's citizens enjoy the benefits that tourism can bring to their communities.

Last year I announced the transformational Ocho Rios Enhancement Programme. This is now underway and Phase One has already been completed. And I'll give details later in this presentation.

This year, it is the turn of Negril and Falmouth.

Negril

Mr. Speaker we will be embarking on a major upgrading of the resort town of Negril. This upgrading will include:

- The Main Road that links Sheffield to Negril from the South Coast

- Landscaping and sidewalk upgrading including the town centre
- Craft market
- Fishing village
- Community centre
- Norman Manley Beach Park

This investment will produce a town residents can be proud of, one that presents an improved experience for their visitors, providing opportunities for enjoyment by both groups.

This project will complement the dual-purpose pathway already under construction along the Norman Manley Boulevard for the safety and convenience of residents and visitors.

The first phase will include the road and beach park, and is to be done this year at a cost of \$400 million.

Falmouth

In Falmouth, we are sensitive to the cries from members of the community about their inability to attract business from the cruise passengers. To the extent that the contrast between the appearance of the town and that of the cruise ship pier is a factor, a transformative solution is required. To achieve this the TEF has signed MOUs with the UDC and the Port Authority of Jamaica (PAJ) to undertake development works in Falmouth.

The Falmouth project has two components: the Hampden Wharf Development and a Streetscape Improvement Project.

The Hampden Wharf Development will create an entirely open experience that will accommodate craft vendors and other business people from the town. It will feature restaurants, an entertainment centre and shops in an inviting environment that harmonises with the development at the pier. It will be completely open to visitors and locals. Improvements to heritage assets like the wharf building, the Dome and Foundry and the

Tharpe House will be included in the development. The projected cost is \$585 million.

Elsewhere in the town, the Falmouth Streetscape Project entails aesthetic and structural improvement to roads and lanes in the vicinity of Water Square. These improvements will enhance the ambiance in Falmouth town. Mr. Speaker, \$330 million has been budgeted for this project. The total expenditure is close to a billion dollars and completion is expected in three years.

We have made certain, as in all our developments to date, that consultation with the stakeholders has been central to the development of the projects. This is done to ensure that there is buy-in from the broader community into all the work that is undertaken.

The team from the PAJ, led by Dr. Paul Robertson is to be commended for the efficiency and speed with which they are approaching the project.

This is the team that has also been working on the Ocho Rios Enhancement Project. They must be complimented for already having brought Phase One of that project to completion.

Phase One includes the transformation of the Turtle River Road into a true promenade. It now offers a well landscaped pedestrian walkway that runs parallel to the paved roadway, offering ease of access to adjacent businesses and providing several rest areas.

Work is underway on Phase Two which will substantially improve the terminal building and cruise ship pier.

Phase Three will see the redevelopment of the seaside boardwalk/promenade that leads east to Main Street.

Phase Four entails the rehabilitation of Main Street.

Other Projects

While we recognise the need for these major resort development initiatives, there is also the need for other projects across the island. Mr. Speaker the TEF is involved in a number of projects across almost every parish. These include:

- The Montego Bay Civic Centre
- Falmouth Post Office
- Montego Bay Craft Market
- Neville Antonio Park, Port Antonio
- Work at Roaring River
- Lover's Leap
- Milk River Bath and Spa
- Bath, St. Thomas
- Devon House
- The Trench Town complex

Also Mr. Speaker, TEF has funded \$328m in projects which is being implemented through the JEEP secretariat. Within this programme we asked for the assistance of the Members of Parliament in submitting proposals for projects that were tourism related and at a community level. This programme has been very successful and has furthered the reach of tourism into every corner of Jamaica. We intended to complete the programme in this financial year. I want to thank the JEEP secretariat for its efficiency in implementing these projects.

Centres of Excellence School Initiative

Mr. Speaker, as we continue to aggressively develop new markets, improve airlift and encourage hotel construction, it will be necessary to ensure the availability of a suitably skilled work-

force for the industry to draw on. Consistent with this, a number of schools will be identified, in which the TEF will make an investment towards developing appropriate areas of the curricula.

After consultation, the TEF has committed a total of \$20 million to initiate this programme in schools which will target improvement in the following areas: Food and nutrition, food preparation, creative arts including music, languages and agriculture.

The schools to be identified will be from the feeder institutions for the tourism areas. Our Ministry and the TEF will be working very closely with the Ministry of Education, which will be the implementing ministry for this initiative.

This will complement a separate programme being implemented by our Ministry to upgrade performing arts venues in selected schools. Mr. Speaker, \$16m has been identified for that programme and the Minister of State will further detail this in his presentation.

Tourism Dollars Working for Us

Mr. Speaker, the TEF receives its funds from fees levied on incoming passengers, by air and sea, to Jamaica. It operates with a slogan : "Tourism dollars working for you". In these real and tangible ways, tourism's contribution to national life is being demonstrated.

As citizens we have every right to expect benefits from our investment in the promotion of tourism. These benefits extend beyond jobs and monetary income and include access to beaches, the preservation of important heritage sites, the upgrading of the communities in which we live, better infrastructure, improved landscaping and, all-in-all, a better way of life.

You will see, Mr. Speaker, that we have invested heavily in ensuring these deliverables for the Jamaican people. In the instances that I have just outlined, all Jamaicans, particularly

those who live in those communities, will be primary beneficiaries of these improvements.

Beach Access

There is an exciting initiative being undertaken by the Ministry in collaboration with TEF, UDC and NEPA. This is to ensure that the Jamaican people are able to enjoy their patrimony through access to our beaches. It is an imperative that suitable quality space for recreation must be made available for Jamaicans.

We are now implementing a programme where at least one beach in every parish will be transformed to make quality recreational spaces available to the public: residents and visitors alike. They will operate at the best international standards.

Typically, they will provide the following facilities:

- Children's play area
- Seating with tables
- Picnic area and gazebos
- Restrooms and changing room facilities
- Adequate parking
- Lifeguard towers
- Utilities (running water, electricity, etc).

Work is actively underway on these sea parks and Burwood Beach in Trelawny is the most advanced. Providence Beach Park in Montego Bay is at the tendering stage and design work is being completed on the Norman Manley Beach Park in Negril. Great Bay at Treasure Beach, St. Elizabeth, Salem in St. Ann and Boston in Portland have been identified for similar upgrading.

Projected outlay on improvement of these first six beaches for the financial year 2014 to 2015 is approximately \$252 million. However the Ministry, working along with NEPA and TPDCo, will

be identifying and securing leases for additional beaches as this will be an ongoing programme.

Rest Stop Programme

Mr. Speaker, as our road network continues to expand, it allows Jamaicans to enjoy the blessings of our country. For the comfort of all travellers, the Ministry through its agencies has resuscitated the programme for rest stops, particularly as it fits into our domestic tourism push. In addition we want to encourage our visitors to share in the Jamaican experience of travelling throughout the countryside, to get an appreciation of our natural beauty, heritage and way of life.

The programme will include upgrading some existing facilities to acceptable standards. Central to this is having bathroom facilities that are properly maintained with the requisite services. The details of the number and the locations will be publicised subsequently.

Conclusion

Mr. Speaker, the contribution of our tourism sector to the economy is significant. Its potential is enormous. It touches many sectors and has been delivering benefits for every Jamaican in very tangible ways.

The substantial economic impact caused by tourism has been clearly demonstrated and its contribution to job creation is undeniable.

Tourism offers opportunity for any Jamaican who can recognise a need and carve out a niche for himself; as it did for fisherman Floyd Forbes, whose dream became a reality in the Pelican Bar in St. Elizabeth, which is now world famous; or for Gloria Minto, who rose from poverty to become the owner of Hotel Gloriana in Montego Bay. It has offered someone who made his living washing cars to move up in life to become the owner of a fleet of buses and it provided the opportunity for Everod "Blackie" Christie to elevate himself to become the owner of the popular

Little Ochie restaurant in St. Elizabeth, and Cosmo Brown to become the owner of a popular beachside restaurant in Negril.

Others have achieved success through direct involvement in areas like events promotion, development of attractions, hotel ownership and management. Some have enjoyed success through an indirect association with the industry like construction, farming, information technology, security services or human resource development.

In my presentation today, I have outlined developments that will bring various benefits to our people: better recreation facilities at beach parks, provide rest stops for our convenience as we travel around our island, improved opportunities for business in the Hampden Wharf development, improvements to the environment in which the citizens of Ocho Rios and Falmouth live and work and the preservation of our valued heritage attractions.

I invite all our citizens to share in the care and reaping the fruits of these developments; to seek within the industry and its linkages to find the opportunity that it can offer for personal advancement in life.

Mr. Speaker, at the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment, as we work to achieve the above objectives, we have been busy with the development of other programmes that time did not permit me to outline in detail today. These include:

- A bed and breakfast policy
- A community tourism policy
- A craft policy
- A pension plan for workers in the industry
- Facilitation of development and promulgation of Development Orders
- Sports tourism
- An entertainment registry

In his presentation, Minister of State, Hon. Damion Crawford will provide a detailed reporting on craft development and the entertainment registry.

We are also about to launch a energy efficiency project for small hotels, which will assist those properties in reducing cost by improved efficiency in energy use, making them more competitive.

We are taking bold and strategic steps to ensure that we continue to develop the industry in a sustainable way, Mr. Speaker. I see an industry that facilitates the distribution of benefits at the community level and in a manner that positively impacts the lives of all Jamaicans.

Mr. Speaker, colleague ministers and members of parliament, we all have a part play in ensuring that tourism continues to deliver on its promise to provide opportunities and growth for all Jamaicans. Let us cooperate in working to at maximise the benefits of tourism for all.

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