SECTORAL PRESENTATION

BY THE MINISTER OF CULTURE, GENDER, ENTERTAINMENT AND SPORT

The Honourable Olivia Grange, CD, MP

Tuesday, 30 May 2017

Gordon House

Acknowledgement

MR SPEAKER, I begin with commendations to you, Sir, on your leadership.

It is my honour to address the House once again as Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport. I thank the Prime Minister, the Most Honourable Andrew Holness, for his continued confidence in my ability to lead these subjects. I assure him, my Colleague Parliamentarians and the nation that my Ministry is making Bold, Ambitious, Beneficial, Strategic and Impactful actions to deliver prosperity to our people through the various portfolios, dubbed “Four the Hard Way”.

It is a team effort and I have received tremendous support from my colleagues in the Cabinet, the leadership of the Ministry and its Agencies, my constituency team including Councillors, special and administrative assistants, members of the sectors I represent, close protection officers and drivers. Mr Speaker, I wish to thank every person who is playing a part in advancing our prosperity agenda.

I also pay tribute to the former Prime Minister, the Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller. We are on different sides of the aisle, but we have worked together on many initiatives for the betterment of our people over the years.

Mr. SPEAKER I ask for your kind indulgence in allowing me time to pay tribute to one of our leading cultural bearers, Colonel CLG Harris, an exemplary leader who has

undertaken outstanding work on behalf of Maroons and citizen of Moore Town.

Colonel Harris served as Head of the Moore Town Maroons from 1964 to 1995. A teacher by profession, he served as Principal of the Moore Town Primary School from 1954 until his retirement in 1976. He is the author of several books, including 'Chronicle of the Windward Maroons', 'On My Honour' and 'Teacha',

Colonel Harris was also a member of the Senate from 1967 to 1972. He was instrumental in getting the government to elevate Queen Nanny to the rank of National Heroine.

Mr. Speaker permit me also to pay tribute to Dr. the Hon. David Boxer, former Chief Curator of the National Gallery. Dr. Boxer was a giant in the Caribbean art world, a pioneering scholar and curator of Jamaican art, an influential and innovative artist, and as a passionate private collector. His contributions to visual art in this country are immeasurable and we are determined to continue building on his legacy.

Under David Boxer's visionary leadership, the National Gallery of Jamaica became a world- class art museum and a model that has been emulated elsewhere in the Caribbean.

A Duty of Service to the People of Central St. Catherine

MR SPEAKER, I am able to address this House as a member because of the people of Central St Catherine. We are now in the 20th year of a partnership to transform the constituency, where the needs are many.

We have come a far way and we have achieved much. Let me briefly share some of the highlights.

In the area of infrastructure development, we were able to repair/rehabilitate several roads in Ensom City, Spanish Town and Hampton Green Divisions. There is more to be done and will be done.

Additionally, we were able to assist with housing solutions in the constituency.

I am proud to announce that we have completed the Thompson Park netball and basketball court. The overall development of the Thompson Park Community Centre is being done in partnership with the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF).

In partnership with the Jamaica Public Service Company and JSIF we are wiring the houses in Tawes Meadows and Ellerslie Gardens in the constituency to fully regularise the supply of electricity. The electrical supply in Gordon Pen is also being regularised.

We have embarked on the painting of a series of murals across the constituency as part of the programme to uplift and beautify over 21 communities.

The Central St Catherine Small Business Development programme assisted over 382 constituents to boost their small businesses. In addition, we have a farmers' group in Tawes Pen affiliated with the Jamaica Agricultural Society. In fact, under this programme, we conduct workshops with persons applying for the farm work programme.

The constituency's social and welfare programme distributed thousands of care packages to the elderly and the disabled and close to 1,000 constituents were assisted with medical expenses and supplies.

We assisted many youngsters with summer employment and internship placement.

We are investing heavily in education. Students at the tertiary, secondary, primary, basic and kindergarten levels received assistance with tuition, uniforms, book grants and exam fees. I am very proud of the many students who now attend the Maritime Institute from my constituency and I thank Dr. Fitz Pinnock for the encouragement and support. I believe that education is one of the most effective ways of transforming gritty communities into models of peace, safety and security.

Much has been achieved, but much more is left to do. We are putting in the work to ensure that St. Catherine Central becomes a model constituency and a place of choice to live, raise families and do business.

Understanding the value of the Cultural and Creative Industries

MR SPEAKER, I turn now to my portfolio areas and I assert that we are **Bold** in our determination, **Ambitious** in the establishment of our goals, **Beneficial** in our interaction with our stakeholders, **Strategic** in the organisation of our missions and purpose, and **Impactful** in our outcomes.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, last year we were "Four the Hard Way". Now we are building on the seeds we sowed and we "coming in from the cold". Robert Nesta Marley in that popular song reminds us that "when one door is closed, many more will open".

You see, Mr. Speaker, it is 2017 - 55 years since we struck for political independence, 73 years since our marginalised and oppressed people were enfranchised through Adult Suffrage and 79 years since the labour riots led by founding fathers William Alexander Bustamante and Norman Washington Manley heralded a new labour movement based on proper industrial relations and the right to proper remuneration for decent work. It is also One-hundred and Eighty-Five years after the death of National Hero Sam Sharpe who was on May 23 executed for standing up for the cause of labour.

And yet I am compelled to admit in this Honourable House that in spite of tremendous global acceptance, certain aspects of our culture — the things that make us uniquely Jamaican — are still fighting for appropriate recognition, acceptance and support right here at home. It is rooted in a lack of appreciation and respect for the value of the culture and creative industries and their contribution to national development.

I think the word 'value' is at the heart of the challenges that my Ministry is facing as it tries to implement its programmes. Do we value what our people create? Do we see value in the way of life and identity of our people? Do we really understand the economic value of Boys' and Girls' Champs or the annual Independence Grand Gala or Fun in the Son, Rebel Salute, Reggae Sumfest or Dream Weekend?

It is estimated that the culture and creative industries contribute at least 5 per cent of GDP and generate between US$15M and US$20M in revenue each year. Tourism is said to contribute 7 per cent of GDP yet tourism's main inputs are precisely these areas I mentioned earlier: namely culture and entertainment to include sport.

Let us look at the figures for music and local entertainment events alone: Based on data provided by the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) Operations Branch in 2016, 19,146 event permits were issued across the 14 parishes. This represented a less than 1% [0.78%] decrease in the number of events granted permits in 2015. Those 19,146 events held in 2016 directly contributed J$20.1B to the economy Mr Speaker. This 2016 figure represented a marginal decrease over 2015 that had direct contribution of J$20.2B, leading to the creation of 8,388 temporary jobs.

National Culture Policy

Mr. Speaker, the draft of the revised National Culture Policy is now ready! It is this policy framework that will help us to achieve a multiplier effect in culture, creative industries, entertainment and our physical culture, sport. We recognise the challenges facing the

cultural and creative sector and its practitioners and are committed to significant structural reforms to create an enabling environment for the development of a viable, sustainable creative economy.

The Policy is far reaching, as it must be if we are to adequately address the dynamic elements of culture and heritage. Among major issues addressed in the revised National Culture Policy are :Culture for Promotion of Social Health and national Wellbeing; Repositioning Culture in Education; Culture Creativity and Innovation; Culture, Heritage and Promotion of Museums and Artefacts. Mr. Speaker the revised Policy has an entire section dedicated to Culture and the Creative Economy with particular emphasis on Training and Human Capital; Financing; Research and Development; Creative Economy and Marketing; Creative Economy and Tourism, and the Creative Economy and the Festival Economy.

You can appreciate therefore that much is anchored in the revised Policy, titled National Policy on Culture and Creative Economy of Jamaica 2017-2027. The document will provide a framework for creative and cultural goods and services to become major contributors to the transformation of the Jamaican economy. We are shaping a framework that facilitates economic growth and development through positive adjustments to existing GDP and supports the creation of new jobs and wealth creation mechanisms.

The Culture Policy ensures an increase in the number of growing small and medium sized businesses and the 'legitimisation' of all cultural and creative business activities.

MR SPEAKER, for too long we have had non-convergence in culture and as such the revised Policy provides for deepening linkages in tourism, manufacturing, agriculture, integrated marketing communication etc., across industries, as well as increased public/ private partnerships.

The focus of this Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport in this financial year will be on making innovative investments, taking a data- centric approach to entertainment and creative industries development and preparing the framework to increase the contribution to GDP of the sectors we represent. As part of this effort, Mr Speaker, we are moving swiftly to operationalise the National Cultural and Creative Industries Council. I will shortly announce the members of the Council who are being tasked with implementing the recommendations of the PIOJ commissioned Business Plan for the Creative Industries, as well as implementing the policy framework in the revised National Culture Policy, all with the aim of enhancing the contribution of culture, creative industries and entertainment to the nation.

MR SPEAKER, Jamaica's superpower status in global culture, entertainment and sport didn't just happen. It is the result of blood, sweat and tears of our creative industry practitioners. We cannot fail to acknowledge the foundations set by the Most Honourable Edward Seaga whose 87th birthday we were happy to celebrate on Sunday.

It is also the significant investment in these areas with the building out of infrastructure, the establishment of institutions and the development of programmes.

GoJ spending on culture, entertainment and sport from 2008 to 2016 has been in excess of 20 billion dollars. This was not a hand out. It is an investment, which has yielded good returns. For this Financial Year an amount of JMD two billion, ninety two million, fourteen thousand dollars (JM$2,092, 014,000.00) was allocated to Culture to include support of the Ministry's programmes as well as allocations to the six Agencies falling under the portfolio. T

he amount is almost double last year's allocation of JMD one billion, four hundred and fifty six million, eight hundred and fifty eight thousand dollars (JM$1,456,858,000.00).

Mr. Speaker, the spend in this financial year must be seen as an investment towards sustainable economic development not just in these sectors but indeed for the future of this nation!

Mr Speaker, the former British Prime Minister, John Major once quipped that "man cannot live by GDP alone". So even as we attempt to double the contribution of these sectors to GDP, we are acutely aware that our cultural assets and activities have intrinsic worth beyond their capacity to turn a dollar. This worth is expressed in historical value, social value, symbolic value, aesthetic value and spiritual value,

improving our quality of life by helping to create a more peaceful, cohesive, healthier, and happier nation.

Legislation and policy setting the stage for the realisation of prosperity

The Sexual Harassment Bill

Mr Speaker, one of the issues that militate against the desired level of peace, harmony and happiness in our country has to do with how we treat each other, particularly vulnerable women and men.

For a long time, the vulnerable have suffered the most harmful effects of sexual harassment particularly at the workplace. Some women and men are sexually harassed, even walking the street.

This is not a simple matter, Mr Speaker. It is a serious crime and we're moving to deal with it.

The Sexual Harassment Bill has already gone to the Chief Parliamentary Council and some amendments made. It is now to be sent to the Legislation Committee.

The amended bill, once approved by the Legislation Committee, will be brought back to parliament this legislative year as we seek to protect all women and men from unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favours and crude sexual behaviours that affect quality of life by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

Legal Deposit Act

My Ministry is also proposing Amendment of the Legal Deposit Act, which is administered by the National Library that mandates publishers (of literary, audio visual, sound or film recordings) to deposit copies of works with the National Library of Jamaica – the country's National Depository. This is in keeping with our commitment to preserve and enhance the historic and social value of our cultural assets.

Mr. Speaker, so much of our works remain a secret, or are kept within the confines of our homes and offices when in fact we should be taking advantage of this facility, the Legal Deposits, which is the official repository to safeguard the creative works of our people. For example, the member from South St. Andrew has done tremendous research and writing on Jamaican music – we need to ensure that this work is preserved and available to present and future generations.

The proposed amendments will foster greater access to publications by allowing the deposits to be made electronically. There has been consultation with a wide cross section of publishers before developing our proposals, which we expect to debate in this House during the year.

Proposed Entertainment Industry Act

The Entertainment Industry Encouragement Act is intended to be the policy framework for entertainment incentives but this piece of legislation has been in draft since 2005.

As a result, work is needed to expedite the passage of this legislation to provide the framework for an incentive regime for entertainment and the creative industries generally.

Even as we await this critical Bill, Mr. Speaker we wish to remind this Honourable House that practitioners of entertainment currently benefit from diverse support including Incentives under the Fiscal Incentives Act to include waiver of custom duties on production equipment (such as film, music). We also have a tour support programme for artistes to perform on international stages.

Mr. Speaker, this level of engagement is vast and it takes funding to ensure that our creative practitioners including our entertainers are afforded quality opportunities. It is with this in mind that we have ensured a budgetary allocation of JMD eighty two million, one hundred and seventy two thousand dollars (JM$82,172,000.00) for the Financial Year 2017/2018 to strengthen the work of the Entertainment Division.

Bold. Ambitious. Beneficial. Strategic. Impactful.

World Heritage

Now that UNESCO has declared the Blue and John Crow Mountains a National World Heritage Site, we have implemented several projects to take advantage of this great opportunity. Last year, we successfully launched the Blue and John Crow Mountains World Heritage Economic Opportunities Workshop targeting over 30 communities around the World Heritage property. We will continue to host these workshops that move from information sharing to practical guide on venture start up.

We have established a partnership with Young Enterprise Scotland/ Bridge to Business to participate in the second staging of the Economic Opportunities Workshop. The Young Enterprise Scotland model is known widely and there are many success stories behind the concept, so we are excited about exposing our young entrepreneurs living around the boundaries of the World Heritage site to the initiative.

On June 8, we will be unveiling the third and final World Heritage gateway sign to the Blue and John Crow Mountains in Port Morant, St. Thomas. Last year we unveiled gateway signs in Papine and Port Antonio as major access points to the World Heritage site. This is a strategic marketing move intended to lift the heritage profile of the communities in which the signs are located and to facilitate increased tourism traffic that comes with World Heritage status. The gateway sign is also a powerful educational tool that keeps in the minds of our people the value and significance of our World heritage status.

Jamaica's presence in World Heritage is growing. As members of the 21 States Parties that govern the work of World Heritage, Jamaica has been active and vigilant in tabling matters concerning Small Island Developing States. Through the Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO, which I chair, we got funding for a project in collaboration with the UNESCO Caribbean office and the Climate Change Division of the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation to host the Caribbean's first ever symposium of World Heritage and Climate Change right here in Jamaica.

World Heritage Site Managers and Policy makers from 12 Caribbean islands, international experts from Europe, Latin and North America are now in Jamaica for this workshop, which ends tomorrow.

Reggae

Over the years, we have witnessed a heightened appeal of Jamaica's Reggae music around the world. As a country, we are proud that the world has embraced our cultural creation, but we are acutely aware of the urgency to safeguard the music form.

At the end of March this year, we submitted a nomination dossier to inscribe Reggae to UNESCO's representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage for Humanity. I am pleased to announce that UNESCO last week confirmed that it is in receipt of our nomination file 'Reggae music of Jamaica' for possible inscription in 2018.

This international protection instrument will ensure that the origins of Reggae and its derivatives are appropriately documented and safeguarded for present and future generations.

I will pause here to share just a snippet from a 7-minute video that was produced by the Ministry as part of our nomination dossier.

Many thanks to the representatives of the music industry, the IOJ, the CPTC and the Ministry, which prepared the dossier.

CARIFESTA

In August this year Jamaica will have just over 150 creative entrepreneurs, performing groups, and vendors showcasing the country's diverse intangible heritage at the 13th staging of CARIFESTA in Barbados. This will be the first time in the recent years that Jamaica will participate with a delegation this size. We are pleased that this is a direct result of the Expression of Interest that was publicly advertised by us to the sector.

The Government of Jamaica will provide subsidies for the practitioners participating in the festival and cover the cost to secure a country pavilion, where all our participants will be housed. "Brand Jamaica" on show!

Ward Theatre

One of the most iconic edifices in Jamaica's architectural heritage, the Ward Theatre is to be re-opened as one of the Legacy projects under the Jamaica 55 programme. For the first time the Ward Theatre has received an allocation from Central Government

based on our representation of J$32M to assist with the restoration of the Theatre. My Ministry is collaborating with the Kingston and St Andrew Municipal Corporation, owners of the Ward to undertake this project to ensure that the Theatre is fully restored and opened to the public.

The restoration of the Ward Theatre has been a dream over the years for many. I want to pay tribute to the work of Ruby Martin, who chaired the Ward Theatre Foundation from the 1970s and undertook stellar fund raising efforts. I must also pay tribute to all those, who have never given up and done everything possible to prevent the building from being totally vandalised.

By August, the facility will be restored to a level that it can be utilised for events, and will play an important role in the commemoration of the anniversary of UNESCO designating Kingston a Creative Music City.

Since Ruby's passing, we needed a team leader to work with the Ministry of Culture and we now have one in the Mayor of Kingston, Senator Councillor Delroy Williams!

Protecting sites, monuments and landmarks

Mr. Speaker, there are close to three hundred declared national monuments and sites have been protected to include historic districts, special communities, archaeological sites, great houses, parks and gardens. We have to become even more proactive in how we treat the protection of sites of significance in our communities.

The archaeological work being undertaken at White Marl in St. Catherine is the largest and most significant Taíno site in the island and considered to be one of the most important in the Caribbean. As a result of the work on the Mandela Highway, the excavations by the JNHT have yielded significant artefacts including large burials, burial mounds, human skeletal remains, zemis among many other pieces dating back to 100 (AD) years after Christ.

The JNHT has also been mandated to undertake an urgent mapping of sites that are to be considered for protection under the Jamaica National Heritage Trust Act and we are pleased to announce that among the list of sites being given priority attention at this time is the Blue Lagoon in Portland. Mr. Speaker, this Lagoon carries with it aesthetic and historic value that can stand above similar sites in the Hemisphere. The Lagoon, which is believed to be around 180 feet deep, has been the source of much debate, with calls for its protection as natural heritage.

As Minister responsible for Culture, I have instructed the JNHT to prepare a Preservation Notice which will ensure that there is no illegal development taking place within the boundaries of the Blue Lagoon, which includes the Pellew Island, over the 6 month period in which the Notice will be in force. During the period, consultations will be held with diverse stakeholders to discuss the proposal to declare the Blue Lagoon as a protected national monument.

When we take steps like this at the local level, Mr. Speaker we are able to take strategic steps towards international heritage designations such as World Heritage inscription. In

fact, I am pleased to announce that having ensured the local protection of the Sunken City of Port Royal; the JNHT has been given the mandate to engage the process for the submission of a nomination dossier to UNESCO in the coming year. Port Royal is the only site of its kind in the Western Hemisphere and my Ministry intends to have this site inscribed as the Caribbean's only underwater Cultural Heritage site on the World Heritage List.

Mr. Speaker, as you will note our Culture Agencies are working. I want to use the opportunity to extend thanks to the National Gallery of Jamaica, a division within the Institute of Jamaica for agreeing to donate pieces to the Parliament for a period. The National Gallery established in 1974 is the oldest and most comprehensive Institution of its kind in the English speaking Caribbean and continues to be our iconic visual arts institution.

The present Board, headed by the President of the Senate, Senator the Honourable Tom Tavares Finson, has been mandated to give life to the vision of the National Gallery and in so doing ensure the widest possible participation in terms of visitorship and artistic expression from the community.

One area of focus of the National Gallery has been to boost the international visibility of Jamaican art, as this potential has not yet been fully tapped. In addition to the numerous exhibitions staged annually, the National Gallery is actively supporting overseas exhibitions of Jamaican art and culture, with loans from its collection and organisational and scholarly support.

We can end the violence; it requires all of us to end gender-based violence

Mr Speaker, I will shift the focus of this presentation to a matter that pulls at heart in a way that cannot easily transcend into words. It is the troubling issue of gender-based violence, inequality and discrimination. This is not a Ministry of Gender matter, it is not a Parliament Agenda matter, it is not restricted to certain families or communities, this is a matter that touches all of us.

National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender-based Violence

This new National Strategic Action Plan provides for an integrated, multi-sectoral approach to addressing the key issues and challenges of gender-based violence, as it relates to victims, perpetrators, and witnesses of acts of violence.

I am pleased to announce that since then and a Costing and Implementation Plan has been submitted to Cabinet and is before the Human Resource Committee for consideration. Under the Plan, we are proposing the establishment of a minimum of three Regional Emergency Centres within the next 2-3 years for women fleeing violence and unsafe living conditions.

We will also be announcing the members of the Gender Advisory Council to provide direct oversight for the implementation of the National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender-based Violence and the National Policy for Gender Equality, 2011.

Reaching Adolescent Mothers

In Jamaica, the rate of adolescent pregnancy has been falling from a high of 129 per 1,000 girls in 1985 to 60 per 1,000 in 2015.The fall has been dramatic, but at 60 per 1,000 Jamaica's adolescent birth rate is still high — higher than the global average.

However, it is instructive to learn from research conducted in 2009 among teenaged girls that almost half (49%) reported having experienced sexual coercion or violence.

It highlights the importance of our national programme to eliminate gender violence at the community level. The success of our anti-violence initiatives will have a positive impact on reducing the adolescent birth rate.

Mr. Speaker the urgency to extend the support to the Women's Centre of Jamaica is critical and necessary. An amount of JMD one hundred and eighty three million, six hundred and sixty four thousand dollars (JM$183,664,000.00) has been approved for the Centre for the FY 2017/2018. The entity will be able to expand the facilities, courses and support mechanisms, which it offers and has become the lifeline to a thousand adolescent mothers and their babies.

We will be taking steps this year to improve the academic component of the programme so that it will be able to qualify as a complete educational institution. As part of this effort, we are procuring equipment to enhance the delivery of virtual CSEC classes in

rural areas. We want to ensure that when adolescent mothers leave our programme and are reintegrated into the formal school system, they would not have missed a step.

Online platform for healing

The Bureau of Gender Affairs has collaborated with UNFPA in the development of an online platform to raise awareness on the issue of gender-based violence. A key feature of the platform is the community section where persons can chat with others who have had similar experiences in a safe, secure, anonymous space. The community chat helps victims and survivors to heal. The platform will be managed by the Ministry and UNFPA.

Sport: Physical Culture, Welfare and Development

Mr. Speaker, Sport is a way of life of Jamaicans. In my Ministry, we refer to Sport as physical culture and we are committed to ensuring that the disciplines and the practitioners, administrators, medical personnel among others are not only celebrated for their talents and expertise. We want to ensure that we hit at the heart of the development of the sport sector, and attend to the wellness of our practitioners of sport. The Sport Division within my Ministry will be tasked with undertaking crucial programmatic and policy initiatives, with a budgetary allocation of JMD one hundred and twenty one million, one hundred and seventy one thousand dollars (JM$121,171,000.00)

Safeguarding and Protection of Children In Sport

Mr. Speaker we have seen in recent times very unfortunate circumstances where we have lost young promising athletes while undertaking their passions. The Sport Development and Monitoring Division in the Ministry is conducting research on existing practices mainly non-medical in the area of safeguarding and protecting of children in sport. We are committed to taking those research findings to create a policy framework that ensures the overall wellness of all our athletes.

Jamaica Athletes Insurance Plan

Mr Speaker, I want to say a word about our programme of support for our national sports representatives, specifically the Jamaica Athletes' Insurance Plan. The group life and health insurance plan paid for by the government as part of our commitment to

secure the development and well-being of our national representatives benefitted 1,285 athletes as at the end of the last financial year. It is imperative that we are able to continue the programme and as such, the Government has developed a sustainability Plan for the Athletes Insurance Scheme. This will be submitted to the Cabinet once the review process has been completed.

Elite Athletes Assistance Programme

Mr. Speaker in the lead up to the Beijing Olympics some of our track and field athletes received some monetary assistance to assist them to prepare for the Games. The feedback was that, though not sufficient, it helped tremendously. Since then, a programme of assistance has been made available to athletes preparing for major championships, including the Rio Olympics. But by and large it has not been structured. Moreover, the assistance was only made available to Track and Field Athletes, to the exclusion of all others, which for some time now has not sat well with me.

It is for this reason, Mr. Speaker that I will be putting together a Committee to undertake a review of the programme, with a view to coming up with a revised format which would be more structured and more inclusive. The members of the Committee will be named in short order. I want to assure our athletes and the nation that this is a priority for us, and the revised programme will be rolled out very soon.

Sports as a catalyst for National Development

Mr. Speaker, as a country, we continue to grapple with our seeming inability to convert the notoriety of our athletic prowess on the track, into tangible economic benefits for our people, and the country at large. The debate rages on. Sports Tourism is the buzz word these days.

I am pleased to advise this Honourable house that my colleague Minister of Tourism and I take this very seriously and continue to look at ways in which we can intensify our efforts to wrest our share of the pie away from the competition. Make no bones about it, it's a very competitive marketplace, but we truly believe that our athletes, and the impact of our cultural ambassadors on the world, primarily through our music, has given us a tremendous comparative advantage. It is for us to convert that into measurable economic returns.

One of the ways in which we will be seeking to do this Mr. Speaker is to go after major international Sporting and Cultural Activities, to stage them right here in Jamaica. I will in short order be naming an International Bidding Committee, under the Chairmanship of none other than the Hon Mike Fennell, the outgoing, long-serving President of the Jamaica Olympic Association, and world renowned Sports Administrator, to aggressively target these events.

This strategy Mr. Speaker will be underpinned by the Jamaica 55 Legacy Programme, which will be the most comprehensive infrastructure development in the Sports and

Cultural Industries since Independence, and the building of our National Stadium. More on that later in this presentation.

National Sport Museum

The strategic business plan has been completed and the review process is in an advanced stage. Once the review has been completed this will be submitted to the PIOJ. Related activities scheduled for this fiscal year include workshops and training seminars on Fabric restoration and preservation, as well as digitisation of artefacts.

We are also focused on the establishment of a virtual museum as an initial stage of the Museum establishment. Other museum related activities planned are the establishment of a museum Foundation among other critical strategies to ensure the vibrancy and sustainability of the Museum project.

Caribbean Sports Medicine Centre

The establishment of the Caribbean Sports Medicine Centre came out of a discussion with Usain Bolt, Mr Speaker. He expressed concern that elite athletes, such as himself, who had to travel outside the country for treatment that is not offered in Jamaica. What if we could offer the services here? What if we could offer the services to athletes outside of Jamaica (in the Caribbean, Latin America, even further)? Just imagine the value of such a Centre in Jamaica.

My Ministry is collaborating with the University of the West Indies and Team Usain Bolt to establish this centre. It will be a lasting legacy for our 55th anniversary celebrations to the people of Jamaica and also a lasting legacy to Usain Bolt.

Mr Speaker, I table in the House today, the Jamaica 55 Official Guide which outlines our programme of activities for the year including some of the Legacy Projects that we are pursuing.

Maintaining the legacy after the Legend retires

Usain Bolt's final home race

Mr Speaker, this year we will witness the final act in the extraordinary career of the world's greatest athlete — the incomparable Jamaican Usain Bolt.

He will compete for us one last time at the National Stadium on Saturday, 10 June 2017 at the Racers Grand Prix. We have made the strategic decision to support the Racers event, for the historic and social value of the occasion. Our financial support of the event is also in keeping with our sports for economic development thrust.

One obvious value of events such as the Racers Grand Prix is sports tourism, which benefits among others, the accommodation, entertainment, culinary and transport sub-sectors.

Statues of Athletic Heroes

Mr Speaker, we will also be taking steps to memorialise and celebrate Usain's outstanding achievements. The Bolt statue is close to completion and will be erected at the National Stadium to coincide with his retirement.

The Bolt statue and three other statues of outstanding athletes — Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, Veronica Campbell-Brown and Asafa Powell — are part of the legacy programme for Jamaica 55.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Speaker, we must take on a new posture, a receptive and fresh perspective on how we engage with culture, gender, entertainment and sport. These are powerful elements of our cultural and human capital that beg for us to develop a mind-set that engenders productivity and economic resilience for the nation.

As we prepare to celebrate 55 years as an independent nation, we are aware that we are still a young nation. But we have understood not to assess the power of our country by its chronological age nor by its geo-political size.

Rather, we judge this country by the capacity of the dynamic forces that propel it onward, by the mystique that remains incomprehensible to so many, by the unwavering resilience of its people, by the national pride and recommitment to stand up for our rightful place in this new thrust towards national prosperity.

Yes, we take on the celebration of Jamaica 55 on the shoulders of the creative imagination of our people, recognising in our ancestral pedigree that not to be acclaimed for what we are is not in itself a hindrance to prosperity, because prosperity resides in the inherent capacity of the people to defy the odds and come in from the cold.

In this reality, the cold shoulders of under-investment and under-valuation have propelled the cultural and creative sector to position itself as the sector to transform the economic destiny of Jamaica and the Jamaican people as a part of a natural design.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport wishes to advise that in this 55th year of our nation's Independence, we are taking centre stage in the national thrust for job creation, wealth and revenue generation, and global competitiveness.

All we ask, Mr. Speaker is that we all show respect and pledge to work closely as we position the creativity for which Jamaica is well known. As the Most Honourable Prime Minister reminds us "if Jamaica were to be measured by its cultural wealth, it would be a very wealthy country." We are committed to positioning the creativity of Jamaicans as the platform on which to build prosperity for all!

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.