



SECTORAL CONTRIBUTION



CEMENTING OUR GAINS...
CREATING
A PROSPEROUS
FUTURE

By Hon. Daryl Vaz, MP

Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation with responsibility for Land, Environment, Climate Change and Investments

TUESDAY
APRIL 25, 2017

GORDON
HOUSE





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SALUTATIONS

Mr. Speaker, it is with humility and gratitude, and with a sense of great responsibility that has been entrusted in me, that I rise to deliver the accomplishments and plans for the portfolio areas to which I am assigned in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation.

Last year, I announced some of the measures that we would be pursuing in ***building a foundation for growth and prosperity. One year later, we are moving to cement our gains and to continue to build on this foundation in order to create a prosperous future*** for all Jamaicans.

I must, first of all, acknowledge a number of persons who have been instrumental to this process.

Mr. Speaker, I begin with the Most Hon. Prime Minister, whose vision, drive and passion for his country has led to the creation of what I consider to be one of the most far-reaching and visionary Ministries to emerge in Post-Independence Jamaica, the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation. I am honoured to serve in this Ministry as Minister without Portfolio and am grateful for the trust that the Prime Minister has placed in me.

Mr. Speaker, it was my father Douglas Vaz, who is present here today who passed on this patriotic passion for service to country to me. He taught me that the true measure of a man, even more than what he does, is what he gives and I am proud to walk in his footsteps in service to my beloved country. He also taught me to walk with Kings but never to lose the common touch. Thanks Dad.

My colleagues in this Honourable House know that my wife, Ann-Marie, and my family are my rock. I am continually reassured and comforted by their love support, patience and understanding, even when my duties take me away from them for hours or even days at a time. I thank them for being there for me, through thick and thin.

Mr. Speaker, much of what has been accomplished over the past year has been due to the hard work of a dedicated team of professionals at the Ministry led by Permanent Secretary Audrey Sewell and Director General Sharon Crooks, as well as our Heads of Agencies and staff.

My team of administrative professionals, both at the OPM and at the Ministry, Pat, Diana and Sherell, are “control central”. They bring order to my hectic schedule and I thank them for being the backbone of my office.

Mr. Speaker, I must also acknowledge my colleagues in this Honourable House on both sides of the divide. Here too, I want to add my own word of congratulations to Dr. Peter Phillips in ascending to the pinnacle of leadership in the PNP, even at this late stage, and to heartily commend the former Opposition Leader, the Most Hon. Portia Simpson Miller on her commitment and service to the people of Jamaica.

WEST PORTLAND

Mr. Speaker, in September of this year, I will be celebrating my tenth year as Member of Parliament serving the people of West Portland. I am only able to be present here today speaking, because of the work and support of my four Councillors. Yes, I said four out of four JLP Councillors! I also thank my support management team, delegates, workers and supporters who I have grown to consider as my own expanded family. I am in fact grateful to the entire electorate for their trust in me and my abilities.

Mr. Speaker, I also welcome the Councillors and Councillor Caretakers from East Portland, who leads a seven – two JLP Municipality for the second time since 2007. The only thing needed to turn Portland completely green **Mr. Speaker**, is a Vaz in the East and I can assure my colleagues on the other side that I am working on that in short order.

Portland, the most beautiful of parishes on our shores, holds vast human and natural resources, opening it up to tap into vast eco-tourism and agricultural potential. I have worked to improve the quality of life, provide the necessary infrastructure as well as the basic amenities needed for the development of my constituency.

Having done so **Mr. Speaker**, and with due regard to several infrastructure projects that are currently being undertaken or are to commence shortly, **West Portland and indeed the entire parish, is poised to take off and be counted as a major growth/job contributor to the economy. This term in office, all our efforts are towards generating employment opportunities within the parish.**

The last ten years we have put in extensive work and made many gains. This year, **Mr. Speaker**, I will be going even further by embarking on many projects that will drive growth in my constituency of West Portland. I highlight only a few of the many projects which span across all sectors.

Social Services for the constituents of West Portland:

- Buff Bay Health Centre of Excellence;
- Buff Bay Fire Station;
- Relocation of Buff Bay Tax Office;
- Improvement to the Buff Bay Court House;
- Regularization of the residents in Dover;
- Buff Bay Market;
- Growth Through Access – Road Infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, quality infrastructure equates to prosperity! I will continue my efforts to rehabilitate the road network in every corner of my constituency of West Portland. Through the Major Infrastructure Development Programme (MIDP), the road from Tranquility to Bangor Ridge will be resurfaced at a cost of approximately \$55 million. This stretch of road is very critical to the country, as it is one of the areas that produces a huge amount of coffee.

Repairs will also be undertaken on the Ythanside section of the School House Corner to Chepstowe main road. This will be done at a cost of approximately \$27 million.



- **Growth Through Economic Opportunities**



Through a collaborative effort with Minister J.C. Hutchinson, the NLA, Agro Invest (AIC) and RADA we are in the process of putting to good use over 200 acres of land which were leased and not being utilized. These lands located in Lennox and Low Leyton are being cut up in small plots to be leased to farmers who will be required to start production within six (6) weeks of signing the lease agreement with RADA.

Mr. Speaker, this is expected to boost production in the parish with special emphasis on banana, plantain, coconut, pepper which is being done through a partnership with Grace and selected farmers. This project is expected to provide employment for scores of persons within the constituency, as well as encourage the unattached to consider farming as a viable option to generate an income.

The AIC has also drafted a proposal for the establishment of a J\$110 million, 100 acre Agro Park in Spring Garden, Buff Bay along with an Agro Processing Plant which is expected to add value to the goods produced by these farmers. This too will provide additional employment opportunities, as well as provide a facility for farmers to yield more from their produce which may not be suitable for export. They will be able to use these for juice, chips, paste and other value added products.

Mr. Speaker, it is still my dream to have all the young people in the constituency having options in finding a suitable job. My partnership with Sandals will see the opening up of Portland's first Call Center. This is still on track and I am in the process of arranging final site inspections of a select location. This project is expected to start with employment of 35 to 50 jobs.

I am **Mr. Speaker**, *creating a prosperous future and opportunities for the people!*

- **Growth Through Community Development**

Mr. Speaker, the Sports Development Foundation, CHASE Fund, National Energy Solutions Limited (NESOL) and some Private Sector partners are collaborating with me to refurbish and upgrade sporting facilities across the constituency to include providing adequate lighting facilities.

This project **Mr. Speaker**, is aligned with my vision to provide recreational opportunities through the promotion of a healthy lifestyle with specific emphasis on exercise, physical activities and training.

To start this project I will explore the establishment of a Multi-Purpose Sports and Training Facility in Canewood and upgrade the existing facilities in the Woodstock Housing Scheme, Lynch Park and Craigmill.

With four (4) such facilities already completed *Mr. Speaker*, I will be establishing three (3) additional Computer Facilities in Mt Pleasant, Hart Hill and in the Buff Bay Valley in collaboration with the Universal Service Fund and Community Based Organizations.

This is creating a prosperous future!

- ***Growth Through Knowledge and Education***

Recognizing the importance of a good start for the students in our education system, I will continue *Mr. Speaker* to collaborate with the Early Childhood Commission to ensure that all Early Childhood Institutions (ECI) in my constituency are duly registered and operating by the standards established by the Commission.

Last year, I made a contribution of J\$1 million to the registration of three (3) institutions in Portland and I intend this year to expand my focus to benefit more schools.

My wife, through the One Jamaica Foundation has committed herself to the registration of ten (10) Early Childhood Institutions in the parish of Portland by August of this year. I must also point out that the One Jamaica Foundation is not only focusing on the parish of Portland, but intends to assist islandwide. This she intends to achieve through the engagement of the Private Sector donors to her Foundation. Every month, it is the Foundation's intention to assist three (3) Basic Schools with certification the first of which are Bethesda ECI and West Retreat ECI in East Portland and Angies' Learning Centre in West Portland.

I wish to place on record my congratulations to the Early Childhood Commission chaired by Trisha Thompson-Singh and the One Jamaica Foundation chaired by my beloved wife, Ann Marie Vaz.

Food for the Poor continues to assist with the requisite infrastructure for a conducive environment for Early Childhood students. *Mr. Speaker*, this year, I anticipate their assistance with the Disciples of Christ Basic School in Hope Bay and the Hart Hill Basic School.

I have facilitated the College of Agriculture, Science and Education (CASE) joining up with the Sandals Foundation to engage in developing an Aquaponics Project. This project will serve to reduce imports, improve the financial standing of CASE and also provide SANDALS with products for their hotels. It will also expose the students to new technologies and improve their ability to secure employment after graduation.

This is creating a prosperous future!



PORTLAND'S TIME HAS COME

Mr. Speaker, I turn now to the development projects and other initiatives from which the entire parish will benefit.

I have embarked on a multi-pronged approach of **INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENTS (Road, Sea and Air)**; and addressing **SOCIAL NEEDS**. *Mr. Speaker*, the rationale for what we are doing concerning Portland is in recognition of the fact that without these initiatives, growth is hindered. **We are creating a prosperous future!**

The recent handing over of two brand new Mitsubishi pick- ups to the Portland Police with an additional three motor cycles to be handed over in short order. This initiative was led by me and totally funded by the private sector at a cost of \$10M.

Secondly, I am in discussion with the National Housing Trust to assist major refurbishing of the Port Antonio Police Station. I am working with the Ministry of National Security to assist with well needed repairs to all police stations, not only in West Portland, but for the entire parish.

Mr. Speaker, the police and residents of Portland deserve no less as Portland continues to be the safest parish in Jamaica, dating back from the sixties.

- **Development Through Road Infrastructure**

I must repeat this fundamental point – **no parish can be prosperous without appropriate access and infrastructure!** There are three (3) key road improvement projects which will drive growth within the parish of Portland.

- 1) Southern Coastal Highway Improvement project (SCHIP)
- 2) Papine to Buff Bay Road Improvement Project – one of the most scenic routes in Jamaica
- 3) Stony Hill to Aqualta Vale Road Improvement Project

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to indicate that the road to Winnifred Beach which has been in disrepair and impassable for close to twenty years, has been approved for funding to the tune of \$27 million through the Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF). This will open up the most popular public beach and area, for greater economic activities and create possibilities for employment.

Mr. Speaker, the parish stands to benefit significantly, capitalizing on the wide scale economic opportunities, such as eco-tourism and employment.



- **Development Through Sea / Ports**

Mr. Speaker, Port Antonio has struggled over the years to secure regular cruise calls. Berthing at the Port Antonio Cruise Ship Pier restricts ships over 700 feet, stemming from the constraints of the channel from the East Harbour into the West Harbour. As a result, only the smaller boutique lines could be accommodated and they have traditionally favoured the Eastern Caribbean where they can deliver a new port every day.



Port Antonio has traditionally been paired with Santiago de Cuba. The recent lifting of the Embargo on Cuba is therefore exciting news for Jamaica as boutique American lines can now take advantage of the Port Antonio/ Santiago de Cuba package.

All of the major American Cruise Lines have made some announcements and itinerary plans for Cuba, and already we have been able to successfully secure a few calls for the 2017/2018 Season from Regent Seven Seas Cruises and Oceania with expectations that these calls will lead to more.

In fact, the 2017/2018 Season is projected to be a very busy season for Port Antonio.

Mr. Speaker, a proposal has also been received concerning the development of the Port Antonio Marina and this is being examined.

- **Development by Air**

The plans to expand the Ian Fleming Airport have already been announced by my colleague Minister, Mike Henry and Portland stands to benefit from this development through additional flights, visitor arrivals and infrastructural work.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard the comments made by the Opposition along with questions being tabled in the Parliament. Let me enlighten the Member with the rationale for this game changer for Portland, St. Mary and St. Ann.

The projected cost of the expansion is approximately US\$15 Million. **Mr. Speaker** I say to my Opposition colleague, do the math.

Portland gets a US\$100m investment the largest ever investment for the construction of a 250 rooms six star boutique resort with 600 to 800 jobs during construction and 500 permanent jobs including food and beverage, concierge, butlers, housekeeping, water sports, IT, finance and accounting and entertainment.

Approximately 2,500 meals served per day.....

Can you imagine the impact of that for local farmers?

Approximately 150 tours to be sold per day.....

Can you imagine that for business and local transportation operators?

Staff bus transfers.....

Can you imagine that for JUTA and other taxi operators?

Guest transfers to and from the airport.....

Can you imagine that for the transport operators of Portland?

Mr. Speaker, where one tourism brand goes others follow. The additional extension of the runway will immediately allow for regional jets like American Eagle, Jet Blue and others to add Ian Fleming to their list of airline routes allowing for visitors and local Jamaicans to utilize Ian Fleming for international travel.

Can you imagine what the advent of these daily flights is going to do for the Guest house, villas and hotel rooms in St. Mary, Portland and St. Ann which will now be that much more accessible by the shortened journey by road to access these parishes?

Once again I say to my Opposition colleague, do the math, it's a no brainer.

- ***Development Through Tourism***

Mr. Speaker, as we open access to the parish via land, sea and air, we will ***cement our gains*** through the re-opening of the Sandals Group's expanded Beaches Dragon Bay Hotel.

Signing of the Framework Agreement by the Seven Senses Group with the Port Authority of Jamaica (PAJ) will see the resort development of Navy Island in Port Antonio consisting of some 204 rooms.

Mr. Speaker, this high-end, mixed-use development will include a resort, villas and a medical wellness facility. The estimated investment will be between US\$72 and US\$90 million. It is estimated that approximately 1,000 temporary jobs will be created and some 800 permanent jobs.

- ***Development Through Water Infrastructure – Port Antonio Water, Sewerage & Drainage Project, Stage 2***

Whilst we expand ***Mr. Speaker***, we are also putting in the necessary infrastructure. The contract for this US\$8 million project was signed last week. It will reduce the impact arising from the disposal of inadequately treated wastewater into drains, rivers and coastal waters which increases the risk to public health and poses both ecological and economic threats to important sectors such as tourism in Port Antonio.

Mr. Speaker, the benefits will include:-

- a potential increase in the number of habitable rooms per unit area which is good news given the hotel projects to come on stream in the parish;
- a reduction in the contamination of groundwater and other water bodies from the retirement of on-site sewage disposal systems; and
- a reduction in the risk to public health.



DOWNTOWN KINGSTON RE-DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (DKRP)

Mr. Speaker, from Portland I now turn to Kingston and I want to re-introduce to the House, a project that has been languishing for some time, but for which this Administration has given a commitment to undertake.

The Downtown Kingston Re-Development Project (DKRP) is one of the most innovative exciting, growth and job-creating, and socially-just projects to be embarked upon in modern Jamaica. I must state **Mr. Speaker**, that this far-reaching project will close development gaps, especially related to the neglected inner cities.

The geographic area of focus for the pilot will be an area broadly bounded by Rae Town to Trench Town and below Heroes Circle. This area gives the project political diversity.

As a Government, we follow a basic and simple rule: ***Jamaica must build its capacity to utilize all of its assets if it is to create a prosperous future. We are cementing our gains, Mr. Speaker***, as there is overwhelming support from our multilateral partners, the private sector, the churches, the security and justice ministries and agencies, and community groups, among others.

The uniqueness of the DKRP is that rather than solely focusing on addressing the ailments or deficits such as informal settlements, disorderly street vending, the inability to collect state taxes, and a general breakdown in law and order, the intent is to mobilize underutilized and distressed assets in Downtown communities and commercial districts.

Undertaking the necessary bold economic and social reforms that target these underlying weaknesses will awaken the entrepreneurs, artisans and creative-persons living and doing business in these areas, who need only a facilitatory and secure environment for their risk-taking and industry. On this issue I would like to publicly acknowledge Prime Minister Holness' leadership in this effort.

Mr Speaker, the project is almost totally funded by the private sector with three private sector companies already incorporated under a Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangement which will impact the Coronation Market and Lifestyle Centre. This will lead our beloved country to the broad-based inclusive economic growth, job creation, wealth and prosperity we crave in Downtown Kingston. We are taking bold steps to achieve our mandate of 5 in 4.

This is the prosperous future all of Jamaica deserves!

The groundwork has commenced *Mr. Speaker*, as widespread and substantive meetings with stakeholders have been held and the project document which outlines its rationale, framework and road-map has been completed.

Proposed developments under the DKRP include among others:

- Musson's West Kingston Business Park;
- Coronation Market;
- Kingston Lifestyles Plaza;
- Railway Station Museum projects;
- Micro-brewery, Restaurant and Beer Garden;
- B&D Trawling Seafood Market, Processing Center and a Major Water-Front Entertainment Park;
- The Culture Hub Social Enterprise in Trench Town;
- Pan-Jam Boutique Hotel and Business Centre;



The discussions to date include:

- The OUR granting a 5-year experimental governance and regulatory framework with utility companies.
- Partnership with Cornell University, the University of the West Indies (UWI) and Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) on the building of critical capacity through scholarship and community development.

Mr. Speaker, the stakeholders who have already made commitments include:

- The Urban Development Corporation (UDC) and the Kingston and St. Andrew Corporation (KSAC) who will provide keen oversight guidance to the DKRP.
- The Development Bank of Jamaica (DBJ), Jamaica Business Development Corporation (JBDC) and Jamaica National (JN) who will collaborate on business discovery, mentoring and early-stage business development under the DKRP.
- The Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF) will serve as DKRP project coordinator.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this 5-year pilot project has the potential to be a real game-changer in the economic life of Downtown Kingston and Jamaica. The DKRP has the capability to be replicated in other towns and help provide Jamaicans with a bright and prosperous future.

Based on a much wider range of economic activities, one can expect that the re-scoped and expanded DKRP could represent as much as 3% GDP in new economic activities, as the smaller original Kingston Lifestyle Centre was estimated to represent approximately 1% GDP in new economic activities.

We are cementing our gains and creating a prosperous future!

LAND

Mr. Speaker, land remains an integral factor in the pursuit of economic growth and social development as key sectors rely heavily on land and its utilization. This Honourable House is aware that the Cabinet had approved the merger of LAMP into NLA with a clear and decisive objective of improving land titling in the country.

It is also in recognition of the fact that there are so many established communities islandwide where individuals living on these lands have “locked up wealth” in terms of assets in their property, that they are not able to access due to their inability to obtain a land title.

We have citizens **Mr. Speaker**, who have to wait in some cases more than 5 years to be able to get their land titles. This I personally experience on a daily basis with my constituents in East Portland and I am sure it is also the experience of my various colleagues on both sides of this Honorable House in their own constituencies.

A continuation of this will not set us on the path to a prosperous future. It is inconsistent with the Government’s objective to empower our people in order to grow the economy in various industries many of which are dependent on the effective use of land, for example the Agriculture and Construction Sectors.



This Government recognizes that we cannot successfully fix this problem by using the same approach that has been tried for the past 40 years, but instead we have to adopt new approaches to make the process easier by reducing the number of steps and at the same time, making it more affordable to obtain a land title.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that we plan to achieve this by adopting a simple, transparent and participatory community-based approach to adjudication in order to establish land ownership. This type of approach has been used successfully in various countries worldwide to carry out rapid land titling and as a way to reduce the cost and time for formalizing land ownership.

The framework for this new approach will be incorporated in the institutional changes to be implemented under the merger of LAMP with the NLA, which is being spearheaded by a Consultant, who has already started work. At the end of this process, using this new approach:

- The Land Titling Business processes will be streamlined and re-engineered to be more efficient with improved accountability, and
- Recommendations will be made for required amendments to the Regulations of the Special Provisions Act that will strengthen and enhance the operations of adjudication committees.

Mr. Speaker, we currently have 16 LAMP Adjudication Committees across the parishes and they will come under the new framework thereby making them more effective in performing their duties to resolve land ownership and facilitating the issuing of more land titles.

This will be supported with the use of modern digital land mapping technology to make the process as efficient as possible.

The Ministry is currently considering a proposal on a Public Private Partnership basis to secure financing to carry out the mapping of lands which will update the digital cadastral index. This programme will be geared towards the formalization of various settlements islandwide, community by community, and will include Government Land Settlements as well as many other settlements all over the country.

This community-based approach represents a fundamental shift to create greater efficiencies

We are cementing our gains, and creating a prosperous future!

Mr. Speaker, the Most Hon. Prime Minister in his budget presentation, spoke to the creation of a Geographic Information Systems Service Corps. We see this as a strategic way to drive the fast tracking of large scale programmes such as this one which requires significant human resources in order to be accomplished over a short time, while at the same time, creating employment for our young people. The Service Corps will be provided with training and will then be engaged to participate in field and office activities in the programme.

- ***Proposed Implementation of Electronic Titling***

Mr Speaker, whilst Jamaica implemented an automated registration system several years ago, the processing of transactions by the Office of Titles is still largely paper based.

This has implications for the efficiency of the entire process of transferring property, fraudulent title transactions and maintenance of the paper records.

A study is currently being undertaken with the assistance of the World Bank, to allow the National Land Agency to implement an electronic titling system and will involve a study tour of Land Information New Zealand by a team from JAMPRO, NLA and the World Bank; workshops in Jamaica to advance the reform of the titles system and consultations with various stakeholders.

New Zealand currently ranks as No. 1 for registering property in the Doing Business Report by the World Bank and uses the Torrens titling system which is also used in Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker, during this Administration through land titling, we will create employment and an environment for greater access to finance which will create growth and prosperity for our people.

I note that the Opposition Leader has appointed a Land Commission to advise him on Land Titling. **Mr. Speaker**, I am not sure what will be achieved as the Opposition has had the last twenty two of twenty seven years to address the matter of land titling yet still we find ourselves way behind.

The issue of land titling is too important to this government's growth agenda to be politicized. I have therefore given instructions as part of the Terms of Reference of the merger of LAMP and NLA and the Opposition to name a representative to be part of the wide consultations which will be held with all stakeholder groups in order to come up with a holistic policy which will be accepted and implemented with the full buy in by all.

Mr. Speaker, this is a major priority of my Ministry and this government and will be given priority attention.

This approach is what you call an inclusive approach rather than going the route of Committees and Commissions which we all know has not taken us very far over the years on our attempts to grow Jamaica.

FACILITATING INVESTMENT

Mr. Speaker, I reiterate, the Prime Minister's decision to house key agencies with the mandate of propelling investment within one Ministry is a strategically sound move. We are organized as a one stop clearing house, where efficiencies can be achieved for permits, access to land and capital, which are key factors in the productive process. **We are working towards a prosperous future.**

Against this background, I am proud to report that we have justified the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation and now move to **cement the gains made.**

It is important to note **Mr. Speaker**, that quarterly GDP in 2016 as compared to 2015 has shown increases in every quarter. This augurs well for the future, now that the greater effects from this Administration's policy initiatives will generate employment and economic growth.

In fact, the Labour Force Survey of October 2016 shows that the unemployment rate decreased to 12.9% from 13.5% the year before, with a 3% annual growth in new jobs. It is expected that this trend will continue with faster growth, more jobs and less unemployment.

Our efforts to ease the investment process are supported by policy initiatives and in that regard, I am pleased to announce that Cabinet has recently appointed a Steering Committee, chaired by Senator Don Wehby that will guide the National Investment Policy process and ensure full engagement and input of all stakeholders.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take time out and acknowledge business leaders who have taken time out of their busy schedule to be present here today.

The private sector is our partner to delivering prosperity. This government is a business friendly government. It facilitates businesses with a view of them making profits that can be reinvested to the benefit of our country.

Mr. Speaker, the International Migration and Development Policies are expected to be finalized this year. This is an initiative of the National Working Group on International Migration and Development, with the participation of my Ministry.

The Policy seeks to ensure that international migration is adequately measured, monitored, and influenced to serve the development needs of Jamaica as outlined in Vision 2030 Development Plan.

Among the intermediate outcomes are a framework that facilitates the use of remittances for development, as well as Legislative and Policy reforms in keeping with global best practices for the continued development of the remittance sector.

Mr. Speaker, we are advancing the legislative framework to modernize Jamaica's business legislation infrastructure. The passing of various legislations will give effect to the establishment of the International Business and Financial Services Centre (IFSC), facilitating a wide range of sophisticated international business transactions.

We have passed the Partnership (General) Act 2017 and the Partnership (Limited) Act 2017.

The International Corporate & Trust Services Providers Act 2017, which will establish a regulatory regime governing the licensing and conduct of international corporate and trust service providers in the sector; and the International Business Companies (IBC) Act are to be tabled in Parliament shortly, and will govern the incorporation and operation of International Business Companies (IBCs).



The objective **Mr. Speaker**, is to attract investors including those in the Diaspora who will leverage the many attributes that Jamaica has to offer through which they will pursue near-shore services to support their global operations.

We are cementing our gains.....creating a prosperous future!

- ***Creating Public Private Partnerships (PPP) for Skills Development***

As Jamaica attracts investments, the country is also seeking to equip the labour force with skills in demand by investors. My Ministry has formed strategic partnerships with the Jamaica Manufacturers Association (JMA) and the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Association to establish Sector Skills Councils [SSC] as part of the recommendations coming out of the Labour Market Forum held with the support of the IDB, in February 2017. Two draft documents have already been prepared for stakeholder consultations.



The next steps will involve the operationalization of Apprenticeship Programmes, with the support of the private sector, to address skill gaps experienced by employers, and will lead to greater employment and productivity. This, *Mr. Speaker*, is the **creation of a prosperous future**.

- **Economic Growth Council (EGC)**

Mr. Speaker, in my last Sectoral Contribution, I introduced the Economic Growth Council (EGC) and indicated that they would work with Government closely to change the red tape to red carpet for investors. I am happy to report *Mr. Speaker*, that **the commitments made have been kept**.

Last year, the EGC recommended to Cabinet eight (8) Growth Initiatives, and 112 Policy Recommendations, aimed at removing the various obstacles to economic growth.

The successes are evident as these growth initiatives are being included in the strategic plans of every Ministry, Department and Agency, and the recommendations of the EGC have been incorporated into the Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies in the current Agreement between the Government of Jamaica and the IMF.

Mr. Speaker, the achievements of the EGC are far-reaching and include:-

- Access to Finance through a reduction in the capital requirements for DBJ guaranteed loans to SMEs, which will result in greater access to capital and positively impact growth.
- Assistance in the reduction of Minimum Capital Test for Insurance Companies which has the potential to unlock billions of investable funds that could be channeled into productive activities, and the finalization of the Terms of Reference for Banking Review.



- Implementing the strategy to increase BPO presence in the economy through the expansion of the skilled human resources required. This has tremendous potential to positively impact economic growth and employment.
- Forging PPPs to promote confidence in the economy and an inclusive approach to decision-making.

It is quite clear from all the recent economic surveys, reviews and the latest IMF assessment that confidence in the economic management of the country is at a very high level. The Don Anderson Polls clearly supports this position.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to put on record for Hansard the Government's full endorsement of the EGC and our appreciation for the time, effort and sacrifice at great personal expense to the ten member of the EGC chaired by the Hon. Michael Lee Chin.

The EGC should be applauded and embraced by both sides of the House for the sterling contribution over the last year. The government is committed to the implantation of recommendations of the EGC and to give the necessary support to the EGC to enable them to fulfill their mandate.

Commitment made.....Commitment kept!

- ***The Investment Project Pipeline***

Mr. Speaker, last year I announced that we had a considerable investment package under review, which would contribute to the creation of tens of thousands of jobs.

We have encountered challenges along the way. However, we are undaunted by the setbacks, and have identified the corrective measures to lead us to success.

We have seen a surge in investment activities since March last year. For the past fiscal year, capital expenditure by JAMPRO-Facilitated Investment Projects was targeted to be over US\$360 million, of which it is estimated that approximately US\$257 million was achieved as at January 2017. This expenditure is estimated to have provided over ten thousand jobs.

Total investments supported by the Development Bank of Jamaica (DBJ) for the year thus far is over J\$25 billion, with the potential job creation of over five thousand persons.

Amongst the PPP transactions completed are:

- Kingston Container Terminal [US\$459 million investment]
- PETCOM [US\$19 million from sale proceeds]
- Caymanas Track Ltd [J\$500 million]
- Lease of 1609.5 acres of Montpelier Property [J\$10.4 million per annum and expected investments of J\$220 million], and
- GOJ shares in KIW international [J\$59 million]

192 new businesses were created or supported through the DBJ's programmes. J\$43 million in grants were disbursed to 27 companies under the Innovation Grant from New Ideas to Entrepreneurship (IGNITE) Programme. These were mostly Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) with innovative products or business models that required financing to boost their operations.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot stress enough the MSME sector as a driver of growth and employment in any economy and so we are moving to ease the constraints faced by MSMEs due to the lack of capital.

We are cementing the gains and creating a prosperous future for Jamaica!

Under the Voucher for Technical Assistance (VTA) Programme, 458 vouchers have been issued to 237 companies. These vouchers have supported over J\$71 million in loans to MSMEs with the potential to support over J\$1 billion worth of projects. Since the start of the fiscal year, over J\$3 billion in loans were made to MSMEs.

In addition, the DBJ was instrumental in the establishment of two (2) private equity funds and are now seeking equity investments in businesses totaling US\$216 million.





The EXIM Bank also had a fairly impressive scorecard for the period under review *Mr. Speaker*, disbursing some 835 loans totaling over J\$6 billion to the productive sector. The major allocations were:-

- Agro Processing J\$2.5 billion or 42 %;
- Distribution and Services J\$1.6 billion or 26%;
- Manufacturing J\$1.5 million or 24%; and
- Mining J\$0.4 billion or 6 %.

The Bank also partnered with the DBJ on some new programmes during the year including:

- A loan facility for small manufacturers in July.
- A small and medium Tourism Enterprises Loan Facility in September.
- DBJ's Credit Enhancement Fund Guarantee facility.

We are creating a prosperous future.

Another of our agencies *Mr. Speaker*, the Agro-Investment Corporation (AIC) has increased access to irrigation of the lands under management by some 86%, from just over two thousand acres in 2015 to more than 3, 700 acres in 2016. The impact on job creation was notable, with the number of persons employed under the Agro Park Programme increasing by some 15 % in 2016.



The Spring Plain Agro Park was commissioned into irrigation, opening up private investment of over J\$500 million and with the potential to produce close to six (6) million kilograms of agricultural items with an estimated value of over J\$400 million, and creating over 100 jobs.

The AIC also partnered in scoping some 700 acres to enable RED STRIPE to implement Project Grow. The projected medium term investment for this project is some J\$ 1.2 billion, with employment creation possibilities of some 100 persons.

Mr. Speaker, for this fiscal year, the Factories Corporation of Jamaica (FCJ) will lever-

age Government assets through greater collaborations with the DBJ, the PAJ, and JAMPRO which includes the sixteen acre property adjoining the Naggo Head Technology Park.

Four (4) enterprise projects are to be implemented:- Naggo Head and Caymanas in St Catherine; Garmex Free Zone, Kingston; and Good Year in the parish of St. Thomas. Through these four projects, the FCJ intends to undertake US\$134 million in investments, with the potential to create over 27,000 jobs.

In addition, the FCJ will be:

- pursuing a programme of divestment of non-performing assets and optimization of selected assets that can create a better return on investment, while expanding its portfolio of rental space.
- seeking to fulfill the directive given to dedicate 40% of this newly constructed space for small and medium size enterprises, especially newly start-up companies .

I am pleased to also report *Mr. Speaker*, that the FCJ has strengthened its governance structure in light of the Auditor General's 2016 report.

This fiscal year, the DBJ is targeting support of over J\$26 billion in investments and over seven billion dollars (J\$7) billion in loan approvals. It will provide support to 200 new businesses and impact 810 MSMEs through capacity development initiatives. 4,500 new jobs are being targeted from these initiatives.

JAMPRO is projecting the value of investment flow for all Jamaica to be some US\$600 million, with the potential for creating thousands of jobs and National Export Sales value of US\$1.6 billion.

Mr. Speaker, JAMPRO estimates that the construction of BPO infrastructure projects will see capital expenditure of US\$72 million and the creation of over 400 construction jobs. These projects are expected to add over 400,000 sq. ft. in additional BPO space which provides the capacity to facilitate the creation of over 4,000 BPO jobs.

Of special note, is the plan by local investors Mussons to create the only Campus Style BPO facility at 58 Half-Way Tree with approximately 236,000 square feet dedicated to the BPO sector. The idea behind this innovative approach is to create an environment that is efficient, and robust, with access to untapped and skilled human resources. Its location in the heart of the Corporate Area is ideal, allowing access to key services within the campus, access to all major transportation links as well as all the hotels in Kingston.

We are well on our way *Mr. Speaker*. We will continue our efforts to ensure that ***the commitments we made, are kept***. In that regard, the project pipeline is flowing for the 2017-18 fiscal year which will enable us to further ***cement our gains, and create a prosperous future*** for all Jamaicans.

- ***INVESTMENT PROJECTS: Logistics, Manufacturing, Agriculture and Tourism***

Mr. Speaker in terms of Logistics, projects with an estimated investment of US\$104 million will see the creation of some 70 jobs across various sub-sectors including air and sea ports, railway, transshipment infrastructure and dry docking.

In this area, I am pleased to note several ongoing projects including:

- The Kingston Wharves Ltd. Multipurpose Terminal Port Project to increase the depth of the Harbour to facilitate post Panamax ships, and the German Floating Dry Dock in Kingston project between Harran and Partners, Kloska Group and Jamaican investors.
- To enhance and facilitate expansion in this area we are finalizing the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) Regulations.
- Phase one of the Logistics Industrial Analysis Master Plan has been completed and Phase two is expected in a few months.

The re-launch of Global Logistics Hub as announced by Honourable Prime Minister will see expert consultants moving our Customs processes to paperless. We are utilizing *Mr. Speaker*, a systematic and best practice application methodology which this time round, will take it from the pipeline to the people: jobs; jobs and more jobs! We are creating endless opportunities for large and small businesses, tying in the Ports with Information Technology, Industry and Logistics.

In Manufacturing, the projects to come on stream are expected to create Capital Expenditure of some US\$100 million and create 100 jobs. *Mr. Speaker*, the Government has been in discussions with the Jamaica Manufactures Association (JMA) to see how the DBJ and the FCJ can facilitate the expansion of the sector especially with regard to needed factory space on favourable credit terms.

This financial year, the AIC will assist in the implementation of 2 new Agro Parks namely Hounslow (St. Elizabeth) and Spring Garden in Portland. These agro parks will bring into production some 660 acres of land, through irrigation and supporting infrastructure, such as road and drain networks.

Moreover, at Essex Valley in Southern Manchester and St Elizabeth, the AIC has facilitated over 1,700 acres of an Agro Economic Zone, which should lead to a significant growth in agricultural production from that region.

The Corporation is also projected to mobilize funding of some J\$500 million for further agricultural development. Major projects will focus on the cultivation of citrus, pineapples, sweet potato and cassava which will see investment of US\$10 million and create 50 jobs. An additional 11 agro parks are planned for 2017 /18.

The AIC will also renovate the incomplete facilities at the AMC Complex for which there has been a very high demand on a consistent basis. The work will include: the renovation and leasing of 38,500 sq. ft. of main warehouse space, the completion of nine packing houses, and two (2) chill rooms to meet the requirements under the Food Safety Modernization Act .

Mr. Speaker, discussions are also being held with an investor to establish a farming and Agro-processing Special Economic Zone (SEZ) on some 20,000 acres of agricultural land which will comprise a core farming operation supported by the processing, packaging and cold storage of fresh produce. The main products include tomato, Sorghum cultivation for power generation and export, fruits and



vegetables.

The Heineken–Red Stripe Project is now underway and was facilitated by the AIC which has provided some 1000 acres . Over 200 jobs are expected to be created from this project.

- **Hotel Projects**

Besides the projects announced by the Tourism Minister in his Sectoral Presentation, there are immediate plans for the expansion of 5 properties by Sandals and Beaches. In addition, two (2) new developments are planned by Sandals. **Mr. Speaker**, we are talking about 1,378 new rooms, and a total investment during construction of US\$433 million, with over 5,000 construction jobs, and in excess of 3,000 permanent jobs.

What is clear from these plans, **Mr. Speaker**, is that it is not only foreign investors who are seeing the potential in Jamaica as an investment destination, but also our own local entrepreneurs. This is another sign of confidence in what this Government is doing.



The Government is doing what is necessary to facilitate these investments, consistent with environmental safeguards. This will require improvements in the road network, especially on the South Coast, and an agreed position on the beach erosion in Negril.

In the latter case, we are glad to report that meetings are being held in this regard. There seems to be an evolving consensus that a multi-stage approach might be necessary with the initial stage being that of beach nourishment, which is needed at this time. I have advised NEPA to meet with the Negril Stakeholder Group, to devise a joint plan of action to include a revised proposal.

RESIDENTIAL DENSITY ZONING

Mr. Speaker, it is the intention of the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation in collaboration with the relevant agencies and planning authorities to undertake a revision of residential densities and to issue new residential zoning standards. This will take account of current trends in urban renewal and development to facilitate an increase in the housing stock; enhance public safety; provide wider options for housing solutions; increase efficiency of use of urban lands; reduce commuting costs and protect environmentally sensitive areas.

A Note will be taken to Cabinet shortly to outline the strategies.

I should state here *Mr. Speaker*, that there has been a significant increase in the number of residential rooms proposed within the Negril Development Order Area from 388 in 2015 to 823 in the present year, as well as a rapid expansion of development infrastructure and population figures, especially in Negril.

A carrying capacity study is essential and would determine the magnitude of development pressure that can be absorbed by critical resources and infrastructure without degrading the resource such that it places continuity of the industry at risk.

It will also outline a clear strategy for sustainable growth within the limits of resources, and provide projections and timing of the additional resource capacity required to support growth of the local tourism industry. ***We are cementing our gains for a prosperous future.***

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce through NEPA and the Ministry's team, we have made great strides and we are almost at the point where the entire country is covered under Development Orders. When this administration took over there were only 4 Orders, and in one year we have implemented 8 more: Kingston and St. Andrew; St. Thomas; St. Catherine; Clarendon; Hanover; Westmoreland; St. Elizabeth and St. Mary.

We have secured funding for printing and move eagerly to complete the two remaining areas Portmore and St. James within this financial year. ***We are creating a prosperous future!***

This is significant *Mr. Speaker*, as it has implications for the promotion of orderly development. It will support new or existing businesses by informing investors and developers of the types, scale and magnitude of the development that can be facilitated in a particular area. This will have an immediate to medium term effect of reducing bureaucracy, promoting timeliness of responses and reducing overall costs to business interests.



National Spatial Plan

Mr. Speaker, Given the current focus on economic growth and development as part of the mandate of the Government of Jamaica. There is a need to prepare a National Spatial Plan. This plan will constitute strategies and policies to deal with national challenges including urbanization, regional imbalances/inequalities, rural development, environmental degradation, transportation and underutilization of the massive resources available in the country.

While the National Spatial Plan will require significant financial resources, the GOJ is committed to improving the mechanisms for the business environment to foster economic growth through this policy initiative in order to create prosperity and equity for all Jamaicans.

The National Spatial Plan when prepared will provide the spatial framework for guiding the location and regulation of orderly and sustainable development of our Country. The National Spatial Plan is expected to be completed by 2019.

DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS (DARP)

Mr. Speaker, the Development Application Review Process (DARP) project has sought to implement a number of initiatives to address inefficiencies in the development application review process and to improve economic performance whilst transforming the nation's interests.

NEPA has signed off on the functional requirements to facilitate the implementation of the pilot phase of AMANDA Public Portal II which will enable the electronic submission of applications.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Speaker, as the Government continues its PROSPERITY AGENDA for all Jamaicans, we are mindful of the critical role that our natural resources play in the country's economic growth and development as well as the social well-being of the population.

During this fiscal period, the Government will attempt to finalize long standing issues that have captured the interests and concerns of most, if not all, Jamaicans, including the Delimitation of the Boundary of the Cockpit Country. What is to be noted *Mr. Speaker*, is that the boundary has been accepted save and except for a small section which is environmentally-sensitive.

Cabinet has taken a decision to have an independent assessment done, taking into consideration the concerns of the various interest groups and stakeholders in relation to environmental protection and economic growth. The findings of this report will be examined by Cabinet in short order given the time sensitive nature of the matter. It is expected that the matter will be resolved very shortly.



Another issue is that of access to and the management of the island's beaches. My Ministry intends to submit a draft Beach Access and Management Policy to the Cabinet during this financial year, for public consultations. Once approved by the Cabinet, a Green Paper and will be tabled in the Parliament. In addition, a Beach Management Plan has been prepared for all of the island's publicly owned or managed recreational beaches.

The Government, while pursuing the Growth Agenda, is also very mindful of the sensitivities of our the public beaches and is working to upgrade existing public beaches for use by our local population.

In my previous Sectoral presentation, I had outlined a number of key Environmental Policies and strategies. *Mr. Speaker*, my Ministry has **kept its commitment to the people of Jamaica** and will move briskly ahead to advance these documents in 2017/18. They include:

- National Policy on Environmental Management Systems (EMS)
- National Policy and Strategy on the Environmentally Sound Management of Hazardous Wastes
- National Wildlife Trade Policy
- National Biosafety Policy
- National Beach Sand Policy
- National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

The Ministry is also developing an Emissions Policy framework for the country. Reduction in emissions will also have an impact on the costs to the health sector from treatment of respiratory and other illnesses.

In relation to wastes, the environmentally sound management of electrical and electronic wastes has been prioritized by the Government. *Mr. Speaker*, my Ministry has been collaborating with the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development in developing and implementing a National Programme for E-wastes.

As the country is aware, the Government has convened a Multi-Stakeholder Committee within the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation as it relates to “The Management of Plastic Packaging Materials (PPM) in Jamaica”.

This Committee is mandated to examine options for the management of single use plastic bags and styro-foam. It is anticipated that the Government will be able to make an announcement regarding the management approach to these two categories of plastic packaging materials before the end of this fiscal year.



In terms of our forest resources *Mr. Speaker*, the Forestry Department will continue its efforts to reforest denuded lands and maintain areas planted. In the process, it will provide approximately 400 jobs for persons living close to forest areas in the planting of a minimum of 100 hectares of lands and the maintenance of 200 hectares. Activities will take place in St. Andrew, Trelawny, St. Elizabeth, Hanover, St. Thomas and St. Ann.

The National Forest Management Plan will be submitted for approval and the Revised Forest Policy has been submitted for tabling in Parliament as a White Paper.

The declaration of 12 Forest Reserves was successfully completed. These reserves will be protected under the Forest Act (1996) thereby increasing the hectares of protected areas in Jamaica. The total acreage of Forest Reserves now stands at 101,366 hectares. The Agency will begin work to amend the Forest Act in 2017/18.



CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE

Mr. Speaker, as a small island developing state (SIDS), Jamaica is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of Climate Change not only in terms of our natural resources, but also our social wellbeing and economic development. For us Climate Change is an economic issue.

Jamaica has joined an increasing number of countries in ratifying the historic 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change. *Mr. Speaker*, this is a monumental achievement and is a signal to the world just how committed this country is to “a long-term goal of keeping the increase in global average temperature to well below two degrees Celsius (2°C) above pre-industrial levels;” and with an “aim to limit the increase to 1.5°C”.



The Agreement establishes a “global goal” of enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change, with a view to contributing to sustainable development and ensuring adequate adaptation in the context of the long-term temperature goal.

The Green Climate Fund [GCF] has been established to serve the Paris Agreement and Jamaica expects to benefit significantly from the GCF. *Mr. Speaker*, through the Commonwealth Secretariat, we have engaged a Finance Advisor to support Jamaica’s efforts to develop a comprehensive programme and a portfolio of projects in line with the investment priorities of the GCF.

We have embarked on a process that will see 12 Sector Strategies and Action Plans completed in short order. In their implementation, we will ensure that resilience is built in our systems to support the movement towards a Green Economy. ***We are cementing our gains to create a prosperous future for all Jamaicans.***



- ***Renewable Energy Projects***

Mr. Speaker, energy is arguably one of the most critical issues facing the country, and one that needs to be seriously addressed on a collective basis if we are to achieve any form of sustainable development.

While we continue to depend heavily on foreign oil, it has become clear that the world is transitioning towards a low-emission economy. This decoupling of emissions and growth is driven not just by environmental and climate imperatives, but by the deployment of cost effective technologies that will help the country to save money. Alternative Energy Projects coming on stream are expected to create an investment of over US\$300 million, create hundreds of jobs and contribute to lessening Jamaica's importation of fossil fuels.

Additionally, more renewable energy projects are being explored. An Enterprise Team has been established to explore the Waste-to-Energy opportunity and provide a way forward for the Government.

Work is also being done to explore the use of biofuels in a much larger capacity.

- ***CLI-MET Merger***

Mr. Speaker, the merger of the Meteorological Service Division and the Climate Change Division, is being undertaken to ensure operational efficiency and effectiveness. The establishment of the new National Agency for Meteorology and Climate Change Resilience (NAMCCR) will merge climate information and climate change resilience into one body, and will promote information sharing, streamlined collaboration and strategic focus resulting in increased productivity and growth within Jamaica. The merger remains a priority for this Government.

CLOSING

Mr. Speaker, as I close, this book on my stewardship of the portfolio areas assigned to me for last year, it is with great anticipation and excitement that I look towards the future. Not all has been presented in this Honourable House, but the span of my success is vast and the plans for the future extensive.

The well-being of every Jamaican matters greatly to this administration. I therefore use this occasion to remind members of this Honourable House that nowhere is this more important than in our commitment to our citizens, living in the difficult environments. Jamaica will be a great country when every citizen can meaningfully pursue their aspirations for a better life for themselves, their dependents, and their loved ones.

Our economy must therefore create broad-based opportunities for business enterprises that are small, medium and large, and jobs utilizing a diversity of skills. It must also ensure personal and economic security, stronger rights, justice and peace, and improved opportunities for self-development. These are the guiding principles of our governance and my actions as Portfolio Minister.

During the 2017/2018 fiscal year, we will be moving to **“Cement the gains that have been made in order to create a prosperous future”** through an impressive collection of multi-sectoral investment projects.

We will return Downtown Kingston to its pride of place as the jewel of the Corporate Area through the revolutionary and far-reaching Re-Development Project, in the process creating opportunities for hundreds of residents of the targeted areas, and restoring social cohesion, harmony and peace to the area.

Over the course of the year, through our agencies, we will continue our efforts to facilitate local and foreign investment opportunities in the island by freeing up the investment pipeline and making the process easier for prospective investors.

We will continue our support of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Sector, with the full knowledge of its potential contribution to economic growth and job creation.

During the year, we will continue to focus on preserving and conserving our natural resources knowing their full impact on the environment and on the health and well-being of all Jamaicans.

Finally *Mr. Speaker*, we are poised to take full advantage of the opportunities afforded to us under the Global Climate Fund for projects and programmes that will ensure Jamaica’s resilience to Climate Change which has the potential to derail all our plans.

I stand before this Honourable House *Mr. Speaker*, as a Jamaican first and foremost, who strongly believes in his country. Jamaica is a goldmine of possibilities. We have it all...natural resources, infrastructure, and most importantly, the vast and oftentimes untapped potential of our citizens.

It is up to us now as representatives, leaders, and citizens to work together so that by 2030, Jamaica will realize her true destiny as “the place of choice to live, work, raise families and do business”.

NATIONAL PLEDGE

Before God and all Mankind,
I pledge the love and loyalty of my heart,
The wisdom and courage of my mind,
The strength and vigour of my body,
In the service of my fellow citizens,
I promise to stand up for Justice, Brotherhood and Peace,
To work diligently and creatively,
To think generously and honestly,
So that Jamaica may, under God, increase in beauty,
Fellowship and prosperity, and play Her part in advancing the welfare of the whole Human Race.

We owe it to ourselves, and we owe it to Jamaica, land we love.



NOTES





CEMENTING OUR GAINS...
CREATING
A PROSPEROUS
FUTURE

Hon. Daryl Vaz, MP

Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation with responsibility for Land, Environment, Climate Change and Investments



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