



youth and culture

#NotLeavingItToChance

2014 Sectoral Debate  
Presentation by  
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#NotLeavingItToChance!





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# In service to the people

Mr. Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to the Sectoral Debate. I do not take this opportunity for granted. I remain committed to the people of SE St. Ann who have reposed their confidence in me. My sincere gratitude to my constituency executive, cluster managers, workers, my personal office staff, and my family of constituents who consistently go over and beyond the call of duty. To my four Councillors, a special thanks. I wish to salute, in particular, Councillor Lydia Richards who achieved a milestone, this year — forty-one years of dedicated service as a teacher.

A special tribute to my Prime Minister, who not only gave me the opportunity to serve, but continues to provide wise insights and guidance.

I must also say thank you to my political colleagues in this House and my regional executive management team, MPs and councillors.

Special Commendation to my Permanent Secretary and staff in the Ministry of Youth and Culture, my board chairmen and heads of agencies.

Finally, I wish to pay tribute to my family: my mother and sister; my rock, Richard and my inspiration, Alexander who continue to love and support me.

I would like to take a few minutes to speak about my SE St. Ann. I wish to

highlight a few projects that will be implemented this year. These projects will provide extensive benefits to the constituency and to the nation as a whole. These are the highway, health care, agricultural development and water.

Few realise that the SE of today is quite different from the SE St. Ann of yesterday. In my last election I received a boundary cut that removed almost 50% of my old voters and replaced them with voters from an adjoining constituency. This time I increased my margin of victory increased to 4,245.

As one of the largest rural constituencies, the need for adequate roads is paramount. We spent in excess of J\$45M over this past year doing major roads repairs. Importantly, however, the new highway, which will open shortly, will reduce the transit time to the constituency, opening up economic opportunities for people in Kingston and other parishes to come to St. Ann and do business.

This year we will be upgrading the water systems for Claremont, Higgin Town, McNie, Moneague Roadside, Walkerswood, Thatch Hill, Beecher Town and Parry Town. On April 25 we completed the laying of approximately 1,000 metres of Pipe so that all sections of the eastern side of the community of Parry Town are now being served or have access. We will

roll out the other projects shortly. I want to thank the Ministry of Water, Land and Climate Change as the residents of these areas will be able to breathe a sigh of relief.

I am also grateful to CHASE for funding the completion of the community centre at Rio Hoe with a full lifestyle park and sports facility for families to visit and enjoy.

I am grateful to the Minister of Health for responding to my appeals to have better health care facilities. In another couple of weeks we will open our Medical Facility - Centre of Excellence in Claremont. It will assist persons, not only in SE but across the parish with longer opening hours, more space, improved technology and additional days of operation. Patients, especially our elderly, will no longer have to travel to St. Ann's Bay but will be assisted closer to home.

Like most rural constituencies, the majority of my constituents earn their living through agriculture. Many farmers still speak of the glory days of AMC when they had a market for their produce. I was disappointed with the closure of National Meats in Lydford and the consequential job losses. Even though Lascelles relocated their distribution centre there, they too closed the cold storage in June of last year. But when one door closes another is opened. I am happy to report

that as at June 1, this year the facility will reopen at my urging. The focus this time will be on exports and supporting the local agricultural sector.

I wish to assure the member from NW St. Elizabeth that I have already implemented what he came to the house espousing and we have the full knowledge and support of the Minister of Agriculture who has been on this journey with me every step of the way.

At Lydford we will have cold storage facilities for farmers not only in SE but nationally, provide added processing to create more local value added, integrate agricultural production to the demands in schools and GOJ institutions and most importantly open export markets.

I have been meeting with the farmers in SE and representatives of RADA to coordinate a supply chain. A lot of work needs to be done, but we have laid the foundation for a brighter future for agriculture in this country.

Mr. Speaker my goal was to improve on the solid principles and objective of the AMC and I am happy that a local investor has taken up the challenge.

Finally, Mr. Speaker I wish to express my support for the pending possibility of the reestablishment of bauxite alumina activities in Lydford that were recently announced by the Minister of Science Technology Energy and Mining.

# Taking control of the development agenda

**‘Chance has never yet satisfied the hope of a suffering people’** — those are the wise words of Jamaica’s first national hero, the Right Excellent Marcus Mosiah Garvey. His words, simple yet profound, amplify the necessity for all of us, as leaders, to actively recognise that our people are the fibre which constitute the fabric of our societies and their needs must form the nucleus of our development agenda. Our priorities must not be accidental nor coincidental but we must take control of the development agenda and implement policies and programmes that will address the critical needs of all humanity.

Today, I speak on behalf of the majority of Jamaica’s population to confidently affirm to them, that what we do is expressly inspired by their dreams and aspirations.

That we recognise that if “the ends [we] serve are selfish, it will take [us] no further than [our individual selves] but the ends [we] serve that are for all, in common, will take [us all] into

eternity” together (Marcus Garvey).

Garvey’s wise counsel has hastened the steps and fuelled the energy of the Minstry of Youth and Culture so that today, I can honestly report to this house that our commitment to achieving three significant objectives we have set for ourselves has been focussed, strategic and deliberate. We have been focussed in improving the conditions for our children and adolescents, especially those in need of care and protection. We have been strategic in seeking greater opportunities for the empowerment of our young people, especially in the face of growing youth unemployment and a commensurate broadening of the cohort of youth at risk. We have been deliberate in enhancing Brand Jamaica through the revision of the Cultural Policy and creation of a Cultural Industries framework for the enhancement of the economic contribution of culture and the creative industries to the national economy.



It is abundantly clear that we have to be shrewd and strategic in the use of our resources and I am happy to say that we have managed to achieve our objectives through the creative and symbiotic relationship between Head Office in the setting and monitoring of the policy framework, and our Agencies through the implementation of the programmes and activities.

We have achieved a new level of integration and interconnectedness in our programme delivery among the Agencies, which I will demonstrate throughout my presentation.

Focussed, strategic and deliberate! We cannot and must not leave it to chance! And so in being focussed, strategic and deliberate, we were able to make significant strides

Here is some of the what we were able to achieve **for our children** last year:

- ✓ We improved our efforts to locate missing children. We were able to locate and return 1,723 of 2,205 children who were reported missing.
- ✓ The OCR and the CDA are now active in tracking and removing children from police stations who spend more than 48 hours in lock-up.
- ✓ We were able to remove all children from adult correctional institutions.
- ✓ We obtained a Cabinet decision to remove from our legislation label of "uncontrollable behaviour" ascribed to children who display extreme behavioural problems.
- ✓ We implemented a Mobile Mental Health Service for the South East Region to provide accessible and

consistent mental health services to wards of the state in critical need of assessment and/or therapeutic care.

- ✓ We initiated 'Art for Life' - a programme featuring the use of the performing arts as therapy and recreation at the South Camp Correctional Centre.

#### **For our youth:**

- ✓ We trained almost 9,000 of them for job placement.
- ✓ We trained another 5,000 in personal and career development across the island.
- ✓ We launched the Graduate Work Experience Programme (GWEP) in which we placed more than 300 young university graduates to work as interns. Mr Speaker, I am happy to report that many of them have transitioned to permanent employment.

#### **In Culture:**

- ✓ We completed the dossier for the nomination of our Blue and John Crow Mountains to the World Heritage List. Our nomination documents were accepted at UNESCO and we now await the arrival of technical experts who will evaluate our bid.
- ✓ Mr Speaker, through our focussed, strategic and deliberate action, Jamaica was elected to the membership of the important World Heritage Committee of UNESCO for the first time. This committee decides, among other things, which sites are inscribed on the World Heritage list.

- ✓ We also introduced the Culture Card programme in some of our corporate area high schools, giving young people free access to a variety of cultural and creative programmes offered by museums, heritage sites and national cultural events.
- ✓ We also began upgrading and enhancing the JCDC's events production capability through the acquisition of much-needed equipment and the training of young people in events production skills in collaboration with the NYS.



# Assessing the state of the Jamaican Child

If I have learnt just one thing in this post over the past two years it is simple this: aim not to overshoot the moon but land right on it. So we are quite heartened by these accomplishments and quite frankly in spite of all the challenges we faced during the past year, I can truly say that we have been encouraged by the strides we have made as we continue to aim high.

And that is why I am pleased that this debate is taking place during Child Month. This is not only a very special time of the year when we celebrate our children, but it is also the time when the nation makes a very deliberate effort to assess the state of the Jamaican child and how we are all doing as leaders, parents, caregivers, teachers, to give each child a better life.

I can confidently say that the Ministry of Youth and Culture has been doing our part in working to improve the lives of children in Jamaica. Sometimes the local commentary does not reflect this, however, the world has taken note of our achievements, so much so

that when I spoke at the United Nations last year November, Jamaica was congratulated on the progress the Government had made for children over the past year and was invited to host a Cross-Regional Conference focussing on eliminating Violence against Children. The conference will be held in Kingston next month. I want to say a very special thanks to our development partner, UNICEF, which continues to work with us as we seek to improve the lives of our children.

Last year, I said we needed to be honest with each other, to speak the truth, to see things exactly as they are, and not pretend otherwise. It is only when we commit to confronting the truth without fear that we can really see the magnitude of our problems and can earnestly begin to tackle them head on!

So even though we present achievements, of which we are proud, I am also the first to say that there is much much more that we must do.



# Children in Care

I turn to an area of challenge and great concern to all Jamaicans, the Residential Care of our children. Currently, there are 59 residential care institutions for children in Jamaica. Nine of these institutions are run by the Government through the CDA. The others are owned and operated by private interests including faith-based organisations with significant sponsorship from the Government. A preliminary audit of the operations of private institutions shows that the CDA contributes up to 90 per cent of the funding of these privately-operated facilities.

I wish to express, on behalf of the Honourable House, gratitude and appreciation to the many women and men who run these residential care institutions and take care of the children.

When I visit our residential care institutions — whether children's homes or places of safety — I can see that we are doing what we are supposed to under the Child Care and Protection Act. Yes, we give them three meals a day. Yes, we provide them with education by sending them to school. Yes, we provide them with security. Through my interactions with the children, I can feel that there is a gap. Something is still missing.

**“If you and your family were wiped out today, would you rest easily knowing that your surviving child would be sent to one of our residential care institutions?”**

Earlier this year I met with a group of senior caregivers to evaluate the level of care being offered to children in our residential care institutions. One by one they ticked off on their checklist the services being offered, and they were convinced that the institutions were doing well until I asked this one question that I had been asking myself — If you and your family were wiped out today, would you rest easily knowing that your surviving child would be sent to one of our residential care institutions? I now put that question to the House and to the nation. Would you?

I believe we would rest a little easier if we knew that every single child in care was guaranteed to be treated with as tender loving care as we treat our own. We would be a little more comfortable if every child in care was being exposed and given access to experiences that contribute to them developing into well-rounded and productive individuals.

We would all feel better knowing that our children would not be exposed to institutional indifference by staff who sometimes learn to become numb to problems.

It is not enough to feed and clothe a child and give him a safe and comfortable place to live.

Children need to be loved and and to feel loved, they need access to extra curricular activities, they need to be nurtured, to develop self worth and self esteem - to be encouraged to be best that they can. We cannot and must not leave it to chance!  
#notLeavingItToChance

Surely the answer isn't simply to increase the budget year after year and hope more children get served. The answer is to reorganise the child care sector beginning at the point of entry.

This will go a far way to assuring that the answer to that very thought provoking question will be 'yes' while ensuring that the J\$1.7 billion per year that we currently spend in this area is properly utilised. Accordingly, we have made a number of changes for this financial year to improve residential care. These changes will be effected through:

- increased capital expenditure for the upgrading of State care institutions, including the allocation of some of our recurrent expenditure towards significantly improving the care offered in our homes;
- ensuring that the right people with the right skills, training and attitude are in the positions to take care of our children;
- implementing co-curricular and extra-curricular programmes as well as training in social graces;
- making amendments to the legislation/regulation to enhance child care and protection;
- strengthening and expanding the Children and Family Support Unit of the CDA to continue the roll out of parenting seminars.

To make it all happen we will have to introduce the following to the sector:

- ✓ A new Case Management System as part of the technological upgrade to bolster our efforts to standardise and harmonise services to children
- ✓ A model child care centre to point the way to new standards of care
- ✓ A therapeutic facility to cater to the needs of a significant cohort of children in care.

### **Case Management System**

This new Case Management System will make it possible to track a child from entry into the system until he or she leaves. The system will also allow for the seamless sharing of information between the CDA and other child-serving entities such as the OCR, the Office of the Children's Advocate, CISOCA and the Children's Court. It will streamline the management of the intake process at all facilities, including referral screening for any behavioural challenges. This is to assist our approach to placement management by ensuring that we match children to the best placement alternatives. It will also improve our client information management, ensuring that at a moment's notice we can locate the child's medical and academic records. The other benefits of the Case Management System include service delivery monitoring, court processing and case load management.

This kind of approach is long overdue. We have identified the budgetary resources to begin roll out of the Case Management System this year. The total cost of this system is approximately J\$58M. It will be implemented over three years in phases. We are confident that through this management tool, we will see a significant improvement in the operations of residential care institutions in short order and that the children will be the beneficiaries of better controls through standardised service.

We're taking deliberate steps to improve the system because we cannot and must not leave it to chance! #notLeavingItToChance

### **Model child care centre**

For many years, the Maxfield Park Children's Home attracted significant contributions from companies and individuals. Let's face it, the Maxfield brand is strong. However, it is the GOJ that ensures that the facility stays open. Maxfield houses 83 children but it was designed to accommodate more than 170. Unfortunately, over the past couple of years the facility has limped along facing challenge after challenge. Maxfield must not limp, it must run smoothly. In fact, we believe Maxfield should become the standard for residential child care institutions. It was therefore critical to identify a team with the drive, passion and commitment to effect the change we all envision. I thank the previous Board, led by Ms. Minna Israel for their service. The new Board of Maxfield, led by Mrs. Lucille Brodber, has been tasked with transforming Maxfield Park into a model children's home and creating a template for the transformation of other homes over time.

I am pleased to say that they have hit the ground running demonstrating the kind of energy, commitment and enthusiasm necessary if we really want to make a difference. They have tapped into the generosity and goodwill of a number of public and private sector partners and have already identified a number of initiatives which can be implemented immediately. These include the physical development of the facility, building new dorms, introducing appropriate mentoring and spiritual programmes for the children as well as a review of the structure and operations.

In order to achieve this, there are a number of matters which have to be addressed including a review of the legal status of the home to see how it can become an incorporated GOJ institution. We are very fortunate to have two lawyers serving on the Board and they have been tasked with liaising with the Attorney General on this matter. Again, we are not leaving this to chance.

### **Therapeutic care facility**

Let me turn now to the third item in our major policy actions for this year: the construction of a child care therapeutic facility. It is important for me to give the House the background to the problem that this action will help to address.

This year, the OCR referred a total of 5,326 reports of child abuse to the CDA for investigation. The number has been increasing at the same time that we have been strengthening the Registry and expanding its reach across Jamaica. In the last financial year, we ensured that the Registry commenced operations in three new parishes — sharing spaces with the Child Development Agency in Manchester, St. Ann and Westmoreland. The sharing of resources helped the Registry to keep down its overheads and to put more resources into direct services to the public, particularly children. This year, the Registry will expand to St Mary.

Child abuse is more than bruises and broken bones — it is also emotional abuse and neglect. Those invisible types also leave scars. One of the consequences of child abuse is "significant short and long-term physical, psychological and behavioural health problems" (APA).



For a long time we have been seeing children displaying behavioural challenges. We used to call them "uncontrollable", took them before the Courts and they were remanded to a detention centre operated by the Department of Corrections on Correctional Orders. Detention centres were never designed to effectively support behaviour modification and so the children ended up in a worse situation than when they entered state care. It is accepted that "child abuse and neglect may adversely impact a child's physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development [and that] timely identification and appropriate intervention with individualised assessment and tailored support [are needed] to minimise negative consequences" (APA).

The proposed Therapeutic Centre is intended to address the effects of abuse against our children and give them the support to lead healthy and productive lives. The new facility will be staffed by mental health professionals who will assess children in care and design individualised programmes to support their treatment. It will be equipped to offer a behaviour modification and therapeutic intervention plan with the complementary care planning activities that embraces the best practices as outlined in the Child Care and Protection Act and rights based approaches provided for under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In keeping with our policy to ensure that, where possible, a child should be reunited with his/her family, all programmatic solutions will involve parents/guardians/caregivers. The facility once established will cater to both new entrants into the system as well as those children who are already in the system but who would have had

his or her order revoked. Mr Speaker, the Ministry of Youth and Culture is partnering with JSIF on the construction of the Therapeutic Centre. JSIF has committed J\$60M.

### ***Review Licensing Regime***

We will also begin, in this financial year, a review of the licensing regime for privately-operated Children's Homes and Places of Safety. The aim of this exercise is to ensure that all entities licensed to operate as Children's Homes and Places of Safety not only have the physical facilities, but also fit and proper staff with the requisite training and experience to offer the new standards of care that we will be insisting upon. We will insist that licensees present credible business plans to sustain the required levels of service. This is also part of our programme to improve the management of the facilities and enhance services to children. We cannot and must not leave it to chance! #notLeavingItToChance

## Parental Assistance and Training

We have to find ways of preventing abuse and neglect. This will be a challenge, because most often the abuser is a parent or a caregiver. Most of the reports of child abuse that we receive at the OCR is for neglect of a child, usually by a parent. This is evidence of an uncomfortable and worrying truth: too many parents are not living up to their responsibility. The easy and simplistic response would be to punish parents who have neglected their child and take away the child. Even if we had the resources to do that we would tread lightly because, in many instances, that would not be the best solution for the child. The best

place for children is with families — preferably, their natural family. We must do all we can to keep children in, or return them to, the care of their family. Let me be clear: I am not proposing to keep children with parents who neglect or harm them. I am proposing to help parents to become better mothers, better fathers, fit to raise children. We have begun the process!

This step required us to expand the mandate of the CDA to include helping parents to become better caregivers by giving them "the support they need to nurture and raise their children and effectively assume their childrearing responsibilities" (Unicef, 2003). We see it as our duty to keep families together by assisting parents to become more effective in their responsibility to look after their children.

We have held over 121 parenting seminars across the island to develop best practices for effective parenting. We have impacted 1500 parents who participated in the CDA parenting assistance programme so far and we plan to go even further.

## Child-friendly Spaces in Police Stations

Over the past few months we begun construction of child-friendly spaces in Police Stations in selected parishes. This was a controversial move, Mr Speaker, simply because there was some misunderstanding about what we were doing. Let me be clear: we are NOT building comfortable places to lock up children. The truth is, Mr Speaker, that several children interface with police stations everyday — children who are lost, for example — and sometimes they have to spend some time there waiting for their

parents or children's officers to come get them. Shouldn't they be able to wait in a proper facility, with good ventilation, comfortable and secure accommodation, suitable bathroom facilities, and perhaps books or games to reduce their level of anxiety as they pass the time? The four stations in the first phase are Barrett Town (St. James), Moneague (St. Ann), Bridgeport (Portmore, St. Catherine) and Nain (St. Elizabeth). The facility at Bridgeport has been completed and will be put in operation as soon as all stakeholders have done their inspections and given it the all clear. Work is progressing at Barrett Town and Moneague. The facility at Nain was delayed, but design has been done and the project sent to tender. Another four police stations are to be selected for improvement under the project in this financial year. Our goal is to have one child-friendly police station per parish.

## Review of our Laws in the Best Interest of our Children

The Review of the Child Care and Protection Act is proceeding. We held national consultations and received written submissions with recommendations for amending the Act. The Multi-Sectoral Technical Advisory Committee reviewed the submissions and made recommendations to the Attorney General for consideration ahead of submission to the Cabinet. Drafting instructions will be given as soon as Cabinet makes its decision.

We are also undertaking a Review of the Adoption Of Children Act which was first introduced in 1958. It is way overdue for an upgrade. In the review, we are attempting to harmonise the

Adoption Act with the Trafficking in Persons Act to address new and emerging practices that affect the safety and well-being of our children. We have held consultation sessions across the island and are now compiling the inputs for review and consideration by the consultant guided by the Multi-Sectoral Technical Advisory Committee. We are working towards bringing recommendations to Cabinet so that drafting instructions can be issued by the end of the year.

We have been focussed, strategic and deliberate. We are heartened by the strides we have made and we have been energised and encouraged to move forward to create the spaces we envision, implement the changes to manage the process and give the children in our care more than a chance but amazing possibilities to grow into... We cannot and must not leave it to chance!

### ***Possibilities to grow into***

So Mr Speaker, following the principles of the Art of Possibility, after this year, here is what it will look like for a child entering state care. A child comes to care for whatever reason - He's six years old, frightened and vulnerable. Utilising our new Case Management System he is registered, screened and placed in a care facility appropriate for his needs as presented at the time of entry. Soon after, he will be scheduled for an assessment either by the Smiles Mobile Unit or at the new Therapeutic Centre to determine his needs and how to address them. He is then placed in the institution best suited to offer care and support. In this home which will be modelled on our agreed best practices, he is nurtured by specially trained care givers carefully selected for their passion and vocation. He is well fed with nutritious

meals and healthy snacks, adequately clothed and comfortably housed. Let's say that he has been assessed with behavioural problems, is he is taken regularly for counselling, and receives regular medical and dental checks and treatments. He attends school every day and enjoys his extracurricular activities at school as well as those offered at the home coordinated by the Arts for Life Programme and Sports facilitators including music, dance, drama, art and craft, chess, netball, cricket and football. Attending church is one of the things he enjoys doing and he is mentored spiritually and emotionally through appropriate relationships with suitable role models. He excitedly looks forward to an annual excursion to one of the many national attractions and to using his Culture Card periodically giving him and his caregivers' free access to museums, heritage sites and national cultural events. He might not remain in care — he may be returned to his parents who have benefitted from our parenting seminars and are not able to take care of him. Or he may become a part of the Foster Care Programme or adopted by a caring and loving family. But if he remains in state care, Mr Speaker, we intend that he will be given more than just a fighting chance but instead by careful and deliberate means he will be given the opportunity to become a healthy, educated, well adjusted young man achieving his full potential. We cannot and must not leave it to chance!



# Deliberate action for youth development

**“It worries me that young people are still seeking training for jobs that will not exist in a few years while ignoring the skills that will provide the greatest opportunities.”**

This generation of young people is the largest the world has ever seen. The latest estimate put the number of young people between the ages 15 and 24 on the planet at 1.2 billion. Each year, around 121 million young people turn 16 and most of them begin seeking jobs.

Young people make up a quarter of the world's total population, yet they account for 40 per cent of the unemployed. Last year, the International Labour Organisation estimated that 73 million young people were unemployed across the world, which is estimated at 12.6% and is close to crisis peak. Additionally, the ratio of youth to adult unemployment stands at 2-to-7. Unfortunately, young people continue to be almost three times more likely to be unemployed than adults. These figures,

however, do not include the vast number of young people who are underemployed and are unemployable.

Here, in Jamaica, the unemployment rate for the 14-24 age group is 37 per cent — that's roughly 65,000 unemployed youth in the island (STATIN). I suspect that by and large this problem is repeating itself within CARICOM.

The job market has changed so much in the last 30 years and the primary driving force of these changes has been technology and the global economy. It worries me that young people are still seeking training for jobs that will not exist in a few years while at the same time ignoring the skills that will provide the greatest opportunities.



In order for us not to be marginalised in the global economy, we have to solve the problem of the disconnect between our youth's understanding of economic fundamentals, capital markets and Jamaica's competitive advantage in the world. Additionally, we must teach our young people how to go outside of their comfort zones, take risks with unbridled determination, break from traditional career paths without fear and — most importantly — to think big. We cannot and must not leave it to chance!

The reality is that we have to make a choice for them: we are either going to be world producers taking our place at the global table, or world consumers being marginalised in a world without boundaries. It is estimated that the world will need to create approximately half a billion new jobs by 2030, as more and more young people join the labour market.

The truth is that our youth in today's Jamaica are savvy, in tuned, have access to information and are not shy to ask for what they want. Persons under 30 represent over 53% of our population. What many lack, however, is the mindset that enables them to connect the dots of how their lives are directly impacted by the Global Economy. Many in this segment ask me on a daily basis: Why are there no jobs for my friends or me when we have college degrees? Or, why can't I get more money for the job that I have?

I believe that every member of this Honourable House has been asked similar questions by the young people they interact with each and every day. These young people make no bones about holding the Government accountable for their career development, as many were looking

towards public sector expansion for job opportunities. Well, that's not unique to Jamaica and in reality for most countries, that is no longer an option.

For the most part we have to reset the thinking of our youth and train them to have the courage to do things differently. This is what we have set out to do from the Ministry that I lead.

How will we respond? We have to prepare our young people to compete with the best in the world and we have to give them the skills and the support to build new, viable enterprises. In short, we have to create a new generation of entrepreneurs, Mr Speaker, to help alleviate the youth unemployment crisis.

First, we are determined that we are more likely to succeed as a team rather than as individuals. There are several exciting areas of opportunity but it requires young people to get together as a productive unified force and we need to facilitate their access to capital and business development that will allow them to properly present their products or services on a world's stage. To succeed in today's world being good, is not enough, you will have to be among the best.

I believe that for us to succeed in the future, we will need more entrepreneurs and multi-skilled persons to create the necessary jobs. Research worldwide suggests that the phenomenon of unattached youth - those not in school, not in work, or have no skills - has adverse consequences for the individual, society and the economy. In Jamaica, that cohort is estimated to be approximately 124,000. Empowering young people by creating favourable conditions for them to develop their

talents and actively participate in the labour market is essential for economic and social development and for achieving the goals of Vision 2030 Jamaica.

The traditional "job for life" has become rarer and youth entrepreneurship has to be seen now as an additional way of allowing the youth into the labour market while at the same time promoting job creation. It has been demonstrated that youth entrepreneurship is an option to create employment for their peers.

Young business people are quicker to see new trends and economic opportunities. Young people are active in high growth sectors.

Young people with an entrepreneurial spirit make better employees.

Young people are innovative and create new forms of independent work.

And young people who are self employed have "higher" life satisfaction.

So where do we go from here? We have been, and will continue to do our part, but it is critical for all of us to understand that the majority of our youth were never taught how to be an entrepreneur. That entrepreneurial experience and education will help our youth to develop new cognitive and non-cognitive skills that can be applied to other challenges that they may encounter as they develop. Opportunity recognition, innovation, critical thinking, resilience, decision-making, and teamwork are just a few of these that not only will redound to their best interest but the country as a whole if they are exposed and mentored.

# Generation of #jobCreators

This year, our agency the National Youth Service will be introducing NEW programmes aimed at enabling the next generation of #jobcreators.

As a follow-up to our entrepreneurship camps last year, the NYS will be launching our Entrepreneurship Programme by training over 200 young people who have the desire, the drive, and ideas to form sustainable businesses that create jobs. Included in the training programme will be coaching in business plan development and how to develop and present credible and effective business financing proposals. This programme will be available in selected parishes, and we will commit J\$20 million initially. Given our thrust to develop the next generation of business leaders, we will be moving swiftly to ensure that youth from across the island will have access to this training.

At the same time we will roll out Entrepreneurship 101 -- a series of sensitisation sessions in all parishes. We will target 1,500 young people. The experience from the sessions will be used to gauge the youth entrepreneurship interest for future roll out of the Entrepreneurship Programmes in those parishes. The House will be particularly pleased to know that we have made a deliberate decision to reserve 10 per cent of the spaces in the programme for youth with physical and development challenges. We will spend J\$35 million on this activity.

You will also be pleased to know, Mr Speaker, that we will be introducing an Empowerment Programme specially for Youth with disAbilities. This year,

we will target 100 young people with intellectual disabilities and assist them with personal and professional development skills. Under the programme, we will help them to identify what they're good at and what careers would suit them best. We will also assist our Youth with disAbilities to participate in voluntary, cultural and sporting activities. Elements of this 6-month programme were successfully piloted in 2013-14 as our Summer Empowerment Camp Project. We have budgeted J\$15 million for this programme.

Guided by the feedback from close to 4,000 young people who participated in the island wide "Express YuhSelf" consultations, the NYS will introduce "Youth Road Map to Succeed." Youth Road Map to Succeed will provide a complete set of guidance materials which can be presented in a classroom environment but will be augmented with youth friendly, online support facilities. The online resources will include résumé creation and self assessment tools, apps and links to self-development databases. This is make sure that they receive the cutting edge training that is now being used internationally to transition from school to work. Cost: J\$40 million

Our new Enrichment Programme will engage 500 youth at-risk in activities that focus on character building, career development, volunteerism and cultural awareness. Elements of this programme were successfully piloted in 2013-14 as our Summer Enrichment Camp Project. Cost: J\$20 million

Also for the first time we will be introducing an Industry Specific Skills ICT Development Programme that will engage 40 youth in animation, graphic design and videography training. We

have also built in exposure/internship opportunities into the programme to ensure that our young people will develop their technical expertise and be ready to start their careers at the end of the training. This is an J\$8 million programme.

This final new programme, is an example of the synergies that we are building across the Ministry of Youth and Culture. The NYS and the Jamaica Cultural Development Commission have entered into a partnership for the training and placement of 60 young people in the area of Events Management and Production. This programme was piloted with good results and will now become a standing offering from the NYS and the JCDC. Following the completion of a one week residential training in basic events management, the trainees will be assigned to JCDC offices islandwide to complete six months internship and receive a monthly stipend from the NYS, giving them much needed hands-on experience in the planning and execution of events during the Festival and Independence Celebrations. In addition to providing gainful employment for these youngsters over the six months period, they will be better equipped for further employment within the creative and cultural industry as Events Production Assistants (EPAs). We allocated J\$8 million towards this programme which commenced in April 2014 and will run to October 2014 following which there will be a review with a view of making it an annual programme.

Focussed, Strategic and Deliberate - Mr Speaker, we continue to roll out our new programmes that are aimed at ensuring that all participants are set on a long-term, sustainable path. This approach necessitates that the

speed of labour market integration but, importantly, to the quality and stability of employment as well. Consequently, skills training will place a focus on vocational skills, and web/ICT based skills that are in-demand locally and internationally. Our thrust is to ensure that we pool our resources to equip them for taking advantage of the areas that we are most competitive in within the global market place. Areas such as: Music and Culture, Sport, the BPO industry, Agriculture, Logistics and port facilities, and Tourism. Essentially, youth coming through the MYC will be prepared for not only these competitive areas, but also the online world of work.

So - as we aim not to overshoot the moon but to land right on it - the NYS will continue with some of their existing and successful programmes:

- ✓ The Graduate Work Experience Programme (GWEP) which provides valuable work experience to tertiary graduates up to 24 years old was introduced last year in response to the dual challenges of

graduates being unable to gain jobs without experience and who cannot gain meaningful experience without jobs. Over 300 Participants were placed for up to six months during which NYS paid them a stipend to assist with expenses. I am happy to report to the House that this year, a quarter of the participants will be young people with disabilities thanks to the involvement of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. This year we will spend J\$48 million on our tertiary students to place them in jobs.

- ✓ The Summer Programme which provides three weeks of work experience for school-aged youth during the months of July and August. This year we expect 4,000 participants.
- ✓ We will give Financial Assistance to 700 post-service participants who are pursuing tertiary education. These students are eligible to receive up to 20% of their tuition paid by the NYS over a period of

three years. The cost of this programme is J\$28 million

- ✓ Access to Higher Education Programme which provides financial assistance to students especially in rural areas including students at the College of Agriculture, Science and Education. Our target: for this period will be 100 students who will benefit at a cost of J\$12 million.
- ✓ We continue to push volunteerism. Our Volunteers Programme is designed to re-establish NYS' volunteerism emphasis by providing opportunities for young people across Jamaica to undertake community-based development projects. Youth participating in this programme will be drawn from among those currently engaged in NYS programmes. The cost for this programme is J\$16 million.

We are doing this as we intend to impact over 11,500 young people this year to the tune of \$322 million towards ensuring that we get them equipped, involved and productive.

New Programmes	Target	Proposed Budget	When
Youth Road Map to Success	4,000	\$40 M	Q3
Empowerment Programme	100	\$15 M	Q2
Enrichment Programme	500	\$20 M	Q2
Entrepreneurship Programme	200	\$20 M	Q2
Entrepreneurship 101	1,500	\$13 M	Q3
Events Production Assistants	60	\$8 M	Q4
Industry Specific Skills (ICT) Development Programme	40	\$ 8 M	Q3

Existing	Target	Proposed Budget	When
Summer Programme	4,000	\$72 M	Q2
Financial Assistance	700	\$28 M	Q2-3
Access to Higher Education	100	\$12 M	Q3
Graduate Work Experience	300	\$ 48 M	Q4
Volunteer		\$16 M	Q1 to Q4



# Re-energising Youth Governance and Participation:

With a 100% increase in FY 2013-2014 in funding to promote youth governance and leadership, the National Secondary School's Council and the National Youth Council movement were revitalised. Several key events were successfully hosted in the FY 2013 – 2014. This pool of funds provided needed support to the National Secondary School's Council (NSSC), The National Youth Council of Jamaica, (NYCJ), Jamaica Youth Ambassador Programme (JYAP) the Jamaica Union for Tertiary Students, various Youth Leaders and Groups. Our NCYD successfully monitored and ensured that:

- ✓ National Elections for the NSSC were held in November 2013.
- ✓ That National Executive of the NYCJ and thirteen Parish Youth Councils across the island are ALL now established and fully operational.
- ✓ The NYCJ Elections were successfully executed in November 2013.
- ✓ That training in leadership and advocacy, parliamentary procedures, protocol, meeting management, treasury, financial management, secretarial responsibilities and minute taking was conducted for national and parish executive members.

I am very pleased to have already received the plans which I requested for this financial year from both the presidents of the NYCJ and the NSSC and attention will be given to provide training and development support for

the new executives in an effort to ensure the successful implementation of some of their activities at the school and community levels. This will further promote effective governance and strengthen our democracy.

Furthermore, we will continue our Engagement of Youth Leaders and Groups. I am happy to report that we have audited over 400 community youth based organisations and as such we will provide financial support to the tune of J\$12 million in the form of Subvention or Grants to assist with the development of these various programmes.

## I Say I – Innovative Sports and Arts Youth Improvement Programme

The mission or output of this programme is to prevent and reduce the incidence of youth violence, crime, and other behavioural deviances and increase prospects of employment and life skills building in most at-risk youth 13-25 years old who are in conflict with the law. Last year, approximately 300 youth offenders in four Correctional Institutions were equipped with knowledge and skills to will help them to be more successful in their re-entry into mainstream society. The project continues at Hill Top, Metcalf Street, South Camp Road and Rio Cobre. Instruments and sports equipment have been delivered to the four institutions targeted. A Youth Empowerment Toolkit and Creative Arts and Sports Life skills Manual were developed from the programme to assist with the future instruction of juveniles in these spaces. Special training geared at using the I SAY I methodology (inclusive of the use of

the Manual and ToolKit developed), to teach youth engagement through the Arts and Sports will commence in FY 2014 - 2015. Youth Empowerment Officers, Probation Officers, Correctional Officers will be trained, The training will be done in partnership with Children First, Manifesto and Studio 174. This programme is supported by UNICEF to the sum of J\$10 million.

## Operation Phoenix

In an age where "spending time in virtual spaces" has become the norm for many of our youngsters, the YIC spaces gives youth from a wide cross section of the society access to a physical space and provides credible information and assistance relating to their personal and professional development, guidance and counselling, access to communication technology, assistance with entrepreneurial pursuits and a platform to express themselves using the Creative and Performing Arts, all in a safe youth friendly environment.

The construction of our Youth Information Centres (YICs) is ongoing. I just had the privilege of opening the Clarendon YIC. We intend to have 15 YICs opened by 2016. The contract has been signed for approximately J\$40million with DR Foote Construction for the establishment of the Hanover Youth Information Centre and construction has started. This activity is being conducted under the IDB/GOJ Youth Development Programme.

I want to stress that as a part of our strategic approach we will be incorporating the NYS into the YICs so that we can cut out recurrent expenditure for the NYS and also provide better value added services to

our youth. By doing this they will be able to access everything we offer at one stop.

## National Youth Policy

Work continues on the revision of the Policy and development of the mechanisms to support implementation.

I am not pleased that we have taken this long for the policy to be tabled. But we have had to ensure that we listened to all the voices and aspirations of our youth. As you are aware several groups exist.

Earlier this year I took the time to meet with the youth of the JFLAG, The Colour Pink and

other LGBT groups in consultation as well.

The draft Green Paper is in the last round of modification and is currently being reviewed by the Ministry. It will be going to Cabinet shortly. We are also in the process of fine tuning the implementation modalities of the policy, once it has been approved by Cabinet.

As such, although the merger of the NYS with the NCYD has been approved, the operational guidelines for the implementation are on hold until the policy is final.







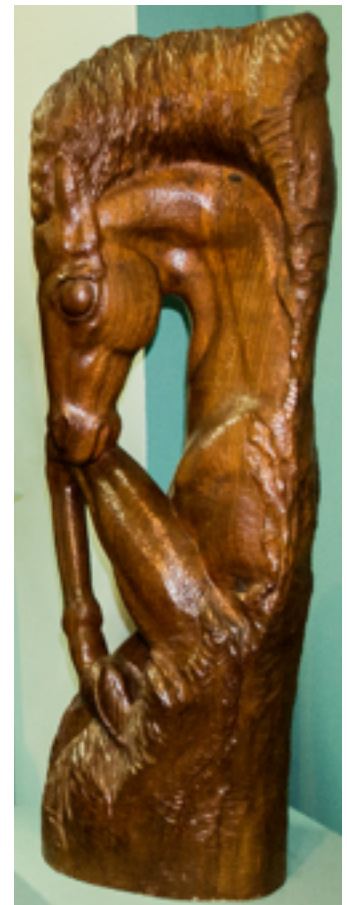
# This is Jamaica!

Jamaica's size belies the power and reach of its culture. For the iconic and widely circulated Rolling Stones Magazine to publish an entire edition on the life of our Reggae King and Icon, Bob Marley - over thirty years after his death, hailing him as the "first major rock artist to come out of a third world country" – demonstrates this. We are indeed, truly humbled that our culture continues to transcend language, colour, class and borders. For us, the cultural and creative industries give us a solid global competitive advantage and we are committed to utilising it for the prosperity of our people.

Our deliberate commitment to getting this done was demonstrated in the recently established National Cultural and Creative Industries Commission led by our Most

Honourable Prime Minister. The Commission, which is comprised of Ministers of Government, Cultural and Creative Industry experts and practitioners has been tasked with ensuring that Jamaica positions itself to leverage the significant economic and development opportunities emerging in the global market. Jamaica will also be exploring ways to develop a framework/mechanism for streamlining the definition, classification, certification and registration of cultural practitioners/organisations. This will facilitate them in the realisation of economic gain as they pursue their talents.

Our cultural acumen and talent did not happen by chance. Our history has moulded us but over many years, thousands of children, youth and adults



have benefited from the early 1950's with the Jamaica Festival of the Arts right through to our National Festival of the Arts training programme, a true example of culture's contribution to poverty alleviation and development. Today, the programmes offer unlimited access to creative development and exposure through our early childhood education programmes all the way up to high school. It is the vehicle through which many Jamaicans have been propelled to global recognition in music, dance, theatre, art, and culinary forms.

Culture is also a critical component of how we are approaching sustainable urban and rural development. The Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF) has given support to the Maroon and Rastafari communities to advance programmes which observe the preservation of their natural environment along with the heritage of their communities towards economic viability. Several projects have already been developed and in March of this year a village showcasing the "Rasta livity", that is, the philosophy, religion and lifestyle of Rastafarians was opened.

Centuries ago, as Jamaicans we were leading a cultural revolution which remains relevant to the world today. At a time when slavery was legal and women were seen as inferior to men, our national heroine Nanny led her people, the Maroons in a fight against oppression from the heights of the Blue and John Crow Mountains. It was in this space, that she -- one of history's important female military leaders - conquered the British 100 years before full freedom. Standing on the shoulders of our legendary heroine, we are extremely pleased that we have successfully submitted the Blue and John Crow Mountains for

nomination to become a World Heritage Site.

Undoubtedly, there is a natural mystic about our beautiful Jamaica, a special dynamic force that not only exists within the creative imagination of all Jamaican people but within the land itself. It is a force that is rooted in history - a history that connects so many peoples of the world. It is the force that is critical to any developmental plan.

I would like to believe that perhaps it was this force that inspired and propelled Garvey to herald into existence the UNIA which proudly celebrates its 100th Anniversary this year. As we mark this significant milestone in our nation's history, I boldly affirm that Jamaica intends to honour the wise counsel of Garvey and the lyrical energy of Marley as we move to claim our share of the global creative economy.

But it is not enough to mesmerise the rest of the world with our talent and creativity, We must manage the process so that we continue to not only spawn the best cultural talent, but move to market this talent to the world with purposeful and consistent arrangements.

With this goal in mind, it was critical that we moved the JCDC from being only talent developers to also talent managers. Because when we produce all of these gold medalists they need outlets to earn. So this year we will open an Artist Management Division at the JCDC which is a new component of the structure going forward. The Ministry of Finance has approved the J\$14 million budget to fund the staff whose terms of reference will be to identify markets for performers while acting as the central database for all

talent coming through our doors. When overseas groups come looking for talent they will be facilitated at the highest professional standards in keeping with the global industry.

The world continues to demand our creative talent and we are committed to meeting the needs of the creative market through increased development programmes. Our children and youth must be given full opportunity to realise their artistic potential.

## Festival of the Arts

We have, therefore, shifted the Festival of the Arts programme from the last term of the school year typically April to June, when the focus should be on exams, to the first term of school, September to December. Schools may now activate their arts programmes during the summer giving students adequate time to balance both their academic and artistic development. This is a major strategic shift but it will be in the best interest of the creation and promotion of our culture.

The NYS through the GWEP will place over 30 graduates as Performance Arts Specialists in each parish to assist with talent development. This year we intend to assign graduates from the Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts and the Excelsior Community College to the parish offices of the JCDC. These graduates will assist in the training and development of talent in the visual and performing arts in communities as well as providing assistance with the arts development programme in schools where this specialised skill does not exist. These Performing and Visual Arts Specialists will also provide training to unattached youths in



cultural centres to be established across the island. This is in keeping with our expressed objective to act as an incubator for local and rural talents. This program will commence this summer and will continue in one year cycles on an annual basis.

## Strengthening of Voluntary Community Participation

The modern Cultural (Festival) Movement was born out of voluntarism at the community level. In an effort to recapture this legacy, we have embarked on a resuscitation of the Voluntary Parish Committees across the island and I am pleased to report that we now have 14 Parish Cultural Development Committees up and running. These persons are energised, enthusiastic and are now busily involved in the planning of the upcoming Emancipation and Independence Celebrations in their respective parishes, in conjunction with the JCDC's Field Staff. Additionally in an effort to improve participation in the annual festival programme and to increase cultural awareness, civic pride and patriotism particularly among our youth, we strengthened our Culture Club programme in communities and schools island wide. The past year has seen a doubling of the number of clubs to 162 with an aggregate membership of 5,607 members.

## Independence 2014

Which brings me Mr. Speaker to Independence 2014 which we will be launching in the first week of June.

### **Jamaica Festival**

The major focus of this year's Emancipation and Independence

celebrations will be our continued efforts to develop and promote the Cultural and Creative Industries towards greater income generation, job creation and export earnings. In six days of excitement and wholesome family entertainment (August 1 – August 6) we will commemorate these two very important national anniversaries in a series of activities which will include:

- ✓ Live Music Tuesdays in every parish
- ✓ Independence Conversations
- ✓ the National Thanksgiving Service on Sunday, July 27
- ✓ Island-wide Emancipation Vigils
- ✓ Emancipation Jubilee
- ✓ Mello-Go-Roun
- ✓ Heart of Ska International Festival
- ✓ Aunty Roachie Short Film & Literary Festival
- ✓ Dutchie Food Festival
- ✓ The Big Stage: Pop and Variety Competition
- ✓ The Grand Gala

In addition to these major national events, all parishes will be staging a week-long schedule of celebratory activities.

### **The Big Stage**

The "Big Stage" will be rolled out to showcase the talent within communities: As a means of catering to the vast number of talented youngsters between the ages of 18 -35, the JCDC like the popular 'Americans Got Talent' show in the US, will seek to identify, develop, and expose the varied creative talents and performing skills of these

youngsters from rural and urban communities. Many of our popular entertainers had their genesis in this way. The target is to reach at least 2000 young people this year. The talent search has already begun and will conclude in August. This programme will provide an opportunity for training and an outlet for the showcasing of creative talents that are not captured in the regular JCDC's current menu of competitions.

The JCDC will be transforming the Ranny Williams Entertainment Centre into a modern venue. So far the facilities received a facelift ahead of hosting last year's Independence Village. This included the repaving of the roadways and parking lots, repainting of some of the buildings, the placement of 18 Jamaica 50 (wooden) shops. A redevelopment committee was appointed by the JCDC's Board that is currently exploring various initiatives for the continued development of the complex. Major work will be done on the facilities on Labour Day. The rental of the facility is a crucial source of additional revenue to the Commission and the aim is to increase its earning potential.

## Our Lasting Legacies

For the year 2014/2015, the Jamaica National Heritage Trust will declare 12 historical sites, four new and eight (8) previously gazetted under the JNTC Act. These include: Public Buildings at East and West King Streets, Bellevue (Mannings Hill), Half Way Tree Court House, Morant Point Lighthouse, Caves and Taino Carvings at Harmony Hall, Fern Gully, Negril Lighthouse and Kellits Sugar works. The Prime Minister has asked for some additional sites and we are now exploring them. The Trust will also seek to establish Heritage Clubs in approximately fifty schools for the year

# Information Services to the World

The National Library in an effort to maximise use of its resources will implement an alternative to the current library management system, which though very low in cost is the most effective at showcasing the NLJ resources locally and globally. The new system Worldcat Local will place the catalogue of the library's holdings into a global library catalogue that is discoverable through popular search engines such as Google, Yahoo and Bing. In a real way this new system will truly enable Jamaica to the World.

In addition, in recognition of the public's preferred mode of accessing information we launched the National Library of Jamaica Digital Collection. NLJDigital will create a digitised encyclopaedia of Jamaica for local and global references. This digital encyclopaedia includes material from the library's paper and photograph collection as well as the full text of 18th and 19th century Jamaican books already digitised by Google. NLJdigital can be accessed at <http://www.nlj.gov.jm>.

In a further move to preserve the nation's intellectual output, this year we will be transferring the legacy 16 millimetre film resources to digital and the concomitant dissemination of these resources through programming and social media.

I also want to use this medium to invite all Jamaica to our Distinguished Lecture: The 2014 Distinguished Lecture will be presented by novelist, poet and Panama historian Miss Olive Senior to mark the Centenary of the Panama Canal and its impact and influence on the construction of Jamaica's economy and culture. I

expect to see the Minister of Transport and Works and his entire team present.

## Poet Laureate

I also want to congratulate Professor Mervyn Morris as our Poet Laureate. This is the first time that Jamaica will have an official Poet Laureate; the last Poet Laureate for Jamaica was named in 1953 by an NGO. I want to thank Mrs. Winsome Hudson, the staff, and the Board of the National Library who played a major role with the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment as we worked together to achieve this very important milestone.

## Museum for the people

Last year we opened three new museums for the people of Jamaica - Seville, Roxborough and the People's Museum. Visiting museums, like visiting libraries, is an essential part of civic education as well as community and individual empowerment. This year we will focus on opening two other major ones.

For many years, in fact, since the days of our Independence, there have been calls to develop a National Museum of Jamaica which would be a museum for the people; a place where all Jamaicans, from all walks of life, could see, read and feel the amazing story that is our history. To witness the national narrative that is dramatic, extraordinary and often painful, but it is a story that all informed citizens need to be able to understand, and importantly, be able to respond to.

There have been many dreams and many plans over the years for a museum but nothing has happened.

Finally, we have moved to develop a National Museum of Jamaica. This museum, will be the centrepiece that spawns a network of community museums located across the island, that will implement the plans. I have overseen the establishment of the National Museum Foundation which will be raising the funds to support a National Museum in Kingston. The Council of the IOJ has designated upstairs of the 16 East Street Building as the space for this important space. I have already engaged key stakeholders, including past esteemed Prime Ministers, the Most Honourable PJ Patterson and the Most Honourable Edward Seaga who have agreed to be Patrons of our Foundation.

Concurrently, we are moving to develop the National Museum West in Montego Bay. This museum will be located in the Montego Bay Civic Centre and will explore the national narrative but with a special focus on Western Jamaica. This new centre will also incorporate elements of the National Gallery as well. It is my particular desire that National Museum West maintain a community focus with the histories and memories of our people. I am reliably informed that the National Museum Jamaica is already seeking out objects and narratives that will tell the story of our people and so I encourage members, particularly those with a Western leaning, to get involved. The Mayor of Montego Bay and his team are fully on board. Both of these projects will commence in this financial year.

I must also mention that we will be reopening our new, and modern Natural History Museum which has been closed for several years. Visitors will see a modern gallery with high tech displays as well the preservation of diverse ecosystems, plants and

animals found in only in Jamaica. Funding support has been received from CHASE and TEF. We expect this to be completed before the end of this fiscal year.

## The Gallery @ 40

The National Gallery of Jamaica will celebrate its 40th Anniversary this year. The 40th Anniversary Exhibition, which is titled In Retrospect: 40 years of the National Gallery of Jamaica will reflect on its history and pay tribute to persons who have contributed to its development. It will give an overview of the of landmark exhibitions and acquisitions and initiatives that have shaped the Gallery and the Jamaican art world since 1974. The exhibition will open on July 28, 2014 and we invite all Jamaicans to come and visit with us.

## Strategic Review of the Institute of Jamaica

The Council of the Institute of Jamaica has agreed to a comprehensive review of the operations and governance arrangements for the IOJ. It has become urgent for the organisation to examine its relevance and effectiveness in light of changing trends in the cultural landscape. The review is to be undertaken in this fiscal year and the recommended changes implemented in the next financial year. It is to be funded by CHASE.

## World Heritage

It was our goal to make history, and for the first time Jamaica was elected to the 21 member World Heritage Committee of UNESCO. The lobbying efforts were extensive and difficult and it came down to a nail biting finish. I had to go on the lobbying floor in Paris where over 190 countries assembled to ensure that we were seen and heard. We won, and will be participating in the First Meeting of this Committee, as the only SID, to be held in Doha, Qatar on June 15-25, 2014. As the Chairman of the National Commission for UNESCO, I want to thank UNESCO for their continuing support in the many areas of Culture, Sciences, Communication and Information, Education and welcome the new Director of the Caribbean office for UNESCO, Ms Christine Norton.

## Reparations

Given the history and consequences of slavery in Jamaica and the wider Caribbean, the issue of Reparations remains an important issue to the Government of Jamaica.

The Government's continued commitment resulted in the reconvening of the National Reparations Commission (NRC) in October 2012, currently chaired by Professor Verene Shepherd.

The NRC has recently completed its Status Report which explains the establishment and work of both the former and current National Commissions on Reparations, rehearses the genealogy of the movement and prior applications and claims; documents the legal and historical bases for reparatory justice, as well as provides critical data on beneficiaries and Jamaica's just monetary claim.

A CARICOM Reparations Commission was recently formed in July 2013 under the Chairmanship of Sir Hillary Beckles. The importance of the existence of the CARICOM Reparations Commission demonstrates regional commitment to the principles of fairness, equity and its resolve to address the ills of the past.

The NRC will work in tandem with the CARICOM Reparations Commission and the International Reparations movement as a way forward.



# Never leave to chance

Mr Speaker, when I began, I shared with this Honourable House, the guiding principles of Garvey which inspired my team and I to be focussed, deliberate and strategic in how we went about fulfilling our mandate and commitment to the people of Jamaica. Throughout this presentation I believe that I have demonstrated that by our approach towards identifying and implementing our priorities, that we were neither accidental or coincidental.

However, the portfolio responsibilities of the Ministry of Youth and Culture are as diverse as they are challenging, and with stakeholders, interest groups and individuals passionate and vocal in their advocacy, sometimes the voices can be conflicting, and polarising, often times sapping the energy of those of us who are on the front line. For too long, we have been fed a steady diet of negativity and defeat fuelled often by the destructive force of partisan politics. Some times, even I am amazed at how cleverly this behaviour is cloaked and disguised by those who seek to constantly and consistently denigrate and derail the best efforts of those who work so long, and so hard.

I am deeply saddened by the negative perception of politicians in general held by so many in this society and those who decide to give public service. Recently, I cringed Mr. Speaker as I viewed the music video of "Fighter" by two of our most popular and admired reggae/dance hall artistes whose music I also personally love and enjoy. I saw where a young man was told to go to the office of the 'dutty politician' for assistance. I thought how deeply troubling, that these two young artistes, so creative, talented and highly influential should mirror, validate, and deliver such a negative perception of politicians so creatively and so artistically.

The accusations of being evil and corrupt are deeply hurtful to the innocent. But I believe that those of us who chose this path, should at all times be mindful of the tremendous responsibility we bear. That each and every one of us seated as Members here today should at all times seek to honour the oaths we took when we entered this Honourable House. Mr. Speaker, we are only human and sometimes we will stumble, and we will fall, but we need to hold the bar of scrutiny very high, and if we agree,

that when we sounded that trumpet or rang that bell that we did so because we all have the best interest of this nation at heart, then we will not fail or disappoint those we swore to serve. Failure for us is not an option.

I believe that when the Rt. Excellent Norman Manley came to the defence of the Rt. Excellent Alexander Bustamante as his attorney when he was incarcerated, it was more than just about being related. They put aside their personal ambitions, driven by conscientious principles, to act in the best interest of our young democracy for the upliftment of our people. What a demonstration!

What will this generation, my generation, do to unite and build a Jamaica of which we can all be proud? Perhaps we could be guided in our actions and our conduct by pondering on the poignant lyrics of "Fighter" (Damion Marley and Cham) as it lays out in gritty detail the lot of Garvey's 'suffering people' whose experience suggests that "the system does not favour the common man". However, we will not be able to lead or represent those who are cynical and suspicious of us, as is so graphically



portrayed in that same music video for the song, where the young man indeed was told to go to the office of the 'dutty politician boy' for assistance.

The determination and level of defiance in the lyrics "we shall reap the riches plentiful like the grains of sand" reveals that these riches can be accomplished by fair means or by foul ones, with or without our input as leaders and policy makers. Therefore, I believe it must be our job to develop the policies and create the environment for our people to get these 'riches' fairly and honestly.

I am of the firm view that the best way to change these perceptions and honour our heroes and our oath, is to demonstrate by our own deeds and conduct that we in fact the fighter in Damion Marley's portrayal " a beacon on the

mountain, shining through like the rising sun... the ones who never stop till the work is done" and not the other juxtaposition.

We must, each and every one of us make a commitment as of today to be a force of motivation and inspiration to the young people of Jamaica, to 'never stop till the work done', and with every fibre of our being - to do everything in our power, to remove the degrading, dismissive and disparaging labels ascribed to us as politicians.

Only then can we be truly confident that as leaders, boldly leading from the front, that when we pause to look behind, we see that there are others following... this commitment we must never leave to chance!



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