



GOVERNMENT OF JAMAICA

# SECTORAL PRESENTATION

2018-2019

*Presented by:*

**Hon. Desmond McKenzie, CD, MP, JP**

Minister of Local Government & Community Development

**GORDON HOUSE**

**Wednesday May 16, 2018**

**Developing Local Government Capacity  
and Performance  
Through Elevated Capital Investment**



Mr. Speaker,

**Acknowledgments, Constituency, Family, etc.**

I want to thank the Most Honourable Prime Minister for the confidence he continues to repose in me, to continue the transformation of Local Government. Let me declare at the outset that this Administration is the most progressive to have governed Jamaica in decades, especially in relation to Local Government. I make that statement with confidence, as someone who has observed and been involved in the history of local government over the last 41 years. This Administration is infusing Local Government with new life, through innovative programmes that are restoring its intimacy and meaning to our people, and I am humbled and proud to be the one who is now shaping the present and the future of local government through this time of fundamental change.

- ◆ The process of transforming this level of Government for national prosperity involves not only the implementation of major policies and programmes, but also the **investment of significant money and time in the social and physical infrastructure of Local Government.**
- ◆ Our burning desire for a better life for everyone is inspired by the National Pledge, and especially, its call for us to “...work diligently and creatively, to think generously and honestly, so that Jamaica may, under God, increase in beauty, fellowship and prosperity...”
- ◆ **After two years, 2 months and 9 days in office, 800 days Mr. Speaker, this Administration is demonstrating in real terms, and in a real sense, its commitment to our people through substantial and continuing capital investments in the structures and services of Local Government.**

## GOVERNANCE, COMPLIANCE TRAINING AND ORIENTATIONS

- ◆ Two weeks after the November 2016 Local Government Elections, we began, through Regional Orientations, the official process of preparing new and returning Councillors for the higher levels of service delivery and governance expected of them.
- ◆ Additionally, all the Auditors in the 14 Municipal Corporations were trained in **Risk-based Auditing**. The three Local Authorities for which audits were not completed in 2016/17 (Portmore, Portland, Kingston and St. Andrew) were audited in 2017/18.
- ◆ As a result, there have been significant improvements in the Audit function within the Local Authorities.
- ◆ Auditors are now preparing and operating from their Risk-based Plans, records are being maintained and Management is being formally held to account through responses required for written reports.
- ◆ Similarly, we are seeing positive signs resulting from the orientations and meetings with the elected representatives. In this regard, I must identify the **Hanover Municipal Corporation** as one of those that has worked hard to reverse the many incidents of non-compliance that had made it a frequent subject of the Contractor-General's Reports.
- ◆ **Mr. Speaker**, the improvement in standards observance is also to be seen in the Local Authorities management of the **Development Approvals** process.
- ◆ **In the last financial year, 2017/18, the Local Authorities and partner Agencies processed 4,527 applications valued at \$65.4 billion, and approved 3,493 within 90 days: an 89% approval rate. This is the highest rate of application approval within this benchmark period, since 2013/14, when the rate of approvals within 90 days was 80%.**

## SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMME

### Municipal Social Assistance Fund, Infirmaries, Drop-In Centres, Education of Poor Children

- ◆ We also started the unprecedented process of allocating dedicated financing to the elected representatives through the four-pronged, \$400 million **Municipal Social Assistance Programme (MSAP)**, to strongly enhance their effectiveness at assisting the vulnerable in their Divisions. The Programme was part of the over J\$700 million the Ministry provided to enhance social protection, through Administrative Support to Councillors, Social Housing Assistance, Indigent Housing Assistance, and Education and Funeral Grants.
- ◆ **Mr. Speaker**, every Division received J\$300,000 as Education and back to school grants and other educational related services. J\$25,000 is provided to each Division monthly for office assistance. The Councillors have expressed great enthusiasm for the Programme, and we will continue with it this year.
- ◆ **Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, \$386.7 million will be spent in this financial year.**
- ◆ **\$68 million will be allocated for Administrative support/Office assistance, \$114 million will be devoted to Funeral and Education Grants, \$90 million will be spent on Indigent Housing while \$114 will be dedicated to Social Housing.**
- ◆ One of my strong desires, **Mr. Speaker**, is to see our indigent citizens outside of infirmary care, living in housing that reflects and promotes not only dignity, but modernity, an improvement over the traditional wooden indigent house. We have started in an incremental way to change this reality.
- ◆ The Ministry, in partnership with the Clarendon Municipal Corporation, designed and built two modern, concrete indigent housing solutions at Palmer's Cross and Crofts Hill. These structures feature among other things self-contained kitchens and bathrooms, and proper ventilation for the occupants. I was honoured to hand over keys to these houses to **Ms. Patsy Wheatley at Palmers Cross and Mr. & Mrs. Earl Fearon at Crofts Hill. They are here with us today Mr. Speaker, and I want to recognise them.**



Hon. Minister Desmond McKenzie hands Mrs. Gilda Fearon the keys to her brand new home in Crofts Hill Clarendon.



Hon. Minister Desmond McKenzie hands Ms. Patsy Wheatley the keys to her brand new home in Palmers Cross, Clarendon.

- ◆ I am also pleased to announce that 28 such indigent houses will be built, two per parish in this financial year, at a cost of \$52 million. The process will begin St. Andrew, where sites have been identified in Irish Town and Kintyre, and the parishes of St. Thomas and Hanover will be next in line for the construction of these houses.
- ◆ We are also continuing **Mr. Speaker**, the work of improving the infrastructure of our **infirmaries** island-wide, which now house 1,405 residents. In the last fiscal year, a new Female Ward was constructed at the Portland Infirmary.
- ◆ A Doctor's Office, Nurse's Station and store room were constructed at the Manchester Infirmary.



A frontal view of the newly constructed Female Ward at the Portland Infirmary.

## Developing Local Government Capacity and Performance Through Elevated Capital Investment

- ◆ A new dining area was built at the St. Elizabeth Infirmary, and construction commenced on a new Female Ward at the St. James Infirmary.
- ◆ Construction of a facility was started at the St. Catherine Infirmary to house social cases from the nearby Spanish Town Hospital. These are persons who live on hospital premises after being treated, because they have nowhere to go.
- ◆ **This year, we will commence construction of a new Male Ward at the Portland Infirmary, at a cost of \$45 million.**
- ◆ **A new Female Ward will be built at the Manchester Infirmary, at a cost of \$45 million, while a new Male Ward will be built at the St. James Infirmary, at a cost of \$38 million.**
- ◆ **The St. Elizabeth Infirmary will receive a new Administrative Building (\$16 million), while new Matron's Quarters will be built at the Westmoreland Infirmary (\$20 million). Solar Panels will also be installed at the infirmaries, at a cost of \$16 million.**
- ◆ **These works will be done at a total cost of \$200 million, through a joint partnership with the National Housing Trust (NHT). In this regard, I wish to publicly applaud the vision and energy of the NHT Board and in particular, the recent Chairman, now the Minister of Finance and the Public Service.**
- ◆ **I am also pleased to announce that in partnership with the Ministry of Health, we will be constructing 10 double units at the St. Ann, St. James, Manchester and St. Catherine Infirmaries, to address the needs of social cases in hospitals.**
- ◆ As I have previously indicated in the public domain, **Mr. Speaker**, we have moved to change not only the infrastructure and capacity of the Infirmaries, but also their brand identity, so that our people will have a far greater appreciation for the services they provide.
- ◆ Through the **Human Services Bill**, which is now before the House, the infirmaries will be renamed as **Adult Residential Care Facilities**. Since the tabling of the Bill, we have been engaging employees in the Local Government system, trade unions and other stakeholders about its purposes and features, and I will, at the appropriate time be piloting this important piece of legislation.

- ◆ **Mr. Speaker**, we continue to demonstrate an active concern about our homeless population. The latest Point-In-Time survey conducted by the Ministry in July last year, revealed 1,935 identifiable homeless people in Jamaica.



(L-R) His Worship the Mayor Michael Belnavis, Hon. Shahine Robinson, Member of Parliament for North East St. Ann and Minister of Labour and Social Security looking on as Hon. Desmond McKenzie cuts the ribbon signalling the official opening of the St. Ann Drop-In Centre.

- ◆ We are erecting additional **Drop-in Centres** to assess, feed, treat, counsel and otherwise care for our homeless citizens. New Drop-in Centres are being constructed in Hanover, St. Mary and St. Elizabeth. **Work on the St. Ann Drop-in Centre is complete, and I was pleased to have officially opened it last Friday, May 11. This year, Drop-in Centres will be built in St. Thomas and in Trelawny, at a cost of \$28 million.**
- ◆ In addition to all these things, this Administration is devoting increased resources to expand the number of Poor Relief Officers. Their technical capacity continues to be enhanced through Human Services Training, and 15 candidates are currently being trained, **Mr. Speaker**.
- ◆ On the subject of education, **Mr. Speaker**, **one of the greatest highlights of the Social Protection Programme, is the assistance that we are giving to poor children through Educational Grants.** We are ensuring that their tomorrow will be completely different from their circumstances of today. Every year, a special ceremony is held to award these children who have excelled in the GSAT, CSEC and CAPE exams. **In the last financial year, grants valued**

at over one million dollars (\$1,016,000), were awarded to 58 students to pursue studies at the secondary and tertiary levels. **Mr. Speaker**, I have seen the transformational effect that these grants have had on these talented and determined children, in my own constituency. We will do everything to ensure the development of this vital component of social protection.

## EMPLOYMENT CREATION AND FACILITATION

- **Mr. Speaker**, we are striving to incorporate our young people into an appreciation of Local Government, while giving them incentives and using their energy and talent to help the Ministry to undertake crucial activities. In this way, the **YOUTH SUMMER EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME will continue to generate employment opportunities.**
- In 2017/18, over 2,300 young people from the 228 divisions were employed to undertake tasks relevant to the Ministry's core functions including a **Streetlight Audit, Missing Street Sign Data Collection and collection of data on the Vulnerable in Communities.** The data collection programme provides the Ministry with the relevant information to improve service delivery. **This year, we intend to increase the number of participants in the Programme to 3,000.**



The Most Honourable Andrew Holness, Prime Minister of Jamaica and Hon. Desmond McKenzie, Minister of Local Government and Community Development are flocked by happy participants at the official launch of the 2017 Youth Summer Employment Programme (Jamaica College Auditorium).

- ◆ **Mr. Speaker**, we faced challenges in implementing all the **MARKET REHABILITATION PROJECTS** we wanted to get off the ground last year. However, we completed and officially opened as promised, Phase 1 of the **Clark's Town Market** in Trelawny, which includes a new Transportation Centre. Electrical works were also carried out at **Linstead Market** in St. Catherine, at a cost of \$12 million.



Public Passenger vehicles occupy the newly constructed Clark's Town Transportation Centre in Trelawny.

- ◆ After many setbacks, **Mr. Speaker**, works have now commenced at the **Port Maria Market** in St. Mary, with a budget of \$55.9 million and a completion target of April 2019. The Falmouth Market in Trelawny was also rehabilitated at a cost of \$300 million, through partnership with the Port Authority of Jamaica.
- ◆ A modern market infrastructure is critical to economic development. It is an important component in the effort to reduce the drift from rural to urban centres, and is also vital to improved traffic management in and around the market districts. Accordingly, **Phase 2 of the Clark's Town Market** will commence this year, at a cost of \$20 million.



(L-R) Mr. Andrew Harrison, CEO of the Trelawny Municipal Corporation, His Worship the Mayor of Falmouth, Cllr. Colin Gager, Hon. Desmond McKenzie, Minister of Local Government and Community Development and Mr. Victor Wright, Member of Parliament for Northern Trelawny, break ground for the construction of the Clark's Town Market.

- ◆ In Hanover, the **Hopewell Market** will be refurbished, also at a cost of \$20 million, while in St. Andrew, the **Stony Hill Market** will be refurbished at a cost of \$30 million, and the **Papine Market** will be repaired at a cost of \$18 million. The **Charles Gordon Market** in St. James will be refurbished at a cost of \$15 million.
- ◆ **Mr. Speaker**, everyone who uses our markets will shortly benefit from a tremendous partnership between the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development, and the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries. **That Ministry, under the leadership of the Hon. Audley Shaw, is providing this Ministry with \$400 million for the development of markets across the island. This level of investment has not been made in our markets infrastructure for many decades, Mr. Speaker, and I wish to thank Minister Shaw for his vision and energy.**
- ◆ However, **Mr. Speaker**, I am issuing a cautionary word from the outset, that I wish to be clearly heard and understood in every community and town centre. **This market development programme will not be implemented, only to have vendors stay outside the facilities. This programme is not only about rehabilitating our markets. It will also be the beginning of the end of the practice of vendors selling their wares on the streets, and creating challenges to spatial order and traffic management.**

## Developing Local Government Capacity and Performance Through Elevated Capital Investment

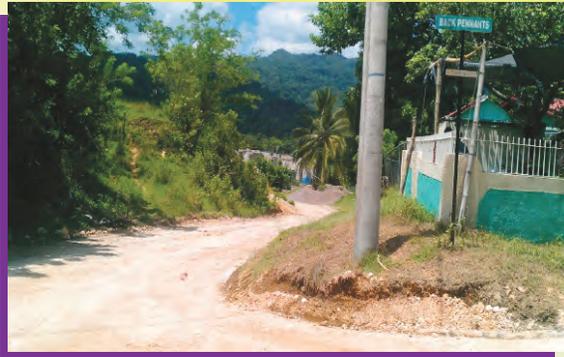
- ◆ There are over 50 active markets in the country, and the Spalding and May Pen Markets in Clarendon are among the few that are filled to capacity with vendors. The experience of vendors selling outside the markets has become a norm that we are determined to undo. Accordingly, I will be meeting with the vendors and their Associations in all the parishes, to ensure understanding and full compliance.
- ◆ I turn now, **Mr. Speaker**, to access to potable water, which is an international development standard, and for which this Ministry has the responsibility of providing minor water supplies. Last year, we commenced the programme of installing **WATER SHOPS** in drought-stricken communities, at Pennants in Clarendon, at a cost of \$10 million. We have been extremely encouraged by the positive responses to this programme, and have since that time built another Water Shop at Marlie Hill in Manchester, which I officially commissioned into service day before yesterday, **Mr. Speaker**. This year, we will focus on St. Elizabeth, where four selected communities and its environs will benefit from the construction of Water Shops, at a cost of \$32 million. In short order the Bellefield division in central Manchester will also benefit from the construction of its own Water Shop.



**Ms. Cassanova taking the first sip of water from the newly opened Water shop in Marlie Hill Community in South Manchester.**

- ◆ Access to proper **PAROCHIAL ROADS** is a real and constant demand from our citizens within their communities, **Mr. Speaker**, and we have been making concerted efforts to address this need.
- ◆ In the last financial year, this Ministry invested \$248 million on flood damaged and other roads in a number of parishes, and spent \$115 million on Phase 1 of the Island-wide Drain Cleaning Programme.

## Developing Local Government Capacity and Performance Through Elevated Capital Investment



Before and after pictures showing the rehabilitation of the Back Pennants Community Road in Clarendon.



Before and after pictures showing a section of the Forte Road in Manchioneal, Portland, which was rehabilitated during the 2016/2017 fiscal year.



Before and after pictures showing a section of the Forte Road in Manchioneal, Portland, which was rehabilitated during the 2016/2017 fiscal year.

- ◆ This year, the Administration has increased six-fold, the level of investment in the improvement of our parochial road network. Since financial year 2013/14, the annual provision for repairs was \$19 million. This year, it is \$110 million. It is a reflection **Mr. Speaker**, of the economic space that this Government has worked hard to create, so that more money can be spent directly to improve peoples' lives.

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- ◆ In my last contribution, I raised the challenges that many of the Local Authorities are facing with regard to obtaining new lands for public cemeteries. We are working with the Municipal Corporations in this regard, **Mr. Speaker**, and we will also be devoting \$30 million for the cleaning of cemeteries in this financial year. I wish also to advise the House on the progress of works at the **Thetford Memorial Park**, at Church Pen in Old Harbour. I announced this in my contribution last year as an initiative of the St. Catherine Municipal Corporation that is being supported by the Ministry.
- ◆ Landscaping works are to begin shortly, and the gate and perimeter fence to the 25-acre property have been completed and installed. The road within the cemetery has been completed and the access road to it has been repaired. 200 burial vaults have been built, and the initial projection is to build 500 vaults.
- ◆ These works have been undertaken at a cost of \$75 million, and I wish to commend Mayor Norman Scott and the Administrative staff of the Municipal Corporation as they proceed to create a modern facility that will ensure final dignity for the deceased and their loved ones.
- ◆ As is well known, much of the revenue that is used to finance the services that Local Government provides and facilitates, comes from **PROPERTY TAXES**.
- ◆ In this regard, **Mr. Speaker**, we have had a year of mixed results. We conducted a sensitisation and compliance campaign, which included Town Hall Meetings in the parishes with the lowest levels of tax compliance. I must say that the turnout to these meetings and the enthusiasm of the participants was very encouraging.
- ◆ Having collected \$7.6 billion in 2016/17, and in so doing exceeded that year's target, the standard was raised for 2017/18. Unfortunately, the total collections for the last fiscal year of \$8.5 billion – though \$800 million higher than the previous year's collections – did not meet the revised target of \$9.6 billion.
- ◆ Having analysed the matter, **Mr. Speaker**, we recognize that the results we experienced were substantially due to the fact that the **Mobile Units** introduced into the system, are still not approved to collect cash. In the last financial year, \$240 million was collected by the Units, and we have received clear feedback that our rural property owners prefer to pay their taxes using cash.

## Developing Local Government Capacity and Performance Through Elevated Capital Investment

- ◆ We have now retrofitted the Mobile Units to take cash in a secure way **Mr. Speaker**, and we are awaiting the final inspection report from our partners, Tax Administration Jamaica, as well as official approval to proceed from the Ministry of Finance.
- ◆ We will also be revising the marketing and collection strategies to ensure that we can substantially raise compliance levels in a number of parishes. In 2017/18, compliance levels were lowest in St. Catherine (75%), Westmoreland (77%), Clarendon (76%) and St. Elizabeth (67%).
- ◆ One of the services supported by Property Taxes is **STREETLIGHTS**, **Mr. Speaker**, and the financing of this vital service continues to be challenging. **Over the last 9 weeks, \$1.7 billion has been paid over to the Jamaica Public Service Company, to address arrears, and this is where the greater weight of this challenge lies. When this Administration came into office in 2016, it inherited a debt of \$3.7 billion.** Over the 2017/18 financial year, the bill for streetlights to the Jamaica Public Service Company (JPSCo.) was \$3.29 billion. In the same period, the Ministry disbursed \$2.4 billion to the Company.
- ◆ **Since April of this year, the Ministry has been billed \$303.6 million, and has paid \$400 million. Overall, Mr. Speaker, \$3.9 billion has been paid to JPSCo. in the last two years.**
- ◆ We continue to have discussions with the company to ensure that the arrears, which are still over \$6 billion are reduced and ultimately liquidated.
- ◆ In the meantime, the 3-year **Smart LED Streetlight installation programme**, which started on June 1 last year, is proceeding apace, **Mr. Speaker**. The installation target for 2017 was 35,000 Smart LED lamps, and JPSCo. has reported that between June last year and January this year, 36,445 lamps were installed. These were placed in St. James, Trelawny, Hanover, Kingston and St. Andrew, St. Catherine, St. Mary, St. Ann and Westmoreland.
- ◆ **The target for 2018 is 15,000 LED lamps, Mr. Speaker**, and the aim is to ensure that the agreed installation target of 105 thousand lamps is achieved. The JPSCo. is reporting that between January and the middle of March this year, 229 LED lamps have been installed in sections of St. Mary, St. James, Manchester and St. Catherine, including 134 along the Mandela Highway.

## Developing Local Government Capacity and Performance Through Elevated Capital Investment

- ◆ **Mr. Speaker**, the **SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (SDC)** continues to execute its mandate of community transformation impressively.
- ◆ The SDC's work has been and remains critical to the Government's social intervention strategies being implemented as required by the **Law Reform (Zones of Special Operations) (Special Security and Community Development Measures) Act 2017**.
- ◆ Through the **Local Economic Development Support Programme**, new entrepreneurs are being created and the skills of existing ones are being enhanced. Significant employment is being created through this flagship programme. **In the last financial year, 1,797 jobs were generated by a capital outlay of \$844 million, the majority being full-time jobs.** Through the SDC's Business Fairs and related business development activities, **business proposals valued at \$127.5 million were developed and submitted. Our people are responding to the call to not just seek jobs, but to create jobs, be their own bosses and experience prosperity.**



- ◆ Under the **Priority Planning and Project Development Programme**, 24 community projects were completed at a value of \$75.3 million.

- ◆ Our citizens are also benefiting from the **Community Incentives and Grants Programme. 15 Local Economic Development Grants, 11 Community Priority Plan Grants, 7 Governance Capacity Grants and 248 Government of Jamaica Administrative Grants cumulatively valued at \$10.7 million** were approved in the last fiscal year, and incentives valued at over \$1 million were also paid.
- ◆ The Agency is also actively facilitating improved governance at the community level. The SDC is working with existing Parish Development Committees and Development Area Committees to ensure their compliance with the requirements of their structures, such as holding Annual General Meetings. All of this is in addition to the successful management of the Agency's cricket, football and netball competitions, in which a total of **453 teams participated, and from which, Mr. Speaker, 77 community projects were financed through \$2 million out of the prize moneys that were awarded to the winning teams.**
- ◆ This year, **Mr. Speaker**, the SDC will be rolling out a pilot programme, that will be vitally important to this Administration's medium and long-term vision of development at the community and parish levels.
- ◆ The objectives of the **Community Education Support Programme (CESP), are to mobilise communities and stakeholders to reduce truancy, improve school attendance and implement educational activities at the community level. The pilot will include Student Enrolment and Attendance Surveys as well as various community education activities.** I will say more about this Programme in due course, **Mr. Speaker**, but I ask that all the elected representatives at the Divisional and Constituency levels give the SDC their total support. You are seeing the important work that this Agency is doing on the ground, and I am looking forward to the results from this initiative.
- ◆ **Mr. Speaker**, the **OFFICE OF DISASTER PREPAREDNESS and EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (ODPEM)** is steadily building Jamaica's capacity to prepare for and respond to nature's challenges, and enhancing the country's reputation throughout the Caribbean as a reliable disaster response partner.
- ◆ As a sub-regional focal point for the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) network, which intervened after Hurricanes Maria and Irma, ODPEM was integrally involved in assessment, assistance and rescue activities in the Turks and Caicos Islands, Dominica, British Virgin Islands and St. Maarten.

## Developing Local Government Capacity and Performance Through Elevated Capital Investment

- ◆ In Jamaica, the Agency has also been doing important work in rationalising the complement of **shelters** across the island. A Shelter Survey has been conducted, Assessment Reports have been completed and Parish Shelter Maps have been developed. This year, ODPEM will be conducting Shelter Management and Emergency Operations Centre Training in all the parishes, on a regional basis. This is a vital preparatory tool for the Atlantic Hurricane Season, which is just five weeks away.
- ◆ The **National Disaster Risk Management Volunteer Programme (JAMVOL)** was also launched in the last financial year. This Programme has been created to attract and train volunteers in community disaster management. This is a critical means of empowering communities to be their own first responders, **Mr. Speaker**.
- ◆ **I am very pleased that over 2,000 people have been registered as Volunteers, with 150 already trained and equipped to preserve their communities. It is the intention this year to significantly increase the complement of volunteers to 5,000.**
- ◆ **Mr. Speaker**, the investment in institutional capacity is fully evident at the **JAMAICA FIRE BRIGADE**. In February, 106 men and women were fully inducted into the Brigade as Firefighters. Their efficiency in the field will be significantly improved, due to the expansion in the fleet of fire response, command vehicles and ambulances.



106 men and women successfully completed their training in 2017/18, to officially join the Jamaica Fire Brigade.

## Developing Local Government Capacity and Performance Through Elevated Capital Investment

- ◆ Last month, I commissioned two fire boats, worth more than \$200 million, to serve the people of the Corporate Area and western Jamaica. **This will be a welcome relief to the people who live and work along the shoreline of the Corporate Area, St. Andrew and St. Catherine especially, who have been without a fire boat for the last 11 years.** We will also be investing \$22 million to improve the housing for the firefighters who will manage the boats: \$14 million for Montego Bay, and \$8 million to upgrade the facility at Newport West.
- ◆ Last year, **Mr. Speaker**, \$187 million was allocated to procure six fire trucks for the Brigade. Four are now in service, and the other two are expected in Jamaica by August. **This year, we will be investing \$232.6 million to obtain four fire trucks, two ambulances and two command vehicles.**
- ◆ I wish to publicly thank the **Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF)**, which is currently procuring six fire trucks, and also the Ministry of Health, which will be providing two ambulances.
- ◆ **These investments in the rolling stock of the Agency have increased the total fleet of Fire Trucks by sixteen units. Currently, Mr. Speaker, there are seven Fire Stations that lack a working Fire Truck. We are working diligently to ensure that by the end of this calendar year, every Fire Station has a working Fire Truck.**
- ◆ This sustained drive of institutional strengthening, is also facilitating the rollout of the Agency's **Emergency Medical Service** platform (EMS).
- ◆ New EMS sites will be launched in the parish of St. Ann - in Ocho Rios and in St. Ann's Bay – in short order. 15 fire fighters have been trained as Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs), and an additional 15 will be trained in June to facilitate the start of the service in St. Ann. In Kingston and St. Andrew, **Mr. Speaker**, we are also hoping to offer EMS from the Half Way Tree Fire Station and York Park Fire Station in this financial year.
- ◆ The EMS initiative is being implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Health. Once again, this is a clear demonstration of partnership and joined-up Government within this Administration.

## Developing Local Government Capacity and Performance Through Elevated Capital Investment

- ◆ After significant delays, **Mr. Speaker**, **construction of new Fire Stations** is expected to commence in October this year, under the World Bank/Jamaica Disaster Vulnerability Reduction Project.
- ◆ Firefighters and the communities they serve will benefit from new Stations at Port Maria in St. Mary, Montego Bay and Yallahs in St. Thomas.
- ◆ We are eagerly anticipating the commencement and completion of works, so that the Fire Brigade's effectiveness as a response, as well as an educational and outreach Agency, will be greatly enhanced.
- ◆ **Mr. Speaker**, there is no doubt that the most improved Agency of the Ministry is the **NATIONAL SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY (NSWMA)**. This Agency was making the news for all the wrong reasons before the change of Administration. Corporate Governance, and in particular compliance reporting were at dismal levels. The new Board took on the Agency's corporate governance challenges aggressively, and the NSWMA has now completed outstanding Audited Financial Statements from 2007/8, to 2014/15. In fact, **Mr. Speaker**, the Board has officially approved the Audited Financial Statements for 2015/16, the Audited Financials for 2016/17 are being processed now, and Audited Financial Statements for the last financial year, 2017/18, will be completed and approved within the next six months. This is accountability. This is responsibility. This is proper management.
- ◆ The NSWMA has also corrected a long-standing and painful wrong, **Mr. Speaker**. One of the features of the employment profile of General Workers, and especially Street Sweepers and Sidemen, was the high number of persons who were aged 60 years and over. In fact, 134 people aged between 61 and 87 years, were employed in these capacities to the Agency and its regional companies. The rationale for this practice was that there was no money to issue the workers ex-gratia payments when they reached the age of retirement. This resulted in many workers, even if they wished to retire, choosing instead to work until their time of death. In the last financial year, the NSWMA decided to address this problem, and successfully initiated a special programme to locate employees who had proceeded on retirement without any ex-gratia payments, or their relatives if they had died. **As a result, Mr. Speaker, \$45.7 million was paid to these deserving workers, for their services to the NSWMA.**

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- ◆ The Agency also reviewed the working conditions and in particular, the admittedly low wages provided to these workers. **I am very happy to advise the House, that effective May 1, that is, just over two weeks ago, their rates of pay have been increased.**
- ◆ I must commend the Board, led by Mr. Dennis Chung, for its outstanding performance. I must also commend the Executive Director, Mr. Audley Gordon, and the staff of the Agency for the hard work and smart work that they are doing.
- ◆ Even as there is need for more resources to increase capacity, **the NSWMA last year earned \$300 million in own source revenue to drive its operations and to train over 700 employees across the country.**
- ◆ Adherence to road sweeping and garbage collection schedules is improving. Improvements are being made to the operations and infrastructure of Disposal Sites.
- ◆ It is no coincidence that **no major fire occurred at the Riverton Disposal Site in the last financial year.**
- ◆ **Mr. Speaker**, the significantly improved performance of the NSWMA is not only due to its talented and dedicated team. **It is also due to significantly increased capital investment by this Administration.** In the last financial year, **\$561.8 million was spent to acquire 28 new Compactors to improve garbage collection. \$120 million was allocated to repair 25 existing Compactors**, and with the procurement process now complete, the trucks are being repaired.
- ◆ For the 2018/2019 financial year, the Agency will procure 12 new collection units, at a cost of \$300 million.



**Prime Minister Holness and Minister McKenzie share a light moment subsequent to handing over 11 new Compactor Trucks to the NSWMA at Jamaica House.**

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- ◆ The Agency will also receive three Compactors from the Jamaica Social Investment Fund, through the World Bank/JSIF Integrated Community Development Project. **Mr. Speaker**, we are talking about the acquisition of 43 new trucks within two financial years – an unprecedented investment in the NSWMA. This will significantly increase collection capacity, and the Agency is expecting to collect 720,000 tonnes of waste in this financial year.
- ◆ Transfer Stations are critical to the operational transformation of garbage collection, **Mr. Speaker**. They are vital solid waste storage facilities, and reduce the time and expense of trucking waste from one parish to a Disposal Site in another parish. As a quick example, **Mr. Speaker**, Westmoreland has no Disposal Site, and so the NSWMA transports waste from that parish to the Retirement Disposal Site in St. James for processing. The inherent inefficiency in that whole process is obvious, **Mr. Speaker**.
- ◆ We are correcting this situation, starting with an investment of \$90 million, to build a Transfer Station at Daniel Town in Trelawny this year.

## CONCLUSION

- ◆ **Mr. Speaker**, in the midst of our challenges, Local Government is on an upward trajectory. The Ministry and its Agencies are improving the quality and reach of service to our people, as we strive to make this form of government more meaningful.
- ◆ This momentum of improvement is clearly a function of the work of the men and women in Local Government. It is also an undeniable outcome of the substantial investment that this Administration has made since taking office just over two years ago.
- ◆ The figures speak for themselves, **Mr. Speaker**. I compared the allocated capital expenditure on the NSWMA, the Jamaica Fire Brigade, and the development of Local Authorities' Infirmaries infrastructure over the life of this Administration, with the allocations made over the full term of the last Administration.
- ◆ Between the fiscal years 2012/13 and 2015/16, the last Administration spent \$66.1 million on upgrades to Infirmaries and Drop-In Centres. From 2016, and inclusive of this Budget, this Administration is investing \$307.4 million in Infirmaries and Drop-in Centres.

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- ◆ The last Administration spent \$332.3 million over the course of its full term on procurement of, and repairs to garbage trucks and Disposal Site infrastructure. This Administration has invested \$948 million in the two years since we took office in 2016.
- ◆ The last Administration spent \$605 million on fire trucks and related vehicles such as ambulances, over its full term. In two years, this Government has invested more than one billion and 77 million dollars!
- ◆ The last Administration – which claimed to love and cherish Local Government **Mr. Speaker** – spent a total of one billion and 23 million dollars on these three major areas, over the four years of its last term. After two years in office, and now entering into its third Budget cycle, this Government has invested and committed \$2.68 billion dollars in these critical areas.
- ◆ When last year’s unprecedented investment of \$700 million in social assistance is factored in, **Mr. Speaker**, this Administration has invested over \$3 billion dollars in the people, structures and systems of Local Government.
- ◆ We are keeping our commitments to the people of Jamaica through performance that is fueled by sound capital investment. **Mr. Speaker**, it comes right back to what we were taught in this very House nearly 30 years ago... “it takes cash to care!”
- ◆ The people of this country can be assured of this Administration’s continued investment in the transformation of Local Government. They can also be assured that as we work with the Local Authorities to increase and maintain Own Source Revenue, service delivery will increase and governance will improve.
- ◆ We will continue to improve. We will continue to innovate. We will never stop trying. Nelson Mandela said: “When a man has done what he considers to be his duty to his people and his country, he can rest in peace.”
- ◆ I am not ready to rest, **Mr. Speaker**. This Government is not ready to rest. With every difficulty, and with every small and large achievement, we are challenged and motivated to do even more to bring lasting prosperity to every Jamaican, **Through Local Government**.
- ◆ Thank you, **Mr. Speaker**.

**Desmond McKenzie CD, JP, MP**  
**Minister of Local Government and Community Development**

**Developing Local Government Capacity and Performance Through Elevated Capital Investment**

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