

# Economic Independence Will Secure Resilience for SIDS

**PRIME MINISTER** the Most Hon Andrew Holness has told world leaders that while Small Island Developing States (SIDS) continue to strengthen partnerships around the world, economic independence will ultimately secure resilience for all SIDS.

Addressing the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York City, USA on September 27, Mr. Holness pointed out that Jamaica and other SIDS continue to work to resolve its economic issues and seek greater opportunities regardless of size and development.

According to Prime Minister Holness, the Jamaican Government has made several strides to help build resilience.



**Prime Minister the Most Hon Andrew Holness addressing the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York City, on September 27.**

"We cannot wait on the world to save us, and we recognise that the world will not wait for us. Notwithstanding that we are a Small Island Developing State with

numerous challenges, we are taking our destiny into our own hands. Ultimately, we believe our economic independence will secure our resilience," he said.

He further pointed out three critical concepts that each nation must embody in order for no country to be left behind in the quest for resilience.

They are: effective strategies to bolster the global financial system; a robust global campaign to identify funding for the implementation of Agenda 2030, and resilience and adaptation measures to address the devastating effects of climate change and natural disasters.

"We (world leaders) must not lose sight of the responsibility to promote and protect the interests of the vulnerable," Mr. Holness charged.

## Rating Agency Gives Positive Outlook for Jamaica

INTERNATIONAL CREDIT rating agency, Standard and Poor's (S&P), has improved its outlook for Jamaica from stable to positive.

This was disclosed by Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service, Hon. Fayval Williams, on September 26 at the post-Cabinet press briefing at Jamaica House.

"On September 25, Standard and Poor's, one of the three global rating agencies, affirmed Jamaica's rating at single B and raised its outlook to positive from stable. Standard and Poor's said that after many years of economic fiscal and monetary reforms, Jamaica has made material progress in achieving macroeconomic stability and improvement in its external debt burden," she noted.

The Minister explained that the positive outlook reflects the likelihood of an upgrade if, in the next 12 months, Jamaica further strengthens its external liquidity position while maintaining tight fiscal policy,



**Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service, Hon. Fayval Williams, addresses a post-Cabinet press briefing at Jamaica House on September 26.**

high primary surpluses and modestly positive real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth.

Mrs. Williams noted that in July of this year, Moody's also affirmed its rating and also changed its outlook from stable to positive.

"So, where we are now, we have two of the major global rating agencies that have changed their outlook on Jamaica to positive from stable," she said.

## CARICOM Must Remain Committed to Fighting NCDs

**PRIME MINISTER** of Jamaica and Chairman of CARICOM, the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, has called on Heads of Government in the Caribbean region to remain steadfast and committed to the fight against Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs).

The Prime Minister says the region must renew its commitment, which was made more than ten years ago, to tackle NCDs.

"Recognising that NCDs remain a major challenge to the health of our populations, we have again elevated this to the UN development

agenda for prioritisation of efforts to reduce risk factors," Mr. Holness said.

He was speaking in New York at the 3rd UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs on September 27, where CARICOM launched the "Step it up" initiative.

Jamaica is set to lead the CARICOM region in the fight against NCDs. This initiative is an adaptation from the 'Jamaica Moves' programme.

Prime Minister Holness reported at the 39th Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community in July of this year, six priorities

which were endorsed by the Heads of Government.

The priorities are: establishing and maintaining a smoke-free status for the Region; implementing policies geared at preventing Childhood Obesity; promoting the elimination of cancer of the cervix; supporting the mitigation of post-disaster vulnerabilities related to NCDs, in particular, nutrition, treatment and care; increasing international financing and technical support; and strengthening accountability in particular through national coordinating mechanisms.



**Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (2nd left) is greeted by Secretary-General of CARICOM, Ambassador Irwin LaRocque (right), when he arrived to address a breakfast meeting on non-communicable diseases (NCDs), at the UN Headquarters in New York on September 27. At centre is Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, Hon. Gaston Browne.**

## More Cases Being Completed in the Courts

**MINISTER OF Justice**, Hon. Delroy Chuck, is reporting improvement in the completion of cases brought before the nation's courts since the start of 2018.

He said statistics indicate that for the first six months of 2018, an average of 90 of every 100 cases that came in during the period were completed. This is an improvement from data over the past two years, which showed 50 out of every 100 cases being completed.

Addressing a JIS 'Think Tank' on September 26, the Minister said the goal is to exceed the targeted number of cases in order to reduce the back log.

He further noted that the justice sector is far advanced in its projection to clear up more than 30,000 back-



**Minister of Justice, Hon. Delroy Chuck, addresses a Jamaica Information Service (JIS) 'Think Tank', on September 26.**

logged cases by 2020, having disposed of one-third of that number since 2016.

"We are now down to under 20,000. The goal is that by 2020, those cases should be out of the system," Mr. Chuck said.

He said the Chief Justice is having regular consultations with all stakeholders, with emphasis being on the

reduction of unused time in the courts.

Mr. Chuck added that the Ministry is also working with Justices of the Peace and community organisations to have more disputes resolved in communities and to reduce the number of conflicts that end up in the courts, through restorative justice and mediation procedures.

## Redevelopment of the National Stadium

**MINISTER OF Culture**, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, Hon. Olivia Grange, says the procurement process for the redevelopment of the National Stadium has been completed, and a consultant has been selected to prepare a business plan.

Ms. Grange made the announcement at the ceremony to break ground for the artificial football turf at the Captain Horace Burrell Centre of Excellence, located at the University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona, on September 25.

"I've been instructed by the Prime Minister to fast-track the redevelopment of the National Stadium. We are now going to be moving quickly into the design stage of the redevelopment. Once it's completed, most of the



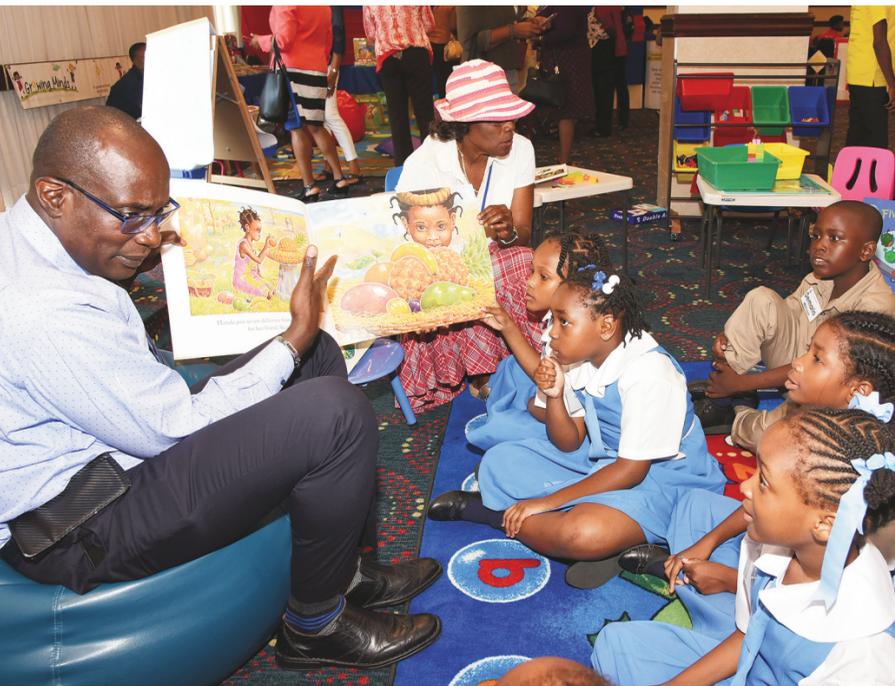
**Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, Hon. Olivia Grange**

stadium will be covered, and we will have good anti-doping facilities, proper dressing rooms, gym and all the other facilities that you would find in a first-class facility," the Minister said.

"We know we have at least two major [sporting] events annually, and we plan to develop other programmes, so we can have other major events where we fill out the stadium. We're also pursuing other diplomatic engagements with other countries, where we seek to provide additional support for athletes, establish Jamaica as a destination for the hosting of major sporting events and improve our sports infrastructure through capacity building and financial investment," she added.

The Minister also noted that work will soon begin on the Stadium East field, so that it can be completed before the start of the track season next year.

## Education Minister Reads to the Children



**Minister of Education, Youth and Information, Senator the Hon. Ruel Reid (left), engages in a reading session with students of the Jessie Ripoll Primary School. Occasion was a kiddes village staged as part of the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Early Reading Conference held on September 27 at the Jamaica Pegasus hotel in New Kingston. In the background is Chairman of the Special Education Committee of the Jamaica Teachers' Association (JTA), Dr. Polly Bowes-Howell.**