

Progress Made in Achieving Vision 2030 - PM

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness says the country is making progress in achieving the goals of the National Development Plan - Vision 2030 Jamaica.

Addressing students at Penwood High School in Kingston last week, Mr. Holness noted that Vision 2030 sets out a plan for what Jamaica must do to achieve developed country status within 12 years and, in the process, make it the place of choice to live, work, raise families and do business.

"Generally, we still have a way to go [as there are] some areas in which we are lagging behind. But Vision 2030 is the National Plan... meaning it is endorsed by both political parties... it is endorsed by civil society and it is endorsed by the private sector. So the goals are all agreed upon nationally," he told the students.



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (right) addressing students of Penwood High School in St. Andrew, during a motivational and empowerment session at the institution on November 6.

Against this background, Mr. Holness encouraged the youngsters to use the plan to guide their own personal and professional goals. He said the public will be kept abreast of the

progress and achievements recorded to date.

In the meantime, Prime Minister Holness stressed the importance of developing a sense of civic awareness that is not only academic but

practical in resolving the negatives affecting the country.

He encouraged the students to be empowered, to stand against the ills within their community and to also act as their brother's keeper.

Building Act Takes Effect January 19, 2019

MINISTER OF Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie, says the Building Act will take effect on January 19, 2019.

He was speaking at the World Town Planning Day 2018 Conference, which was held at the Jewel Grande Montego Bay Resort and Spa in St. James on November 8.

"The Local Authorities are keepers of the built environment in the areas under their control as is stipulated in the Building Act of 2018, which will come into effect on January 19, 2019," Mr. McKenzie informed.

The Minister urged developers to work closely with the local planning authorities to ensure that the design and location of any new infrastructure will facilitate water conservation, mechanisms to maintain sustainable drainage systems and appropriate ventilation.

Provisions in the Building Act include ensuring public



Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie

safety and welfare, as well as the accessibility and safety for individuals with disabilities. It also involves promoting sustainable development and preventing squatter settlements.

The Act also establishes that the Municipalities will be the local building authorities responsible for certifying, inspecting and taking the necessary actions to change existing structures, approve new buildings or destroy dangerous structures.

Economic Conditions Have Never Been Better - Dr. Clarke

FINANCE AND the Public Service Minister, Hon. Dr. Nigel Clarke, says the Government is pleased with Jamaica's successful completion of the fourth International Monetary Fund (IMF) Precautionary Stand By Arrangement (PSBA) Review.

This follows the IMF Executive Board's consideration and approval of the Review at its meeting on November 5.

Consequent on Jamaica passing the fourth PSBA Review, an additional US\$226 million is now available to the Government, if needed, which brings the total credit accessible under the PSBA to US\$1.2 billion.

In a statement, IMF Board Acting Chair and Deputy Managing Director, Tao Zhang,



Finance and the Public Service Minister, Hon. Dr. Nigel Clarke

highlighted the Government's continued impressive track record under the PSBA.

This, he noted, is primarily evidenced by sustained macro-economic stability, reduced public debt, and improving

social and unemployment indicators.

Speaking with **JIS News**, Dr. Clarke said the Review's outcome suggests that Jamaica's economic conditions "have never been better".

He cited among the supporting indicators, first quarter growth of 2.2 per cent for 2018/19; further reduction in unemployment to 8.4 per cent as at July 2018; and a 16 per cent increase in private sector credit.

He noted the need for further expansion of credit to the private sector in order to accelerate growth, and for more private sector stakeholders to take advantage of the opportunities available to them to boost investments in order to sustain the cycle of growth.

Dr. Clarke told **JIS News** that the Administration remains focused on ensuring that Jamaica continues to be fiscally responsible, and pursues all avenues and strategies for attaining higher levels of sustainable growth.

Disabled Community on Board with NIDS

MEMBERS OF the disabled community are looking forward to the benefits they will enjoy with their inclusion in the proposed National Identification System (NIDS).

This is according to Chief Technical Director in the Office of the Prime Minister, Jacqueline Lynch-Stewart, who said mentally challenged persons in particular "are very happy with what is to come".

"They are locked out right now. They can't get an ID because you can't get one if you're mentally challenged - you can't get a voter's ID and you cannot travel," she pointed out.

Mrs. Lynch-Stewart, who was addressing a meeting of the Rotary Club of Kingston at the Jamaica Pegasus hotel in New Kingston on

November 8, said that the disabled community has been included in the process to introduce NIDS, noting that "they are on board with us and working with us".

"Right now, we are working on the regulations to the law, and they are actively a part of the working group, because we are making every effort to make sure that we recognise whatever the needs of that community are, and that's why we have brought them to the table as they know best what they need," she said.

NIDS is intended to provide a comprehensive and secure structure to enable the capture and storage of identity information for all Jamaicans. Each citizen will be provided with a randomised nine-digit National Identification Number (NIN), and an identification card that they will have for life.

Gov't Finalising Prevention of Sexual Harassment Bill

THE GOVERNMENT is finalising the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Bill, which will be brought to the House of Representatives shortly.

This was disclosed by Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, Hon. Olivia Grange, during a sitting of the House of Representatives on November 6.

Delivering a statement on the spate of violent attacks against women and children, she pointed out that sexual harassment was not a simple matter, noting that it

is a very serious crime that militates against the desired level of peace, harmony and happiness in the country.

"I look forward to our debate in this House and us providing protection to all women and men from unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favours and crude sexual behaviours that affect quality of life by creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment," Ms. Grange said.

She also informed that the Joint Select Committee

of Parliament to review laws relating to violence against women, children, the elderly and persons living with disabilities when they reconvened.

"We heard submissions from various quarters, and we have given earnest consideration to all the arguments. Our report and recommendations will be laid before this House before the end of the month," Ms. Grange said.

She added that the laws will only be a deterrent if people believe that they will be enforced.



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



Hazard Primary Benefits from Road Safety Campaign

Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister, Hon. Mike Henry (3rd right), along with students from Hazard Primary School in May Pen, Clarendon, view a mural highlighting the proper way to use a pedestrian crossing. Occasion was the launch of the JN Foundation's 'X Marks the Spot' road safety campaign at the school on November 7.



Chief Technical Director in the Office of the Prime Minister, Jacqueline Lynch-Stewart (centre), highlights a point to President of the Rotary Club of Kingston, Linval Freeman (right), while Past President of the organisation, Mike Hemmings, observes. They were at a meeting of the club at the Jamaica Pegasus hotel in New Kingston on November 8.



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