PM Welcomes Auditor General’s Report on Petrojam

Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness has welcomed the report of the Auditor General which he described as a “very, very comprehensive report.”

“The issues with pricing – that is something we will have to take a look at. There are issues to do with fraud and the use of public resources ... but with the good governance that we are building here, I am confident that we can end that,” he said.

Mr. Holness noted that the issues highlighted which we have already acted on. We have already addressed some of the governance issues. There are still many issues that she has raised, which I will obviously have to address,” Prime Minister Holness stated.

The Prime Minister specified that the State commission an immediate review of key functional areas of the Petroleum Corporation of Jamaica (PCJ) and Petrojam. Additionally, it was recommended that the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service make it a prerequisite for all public boards to establish a governance sub-committee for monitoring and reviewing governance arrangements.

“Let me just say that the audit and the report is only an initial step of the process. We have to take a very serious look at the governance of our public companies to ensure that they operate in a transparent and accountable manner,” Mr. Holness said.

The report also recommended that the State commission an immediate review of an Accountability and Corporate Governance Framework in Jamaica. Mr. Holness was speaking on an interview recently after touring the St. Andrew West Central Constituency. Among the recommendations is the establishment of an Accountability and Corporate Governance Framework in Jamaica, he added.

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Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, Hon. Olivia Grange, who officially rolled out the campaign during a public event at the Courtleigh Auditorium in New Kingston, said it is in keeping with ongoing efforts to address the long-standing issue. Ms. Grange noted that this is the first public education campaign for the three-year National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender-based Violence (NSAP-GBV), which was launched in 2017.

The campaign will be targeted to women, aged 15 to 35; men, aged 15 to 40; perpetrators of abuse/violence; survivors of violence; persons experiencing violence; and persons witnessing or aware of violence.

Varying messages will be used to relay different thematic messages, and target groups will be identified through the findings of the Women’s Health Survey 2017.

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Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, Hon. Olivia Grange (left) and Audley Shaw, Opposition Senator for Children, Jqani Chung (right), who attended the Grade Six Achievement Test at the bustamante Hospital for Children. (Photo: JIS)

Jamaica Special Economic Zone Authority (JSEZA) Chairman, Metry Seaga, tells JIS News that based on a revitilization exercise of the over 219 free zone companies initially registred, 110 were found to be legitimate free zone operators. He points out that entities that were no longer operational or those that were found to be operating within the zones with no requisite documentation were removed from the listing.

Mr. Seaga says the 40 prospective firms, which are engaged in operations varying from manufacturing and servicing to logistics, represent “over US$100 million of investments and in excess of 2,000 jobs.”

He also advises that the process to transition 109 free zone companies to the SEZ regime is expected to be completed by the end of 2019.

Five More Companies Recommended to Operate under SEZ Regime

The JAMAICA Special Economic Zone Authority (JSEZA) has recommended five additional companies for approval to operate under the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) regime, and is negotiating with another 40 that have expressed an interest.

The process to transition 109 free zone companies to the SEZ regime is expected to be completed by the end of 2019.

Chairman, Metry Seaga, tells JIS News that the JSEZA Board took the decision to recommend the five new applicants to the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation for consideration during a meeting last week, after reviewing the entities’ submissions.

“that will bring the total number of approved new applicants to 15... once those are approved,” he informed.

Mr. Seaga says that the entities recommended will add to more than 1,400 entities operating under the SEZ regime, and are expected to add close to 10,000 jobs.

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By Her Excellency the Most Hon. Lady Allen (centre) interacts with former patients at the Bustamante Hospital for Children, Jaeni Chuang (right), who attends Hampton School, and Jahnia Johnson of The Queen’s School, who sat the Grade Six Achievement Test (GSAT) while hospitalised. The occasion was a visit to the St. Andrew-based hospital by the Government-General, Her Excellency the Most Hon. Sir Patrick Allen and his wife, Lady Allen, on December 5.

Minister of Transport and Mining, Hon. Robert Montague, has announced the commencement of multimillion-dollar renovations by the Airports Authority of Jamaica (AAJ) at the Ian Fleming International Airport in St. Mary, on the island’s four domestic aerodromes: Tinson Pen, Kingston, Ken Jones, Portland, Lionel Danielham, St. Elizabeth; and Nevis, Vance and Nevis.

Mr. Montague said the renovations are in keeping with the Government’s recognition of the civil aviation industry’s importance to Jamaica’s economy and the need to boost operations in keeping with global standards.

He was speaking at the opening ceremony for a two-day aviation seminar, held at the Courtleigh Auditorium on December 6.