

PM Announces Administrative Changes

PRIME MINISTER, the Most Hon. Andrew Holness has announced several administrative changes, effective February 14.

Key among these is Hon. Fayval Williams' appointment as Minister of Science, Energy and Technology.

She previously served as Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service.

Joining her is former Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Justice, Carol Palmer, who assumes that position in the Energy Ministry.

The changes are consistent with significant policy, governance and administrative advances which Mr. Holness said have been made since taking over the science, energy, and technology portfolios last July.

Additionally, he said the Boards of all agencies falling under the portfolios "have to be reconstituted, where necessary, and appropriately missioned".

"I am, therefore, confident that with the changes set in



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness addressing the House of Representatives. Listening are: Finance and the Public Service Minister, Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke (left, front row), Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. J.C. Hutchinson (left, back row); and Labour and Social Security Minister, Hon. Shahine Robinson.

motion, I can now refocus my attention and effort on other pressing areas of Government, particularly crime, ease of doing business, and completing the extensive infrastructure programme undertaken," the Prime Minister stated.

Other administrative changes announced see Hon. Floyd Green, who was State Minister

in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information, reassigned in that capacity in the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries.

He has been replaced by former State Minister in the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, Hon. Alando Terrelonge.

Meanwhile, former Permanent Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), Sancia Bennett Templer, has assumed that position in the Justice Ministry.

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Audrey Sewell, has reassumed that role in the OPM.

\$600M Allocated to Curtail Dengue Fever Outbreak

CABINET HAS approved the allocation of over \$600 million to treat with the dengue fever outbreak in Jamaica.

Health Minister, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, said of that amount, \$55.7 million has been earmarked for Members of Parliament and \$100 million Municipal Corporations to undertake community vector control activities.

"We urge Jamaicans to search for and destroy mosquito breeding sites around their homes, visit their doctors if they experience symptoms and follow the prescribed course of treatment."

He was providing an update in the House of Representatives, on February 12.

Dr. Tufton said for the month of February, the Ministry will continue to work with regional and international collaborators to sustain the ramped up vector control management, public education and clinical management.

"We urge Jamaicans to search for and destroy mosquito breeding sites around their homes, visit their doctors if they experience symptoms and follow the prescribed course of treatment," he advised.



Health Minister, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, updates the House on the Representatives on the Government's response to the dengue fever outbreak.

Dr. Tufton also assured that there is an adequate supply of medication to treat dengue cases.

"There is no shortage of medication in the public or the private health system," he said, pointing out that the stock level of certain drugs continues to be monitored.

These include: paracetamol tablets and syrup, oral rehydration products and intravenous fluids.

As at February 8, the Ministry classified 1,166 suspected, presumed or confirmed cases with dates of onset in 2019.

There have been six confirmed deaths, five from Kingston and St. Andrew, and one from Portland.

A total of 1,023 suspected of confirmed cases were classified in 2018.

Gov't Presents \$803 Billion Budget for 2019/20

THE GOVERNMENT has presented an \$803 billion Budget for the 2019/20 fiscal year.

A total of \$731 billion has been earmarked for recurrent (housekeeping) expenses, and \$72 billion for capital (development) projects.

The Ministry of Finance and the Public Service has been allocated the largest sum, with \$385.6 billion for recurrent expenses, and \$5.7 billion for capital expenditure.

A large portion of the sum will go towards meeting Jamaica's debt obligations.

The Ministry of National Security has received \$72.4 billion for recurrent expenditure and \$20.2 billion for capital projects.

Significant focus will be placed on the Jamaica Constabulary Force's modernisation and transformation, and bolstering support for the Jamaica Defence Force.

The Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation has received \$10.9 billion for recurrent expenditure and \$18 billion for capital projects; Office of the Prime Minister, \$9.1



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

billion for recurrent, and \$7.9 billion for capital. The Ministry of Justice has been allocated \$8.5 billion for recurrent and \$1.7 billion for capital.

Gov't to Improve Access to Home Ownership

MORE NATIONAL Housing Trust (NHT) contributors will benefit from measures by the Government to increase access to home ownership.

This was disclosed by Governor-General His Excellency the Most Hon. Sir Patrick Allen while delivering the Throne Speech to open the new session of Parliament in Gordon House, on February 14.

He indicated that by providing greater access to funding and bringing additional projects to mar-

ket, home ownership will become a reality for more Jamaicans in the 2019/20 fiscal year and beyond.

The Governor-General said the NHT will review its construction management processes, redesign/enhance its customer-facing systems, and implement an improved contributions accounting management system.

He noted that the NHT Strategic Review, which has been tabled in Parliament, will be debated this year.



Governor-General His Excellency the Most Hon. Sir Patrick Allen addressing the 2019/20 Ceremonial Opening of Parliament at Gordon House, on February 14.

New Energy Minister Focused on Strengthening Governance

NEWLY APPOINTED Science, Energy and Technology Minister, Hon. Fayval Williams, says the first order of business is promoting good governance across the Ministry.

Mrs. Williams said she will be guided by the new Cabinet-approved procedures for public bodies board selections, and the procurement process.

The guidelines are in keeping with the Administration's undertaking to further strengthen the corporate governance framework of statutory bodies in order to improve accountability and the transparency of operations.

"Right now, what the Jamaican people want is for their hope and trust to be restored in this organisation, so that is first. We will go in and begin the process of restoring their trust and confidence in these institutions," Mrs. Williams added.

She further stated that the Government will be forging ahead with the compulsory acquisition of the State-owned oil refinery, Petrojam.

On Tuesday February 12, Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness tabled a Bill in the House of Representatives to retake ownership of the 49 per cent shares in the facility that are held by the Venezuelan State-owned oil and natural gas company, Petróleos de Venezuela (PDV) Caribe.

The Bill, titled the Compulsory Acquisition (Shares in Petrojam Limited) Act of 2019, provides for ownership of the applicable property to vest in the Accountant General in Trust for the Government and for compensation to be paid to persons having an interest in the property in accordance with specified rules.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Williams advised that there will be



Newly appointed Science, Energy and Technology Minister, Hon. Fayval Williams

"broad consultations" with interested parties on the Terms of References (TOR) for the forensic audit into Petrojam.

She assured that the drafting of the TOR will be a transparent process "so that the people of Jamaica will trust the outcomes".

Parliamentary Year Opens



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (2nd left) and his wife, Member of Parliament for East Rural St. Andrew, the Most Hon. Juliet Holness (3rd right), lead Government Parliamentarians to Gordon House for the 2019/20 Ceremonial Opening of Parliament on February 14. From left (front row) are Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Minister, Senator the Hon. Kamina Johnson Smith; Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister, Hon. Karl Samuda; and Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, Hon. Olivia 'Babsy' Grange. In the back row are (from left): Attorney General, Marlene Malahoo Forte; newly appointed Science, Energy and Technology Minister, Hon. Fayval Williams (partially hidden); Transport and Mining Minister, Hon. Robert Montague; Finance and the Public Service Minister, Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke; and State Minister in the Ministry of National Security, Hon. Ruyard Spencer.



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