

# Jamaica's Economic Progress a Model for Other Countries - PM

**P**RIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness says the economic progress made by Jamaica in recent times can be used as a model for other countries to follow.



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (seated centre) with members of the Diplomatic Corps at a meeting held at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel in New Kingston on March 13. Also pictured are Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Senator the Hon. Kamina Johnson Smith (seated 8th left); Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, Ambassador Marcia Gilbert-Roberts (seated 8th right); State Minister in the Ministry, Senator the Hon. Pearnel Charles Jr (12th left, 2nd row); and Minister of National Security, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang (11th right, 2nd row).

The Prime Minister, who was addressing heads of diplomatic missions at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel in New Kingston on March 13, cited among the economic achievements the reduction of the debt-to-gross domestic product (GDP) ratio, which will fall to 96 per cent at the end of the 2018/19 fiscal year on March 31.

This represents the lowest level of debt in nearly two decades, and the first time it will fall below 100 per cent over that period.

Mr. Holness further noted that the macroeconomic indicators remain positive, with foreign reserves above the level deemed adequate while the current account remains low and sustainable.

Additionally, market interest rates are at historic lows and fiscal performance continues to be strong.

Mr. Holness advised the diplomats, that Jamaica is addressing its infrastructural needs, with increased capital spending on the development of major roadways in and around Kingston.

"We expect that we will finish those major infrastructure developments in the next two months, and that will have a significant impact on our economy," he said.

The macroeconomic indicators remain positive, with foreign reserves above the level deemed adequate while the current account remains low and sustainable.

He noted that the strides made economically came at "great sacrifice" by Jamaicans, but noted that there is "social consensus" among citizens about the changes that are needed for the country to continue advancing.

## Gov't Ramps up Activities to Combat Illegal Fishing

THE GOVERNMENT will be spending \$20 million to boost coastal surveillance and enforcement activities to counter illegal fishing in Jamaican waters and protect the island's fisheries sector.

The money will be provided under the Fisheries Management and Development Fund, which was established to facilitate the sustainable management and development of the sector.

Minister of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. Audley Shaw, made the disclosure at a press conference at the Ministry's Hope Gardens offices in St. Andrew on March 12.

He said that appropriate technology will be employed to effectively police the country's waters.

"Regulations will be put in place, very shortly, to mandate all locally licensed motor fishing vessels to have on board a vessel monitoring system (VMS) device. Very



Minister of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. Audley Shaw (centre), emphasises a point during a press conference at the Ministry's Hope Gardens offices in St. Andrew on March 12. Listening are Minister without Portfolio, Hon. J.C. Hutchinson (left), and Minister of State, Hon. Floyd Green.

importantly, to complement this technology, we are arranging access to satellite imagery of our waters to enable us to actually see these perpetrators," he noted.

Minister Shaw also informed that plans are far advanced for the establishment of multi-agency enforcement teams, which, at a min-

imum, will be comprised of the police, coast guard, and personnel from the Ministry's Fisheries Division and the Praedial Larceny Prevention Unit.

He also indicated that a revision of the relevant laws will be undertaken soon to address the issue of poaching in Jamaican waters.

## 91 Youth to Benefit From Training Initiative

NINETY-ONE unattached young persons from several communities in Kingston and St. James are to benefit from skills training under a \$50-million Youth Empowerment Training Initiative (YETI).

The initiative, being implemented by the Ministry of National Security and the Citizen Security and Justice Programme III (CSJP III), will engage the youngsters in intensive training over a 12-month period in the areas of mechatronics, heavy-duty equipment operation, and landscape design and construction.

The training will be carried out by the Caribbean Maritime University (CMU), through its Faculty of Advanced Skills and Professional Development.

National Security Minister, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang, who brought greetings at the orientation exercise held on March 14 at the CMU campus in Kingston, said that the initiative is part of the Government's crime-prevention strategy.

"This high-quality intervention... is in keeping with

## HAJ to Provide Over 3,000 Housing Solutions in 2019/20

GENERAL MANAGER of the Housing Agency of Jamaica (HAJ) Limited, Gary Howell, says that the agency will be providing more than 3,000 housing solutions during the 2019/2020 fiscal year.

"We have five projects coming on stream shortly," he said, noting that at least one development will start before the current fiscal year ends on March 31.

Mr. Howell was speaking at a JIS Think Tank held on March 13 at the JIS head office in St. Andrew.

He noted that the projects, to be implemented across the island, will be undertaken through public-private partnerships.

Meanwhile, Director of Technical Services at the HAJ, Rosemarie Brown, said that four solutions will start in the first quarter of the new fiscal year.

"These include [a project at] Bernard Lodge, which should not be confused with the New Town Bernard Lodge development," she noted.

"This project will yield 1,600 solutions. We'll be building approximately 600



General Manager, of the Housing Agency of Jamaica (HAJ), Limited Gary Howell

studio units and the remaining 1,000 units will be one-bedroom houses," she said.

"We have another project at Shooter's Hill in St. Catherine off the Hillshire main road. We will be building just over 600 housing solutions comprising service lots and housing units, which cater to the lower-middle and upper-middle income brackets," Ms. Brown shared.

Meanwhile, the Rhyne Park project in Montego Bay, St. James, will yield approximately 744 units.



National Security Minister, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang (seated), tries out the simulation equipment for heavy-duty machine operations at the Caribbean Maritime University (CMU) campus, Kingston, on March 14. The occasion was the opening ceremony and orientation exercise for the Youth Empowerment Training Initiative. Looking on are Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, Dianne McIntosh (left); Citizen Security and Justice Programme (CSJP) Programme Manager, Simeon Robinson (centre); and President of the CMU, Professor Fritz Pincock.

the Ministry's strategic framework, which is pinned to crime prevention through social development," he said.

He noted that the initiative will equip the participants with globally marketable skills and certification.

"As our logistics and port sectors expand, these young people will be able to find

work in value-added businesses, nearshore operations and a variety of industrial fields," he said.

YETI is a CMU certificate programme aimed at increasing the number of young people benefiting from employment and professional development.

## Jamaica Observes Commonwealth Day



President of the Senate, Thomas Tavares-Finson (2nd right), with from left: Clerk to the Houses of Parliament, Heather Cooke and students of the Denham Town Primary School. Occasion was a Commonwealth Day Youth Consultation held on March 11 at the school in Kingston.

## Solid Waste Management Regulations Near Completion

REGULATIONS TO govern solid waste management in the island are expected to be completed in short order.

"They are in the final stages now," Executive Director of the National Solid Waste Management Authority (NSWMA), Audley Gordon has advised.

"So, for those people who are anxious for us to be more robust in our enforcement strategy, the regulations to empower us are near completion and we are looking at months. Then we will have

the kind of enforcement strategy that the public expects of us," he said.

Mr. Gordon was speaking to journalists at the first clean-up activity under the Western Parks and Markets (WPM) enforcement initiative in Negril, Westmoreland, recently.

He said public cleansing is among the critical areas that will be covered under the regulations.

"There is much more that we can do. For example, we



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