

# Education Ministry Being Reviewed - PM

**PRIME MINISTER** the Most Hon. Andrew Holness says administration and governance reviews are now being conducted at Ministry of Education, Youth and Information.

This, he says, is with a view to the Ministry being properly missioned with policy directives to ensure the education system functions efficiently in the national interest.

This assurance comes in the wake of the Office of the Prime Minister's (OPM) assumption of temporary oversight of the Ministry.

Minister without Portfolio in the OPM, Hon. Karl Samuda, has been assigned responsibility for the Ministry.

Prime Minister Holness, who met with the Ministry's executive leadership last



**Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (centre) speaks to leaders in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information and its agencies, at the Ministry in Kingston, on March 27. At right is Acting Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, Dr. Grace McLean.**

week, said the strategy being employed will entail broad consultations with the boards of agencies under the portfolio, "to understand from them, the mission that they

were given and to see how we can improve that".

"We then focus on governance to make sure that the way in which the public body, or the department or agency

is run, aligns with our national governance standards.

This is an opportunity to, if necessary, have a national recommitment towards education," Mr. Holness stated.

## House Approves Third 2018/19 Supplementary Estimates

THE HOUSE of Representatives on March 26 approved the third supplementary estimates for the 2018/19 fiscal year, which reflect total Government expenditure of \$802.6 billion.

The figures indicate no deviation between the expenditure out-turns projected in the second 2018/19 supplementary estimates, which were approved in January 2019, and the current estimates.

Minister of Finance and the Public Service, Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke, who tabled the document on March 20, explained that the third supplementary estimates represent a reallocation of programmed expenditure from areas where provisions have been made and those monies have not yet been spent, with five days to go before the 2018/19 fiscal year ends.

Providing details on the areas benefiting from the reallocated fiscal space, Dr. Clarke informed that \$2.1 billion has been used to clear streetlight arrears to the Jamaica Public Service (JPS).

"This follows a payment by the central Government



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

of \$7.2 billion provided in the first Supplementary Estimates.

"This allocation will bring the total payout for the financial year to \$9.3 billion. After this \$2.1 billion, the Government will not have any arrears whatsoever with respect to streetlights with the JPS," he said.

The Minister further stated that an allocation of \$1.5 billion within the capital estimates is being transferred to increase the contingency for Natural Disasters/Infrastructure Rehabilitation provision to \$2 billion, up from the \$500 million approved in fiscal year 2018/19.

## Construction of New Parliament Building to Begin 2021

**PRIME MINISTER** the Most Hon. Andrew Holness says construction of the new Parliament building is expected to commence by 2021.

Winner of the Government's Houses of Parliament Design Competition, Evan

Williams, and his team, Design Collaborative, will provide the concept for the structure, which will be built at National Heroes Park in Kingston.

The Prime Minister announced the winning concept design, titled 'Out of

Many, One People,' during the awards ceremony at the park, on March 27.

It features an interconnected building with space to accommodate a football field and an area for outdoor movie viewing.

Mr. Holness praised the participants for embarking on a "long but rewarding" journey of designing a Parliamentary building that will not just be an edifice, but a "working building" of iconic value that will become a tourist attraction.

"We have to make sure that the Parliament is functional and that the people who occupy the Parliament, their capacity to produce is improved," he said.

He also stressed that the construction of the building is necessary to improve the governance of the country.

Prime Minister Holness added that the Government will strive to integrate more architecture in developing the country's built environment, noting that this is a valuable lesson coming out of the competition.



**Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (2nd right) with team leader for the winning entry in the Government's Houses of Parliament Design Competition, Evan Williams (2nd left), after presenting him with a trophy for also copping the People's Choice Award, during the awards ceremony at National Heroes Park in Kingston on March 27. Also (from left) are, Patron of the Design Competition, Gordon Gill, and Chairman of the Urban Development Corporation (UDC), Senator Ransford Brahm.**



**The winning entry entitled 'Out of Many One People' in the Government's Houses of Parliament Design Competition.**

## NHF Provides Over \$30 Billion in Drug Subsidies

THE NATIONAL Health Fund (NHF), has been making healthcare affordable for Jamaicans, through the provision of drug subsidies valued in excess of \$30 billion to benefit more than 800,000 persons over its 15 years of operation.

This is in addition to more than \$17 billion in grants to fund health projects, including rehabilitation and upgrading of health facilities.

"This is an organisation that has taken seriously its role in seeking to have no financial barriers to healthcare for the Jamaican people," says Deputy Chairman of the NHF, Dr. Dana Morris Dixon.

She notes that the entity is one of the best managed across the public and private sectors, and the staff is committed to its mandate of delivering high-quality service to customers.

Through the NHF Card Programme, the agency, under the Ministry of Health, provides financial support for the treatment of chronic diseases.

Covered under the programme are asthma, arthritis, breast cancer, prostate cancer and benign prostatic hyperplasia, diabetes, epilepsy, glaucoma, high cholesterol, hypertension, Ischaemic heart disease, major depression, psychosis, rheumatic fever/heart disease, sickle cell disease, and vascular disease. Lupus was recently added to the list of illnesses covered.

The Fund, which now has responsibility for managing public-sector pharmacies, filled 2.5 million prescriptions for patients in the public health sector last year.

## Accompong Targeted for Hemp Pilot Project

**MINISTER WITHOUT** Portfolio in the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. J.C. Hutchinson, says there are plans for a hemp cultivation pilot project in the Maroon community of Accompong, St Elizabeth.

Mr. Hutchinson indicated that the Ministry is looking to cultivate 50 acres of the plant for use as raw material in a variety of commercial products, including oils and animal feed.

The proposed venture will complement the Alternative Development Programme (ADP) that was implemented in Accompong and other communities earlier this month, to provide small-scale farmers with a channel through which to benefit from the cannabis (ganja) industry.

"We are going to start in the Big Ground area of Accompong, and once we get that going, we are going to [cultivate all] of it with



**Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. J.C. Hutchinson (right), and Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, Hon. Olivia Grange (centre), converse with Hardware and Lumber Limited's Marketing and Customer Experience Officer, Andrea Green-Browne, during an 'Economic Opportunities Workshop' grant handing over ceremony in Accompong, St. Elizabeth recently.**

hemp. Accompong has a lot of land and we want to put everybody to work," he said.

Mr. Hutchinson was speaking at the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport 'Economic Opportunities Workshop' grant handing over ceremony, which

was held in the community recently.

Meanwhile, the Minister said Accompong's ADP cannabis pilot programme is advancing at a "steady pace", noting that 10 acres of land have already been prepared for the farming initiative.

The Alternative Development Programme aims to prevent and eliminate illicit ganja cultivation and channel the process through legal streams. The pilot has also been initiated in Orange Hill, Westmoreland.

## Public Sector Energy Champions Win Over \$24 Million in Prizes



**Science, Energy and Technology Minister, Hon. Fayval Williams (4th right), joins the staff of eGov as they display the prize won as division one winner in the Petroleum Corporation of Jamaica's (PCJ), Energy Champion Competition. The awards and recognition ceremony was held recently, at the Jamaica Pegasus hotel in New Kingston.**



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