



SECTORAL PRESENTATION

Presented by:

Hon. Desmond McKenzie, CD, MP, JP

Minister of Local Government & Community
Development

Creating institutional change in Local Government

GORDON HOUSE Tuesday May 28, 2019

CHAPTER ONE

Mr. Speaker...

Acknowledgments...Constituency...Family etc.

I also want to specially recognise former Prime Minister and Member of Parliament for Western Kingston, the Most Honourable Edward Seaga, who is 89 years old today.

Mr. Speaker, I am making my contribution as a proud member of this Administration that has made significant steps to bring more Jamaicans into **prosperity** during the last financial year.

We are a young Administration, just entering our fourth Parliamentary year, and we are led by the Most Honourable Prime Minister, a man of youth and also of experience. He is in his 22nd year as a Parliamentarian, which is nearly half his age. In him **Mr. Speaker**, we have a visionary, a builder of national institutions, a leader of clear thinking, decisive action and calm assurance... **but not youthful exuberance.**

I am even more proud of the fact that the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development, has carried its weight in contributing positively to Jamaican life. **Mr. Speaker, the last year has been phenomenal for local government. We have recorded some of the most significant achievements in the history of the administration of local government, even as we have battled serious challenges.**

As a Government, we want to publicly express our love and respect for the people of Jamaica, who placed us here to serve them. We are also profoundly grateful to our civil servants in every Ministry and Agency.

My presentation today will address the record of what we have done over the last financial year, and what we will do this year.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend and encourage the Local Authorities, as they manage the **Development Approvals** process under the full Authority of the Building Act 2019, which came into effect on January 15 this year. Since that time, all management structures identified in the Act - the **Building Practitioners Board, the Building Appeal Tribunal and the Building Advisory Council** - have been fully constituted and are operational, and the **Regulations to the Act** are at an advanced stage of development.

In fact, the Ministry is partnering with the Jamaica Social Investment Fund, the World Bank and the Bureau of Standards Jamaica in developing and implementing a detailed training programme on the building codes for local government practitioners.

Between April and December in the last financial year, the Local Authorities and partner Agencies processed 3,925 applications valued at J\$58.3 billion, and approved 3,089 within 90 days: an 88.5% approval rate.

The Economic Growth Council **Mr. Speaker**, has identified the Development Approvals process as one of Local Government's critical contributions to the Growth Agenda. Through the Building Act, the Local Authorities are managing a modern legislative instrument that will change the face of Jamaica, while generating its Own Source Revenue.

Mr. Speaker, one of the actions that will harmonise the Development Approvals process, is the **standardisation of building fees charged by every Local Authority, in its capacity as the Local Building Authority.**

This will improve the predictability of the applications process, which is a critical International Monetary Fund benchmark. It will also streamline the Local Authorities' payment obligations, of 1% of the fees collected each year into the National Disaster Fund, as required by the Disaster Risk Management Act (Section 37b).

At the same time, fees would be revised to keep up with modern realities, and eliminate the current situation where, contrary to building regulations, there are substantial variations in the fees charged by the Local Authorities. These revised, standardised fees will give local authorities the financial muscle to increase technical staff, procure new technology and do the necessary research to ensure thorough validation of applications, and increased numbers of approvals within 90 days.

The Ministry has been discussing these matters with the Local Authorities since late last year **Mr. Speaker**, and emerging from this, a standard regime of three rates to cover all categories of building work has been developed.

- 1. A standard rate of \$90,000 per square meter, which will apply to all construction categories, and which will be reviewed every two years;**
- 2. A residential rate of .25% of the estimated construction cost; and**
- 3. A commercial, institutional, industrial and resort rate of .5% of the estimated construction cost.**

These residential and commercial rates are a 50% reduction of the current rates in the building by-laws Mr. Speaker. We want to ensure regulatory efficiency, and ensure that the fees are manageable for homeowners and business people at every economic level, as they pursue their development objectives.

While we have agreed to standardise the **formula** for calculating building fees now **Mr. Speaker**, we recognise that a moratorium or roll-out phase is necessary to ensure total efficiency in the administration of this initiative, including the conclusion and application of the new fee regulations to the Building Act. **It is expected that by 2021, all local authorities will apply the same building fees, to the same categories of building applications islandwide.**

SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMME

Municipal Social Assistance Fund, Infirmaries, Drop-In Centres, Indigent Housing

We continue to allocate dedicated financing to the elected representatives through the **Municipal Social Assistance Fund**, to increase their effectiveness at assisting the vulnerable in their divisions.

This Fund enhances social protection through administrative support to councillors, social housing assistance, indigent housing assistance, and education and funeral grants.

Last year, **Mr. Speaker**, every division received J\$300,000 as education grants and back to school and other educational related services. **This year, the education grant for each division will be increased to J\$500,000. Additionally, the allocation for administrative assistance will be increased from J\$25,000 to J\$30,000.**

We also started constructing **modern, concrete houses for indigent persons** living outside of the infirmary system. We started in Clarendon with the aim of building 28 such houses for 2018/19. Eleven of the houses were completed or are in various stages of completion in St. Ann, St. Thomas, Trelawny and St. Andrew.

This includes two that were built in Lime Hall and in Beecher Town, St. Ann, at a combined cost of J\$4 million, while another was built in Irish Town in St. Andrew at a cost of J\$2 million. Just last month, I handed over housing units in Hatfield in Manchester.



Hon. Desmond McKenzie (second left) cutting the ribbon to officially hand over a furnished studio unit to 75 year-old Gladstone Taylor of Lime Hall, St. Ann (January 4, 2019). To the Minister's right is Cllr. Geneva Bailey followed by Hon. Shahine Robinson, His Worship the Mayor Michael Belnavis and Councillor Lydia Richards, to his left.

This year, we will be building concrete indigent houses in St. James, St. Catherine, Portland and Kingston.

Mr. Speaker, we have not forgotten our outdoor poor who live in structures that are in various stages of disrepair.

I will be introducing in this Financial Year, a special programme valued at J\$20 million, designed to implement repairs to the houses of our registered outdoor poor.

We are also continuing to improve the infrastructure of our **INFIRMARIES** island wide.

Last year, I announced a special project involving comprehensive works at a number of infirmaries, to be financed to the tune of J\$200 million through the National Housing Trust (NHT).

While there were delays **Mr. Speaker**, the country is aware that we recently signed the Memorandum of Understanding with the NHT, and works have started. Accordingly, the Portland Infirmary will benefit from a new female ward. In St. James, a male ward will be built this year. In Westmoreland, work has started on a new male ward and Matron's Quarters, and in Manchester, a new female ward will be constructed this year. **All the infirmary works to be done under the MoU with the NHT, will be completed in one year.**



Ground being broken for the construction of a new Female Ward at the Manchester Infirmary. (L-R) Hon. Desmond McKenzie, Ms. Treka Lewis (Corporate Secretary for the BOS), His Worship the Mayor Donovan Mitchell and Councillor Faith Sampson.

In addition to this construction programme, the residents will benefit from the deployment of dietitians and physiotherapists to all infirmaries. A submission in this regard is being presented to the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service for approval. We have also introduced Medical Autoclaves to safeguard their health, by preventing cross-contamination.

I handed over 12 autoclaves two weeks ago, and they are already being put into service. I say thanks to our financing partner, the National Health Fund, for providing the J\$5 million to procure these critical devices.

Mr. Speaker, the Social Protection Programme is designed to rescue, **secure and enhance** the lives of our vulnerable people. That is why our efforts are not confined to expanding the built environment at our infirmaries.

We are **rescuing** our homeless population, currently registered at 1,971, through the expansion of **DROP-IN CENTRES** around the country. The **St. Ann and St. Mary drop-in centres** were completed at a cost of \$28 million and officially opened in May and November 2018 respectively. The **St. Elizabeth drop-in centre, which I officially opened earlier this month**, was completed at a cost of J\$14 million, while the **Hanover drop-in centre** was completed also at a cost of J\$14 million.

I am pleased to advise that drop-in centres are being built in St. Thomas and in Trelawny, and that they are both more than 50% complete. We are not just opening the facilities; we are also providing the necessary budgetary support. We are in the process of obtaining approval from the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service to hire administrative and other support staff to run the centres.

Mr. Speaker, this year a new homeless shelter to serve the vulnerable in Kingston and St. Andrew, will be built at King Street, at a cost of approximately J\$120 million. The designs have been completed, and the works have already been put to tender. This facility will cater to over 300 Jamaicans who are living on the streets, and lacking proper care.

We are not only providing physical spaces for the care of our homeless. **This year, J\$30 million will be provided to the drop-in centres for nutritional support.**

The administrative structures through which the services to the homeless are provided have been greatly enhanced, as eight Parish Homelessness Committees were established in the last Financial Year.

Mr. Speaker, the **security** of our infirmaries is now being addressed as never before.

The **Hanover infirmary** is the pioneer project in this regard, with the successful installation of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras and perimeter lighting. The Clarendon infirmary is next on the schedule for CCTV installation.

We are also focused on enhancing the quality of life for residents at the infirmaries. The provision of uninterrupted electricity is critical in this respect. **That is why this year, solar panels will be installed at all our infirmaries at an estimated cost of J\$27 million, thanks to the National Housing Trust (NHT). Additionally, through the kind support of the Culture, Health, Arts, Sports and education (CHASE) Fund, the delivery and installation of generators has commenced. Mr. Speaker, I can safely say that by the end of this calendar year, all infirmaries will have solar panels, generators and CCTV's installed for the safety and comfort of both residents and staff.**

The **Board of Supervision (BOS)** is the Ministry's guardian of the Social Protection Programme, **Mr. Speaker**, and a beacon of hope for our vulnerable people.

I commend the staff of the BOS headed by the young and vibrant Ms. Treka Lewis, as they work to protect our citizens in partnership with the Local Authorities. In this regard I wish to announce that the **Golden Age Home in Vineyard Town, and the Denham Town Golden Age Home were returned to the custodianship of this Ministry on February 5 this year, as well as the full care of the indoor and the outdoor poor. I thank the Ministry of Labour and Social Security for its tireless stewardship over many years.**

CHAPTER TWO

Employment Creation and Facilitation

Mr. Speaker, we are getting our young people to appreciate Local Government, while giving them incentives and using their energy and talent to help the Ministry to undertake crucial activities. That is how the **YOUTH SUMMER EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME** has over the last three years, generated more than 7,500 employment opportunities.

Young people from the 228 divisions were employed to undertake tasks relevant to the Ministry's core functions including a **streetlight audit, missing street sign data collection and collection of data on the Vulnerable in Communities.**

Their work on the streetlight audit was critical to the agreement we reached with the Jamaica Public Service Company regarding the total number of functioning versus non-functioning lights. **This year, they will help to streamline the system for managing trade Licences.**

We intend to increase the number of young people in the Programme to 3,500, and I am happy to note that over 30% of the participants are now fully employed in the local government system.

Mr. Speaker, despite the challenges we faced in implementing all our **MARKET REHABILITATION PROJECTS** last year, we persevered, and we are building out the infrastructure that will ensure expanded business and orderly spatial management.

The **Falmouth Market** in Trelawny was completed in partnership with the Port Authority of Jamaica, at a cost of J\$300 million, and is up and running.



A section of the audience at the launch of the 2018 Youth Summer Employment Program, held in Manchester.



Hon. Desmond McKenzie (right) is accompanied by Member of Parliament for Central Manchester, Peter Bunting as he inspects the ten 2,000 gallon water tanks installed at the Bellefield Water Shop.

Having completed Phase 1 of the **Clarks Town Market**, Phase 2 of the project, which involves the construction of an Administrative Building is being done. Last year, I signed the contract to commence the first phase of a new market in **Port Maria**, and we expect the works to be completed by July. In St. Elizabeth, the installation of awnings at the **Black River Market** has been completed. Within the Corporate Area, repairs to the **Papine Market** are currently underway.

We will focus on the **Stony Hill Market** in St. Andrew, where J\$13 million will be spent to do sanitary, electrical and plumbing works, and to develop water harvesting infrastructure. The **Hopewell Market** in Hanover will undergo rehabilitation works at a cost of J\$20 million.

Mr. Speaker, following consultations with the Negril Chamber of Commerce, residents and other stakeholders, our technical team has **completed the designs for a Market in Negril**. **The project will commence this year, at a cost of J\$70 million.**

I turn now to access to potable water, which is an international development standard, and for which this Ministry has the responsibility of providing minor water supplies. We commenced the programme of installing **WATER SHOPS** in drought-stricken communities.

In the last financial year, two of these critical facilities were established at **Marlie Hill and Bellefield in Manchester**. **The Bellefield facility will provide 20,000 gallons of purified water every day.**

A Water Shop is being built at **Southfield** and another at **Malvern** in St. Elizabeth, both are approximately 60% complete and are scheduled to be commissioned into service in August.

Work will commence shortly on the facilities at **Myersville and Junction in the parish. This year, we will bring relief to communities in St. Mary and in Portland through the construction of Water Shops.**

Access to proper **PAROCHIAL ROADS** is a constant demand from our citizens **Mr. Speaker**. In the last financial year, this Ministry invested approximately J\$260 million on rehabilitating and repairing flood damaged and other parochial roads right across the island.

One of the projects that we are most proud of is the transformation of Douglas Castle in St. Ann, a small agricultural district. The community was not only inundated on almost every occasion of sustained rain, but was marooned, as the main road connecting the community to the rest of the country was under water. Today, the residents are far more at ease, as engineering works valued at over J\$40 million resulted in the main access road being elevated by approximately four feet, and major culverts and related drainage infrastructure being constructed.

These works are making a tremendous difference to community, residential and commercial life especially in the interior corridors of the country. This year, \$270 million will be allocated to enhance parochial development, through the development of parochial roads.

Mr. Speaker, TRADE LICENCES are a significant source of revenue to the local authorities.

We have seen significant improvement in the collection of fees by way of these licences. In the last financial year, the Municipal Corporations collected **J\$274.2 million from the 11,300 entities on register...a compliance rate of 93%**. I urge the local authorities to continue to ensure that all eligible businesses are registered, as these revenues are important to the continued improvement of their operations.

A critical service supported by property taxes is the provision of **STREET LIGHTS**.

Mr. Speaker, under this Administration, the long-standing, massive weight of the street light debt to the Jamaica Public Service Company, has been lifted from the shoulders of the Local Authorities. A debt which we inherited, and which ran into billions of dollars - at one stage reaching a high of J\$7 billion - has been taken over by the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service. Mr. Speaker, it feels as if emancipation has come three months early. I want to publicly thank the Minister for this expression of support, which gives the local authorities a clean slate, and the challenge of properly monitoring and managing the service in the communities they serve.

With regard to the **SMART STREET LIGHT PROGRAMME, 43,687** of the overall target of 105,000 lights have been installed, since its inception in the 2017/18 Financial Year. In the last Financial Year, **7,127** LED street lights were installed. For this Calendar Year, the installation target is **25,200 Mr. Speaker**, and we look forward to the successful completion of the project in 2021. **An important objective of the 2019 rollout Mr. Speaker, is the installation of LED lamps in PARISH CAPITALS that were not touched in the first two**

phases of the programme. Accordingly, works will be carried out this year in Morant Bay, Port Maria, Port Antonio, May Pen, Mandeville, Black River and Lucea.

CHAPTER THREE

OUR AGENCIES: Jamaica Fire Brigade, Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management, Social Development Commission, National Solid Waste Management Authority

I now turn to the **JAMAICA FIRE BRIGADE**, which is continuing to protect protect lives and property across the country. I salute the staff of the Brigade, and recognise their new Commissioner Mr. Stewart Beckford. We also thank the previous Commissioner Mr. Raymond Spencer for his many years of service.

New firefighters are being recruited into the Agency, and the target is 110 recruits in this financial year. Our firefighters are also receiving the protective equipment they need.

350 Bunker Gears were procured in the last financial year, and an additional 350 will be obtained this year, along with breathing apparatus at a cost of J\$167 million. We are also ensuring that each firefighter has his and her own respirator to use in the field.

In the last financial year, a new fire boat station was commissioned into service in Montego Bay at a cost of J\$15 million. A fire boat station was also commissioned in Kingston at a cost of J\$10 million, two new fire trucks were added to the brigade's fleet at a cost of J\$130 million, and two ambulances were procured at a cost of J\$24 million.



Hon. Desmond McKenzie (centre) and His Worship the Mayor Homer Davis (left) along with other personnel, inspecting the new fire boat for Montego Bay.

Work continues on the final phase of the Spanish Town Fire Station at a cost of J\$53.7 million and the Frankfield Fire Station is now being upgraded at a cost of J\$10 million. This year, the Falmouth Fire Station in Trelawny will be renovated at a cost of J\$10 million. Thanks to the Tourism Enhancement Fund, J\$8 million has been provided to start works at the Negril Fire Station.

We see the improvement of infrastructure as critical, as we know that approximately 65% of our fire stations require some form of repair or rehabilitation.

That is why one of my disappointments has been the delay in getting works started on the fire stations at Barnett Street, Yallahs and Port Maria. The House is aware that I had announced these works last year under the (Jamaica Social Investment Fund and Disaster Vulnerability Reduction Programme) JSIF/DVRP project.

After many challenges **Mr. Speaker**, I can advise this Honourable House that ground will be broken on June 6, 2019 for the construction of **the Barnett Street Fire Station in Montego Bay. Contracts for the construction of the Port Maria and the Yallahs fire station are presently with the National Contracts Committee. Mr. Speaker** prosperity is moving at a rapid pace as for the first time in over 20 years Jamaicans will witness the construction of four brand new fire stations. Additionally, **Mr. Speaker**, six fire trucks will be procured for the Brigade under the JSIF/DVRP.

We are also striving to improve the efficiency of our firefighters, by giving them modern equipment to deal with the evolving built environment. **Accordingly, the Fire Brigade is procuring two command vehicles valued at J\$13 million dollars, to aid in command and control, especially at large protracted incidents.**

Additionally, J\$176 million will be spent this year, to obtain four fire trucks (two water tenders and two pumpers).

OFFICE OF DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Mr. Speaker, the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management is continuing to do us proud, as Jamaica's Disaster Management Agency and as a critical focal point for the Southern Caribbean.

Its role in the improvement of the national disaster resilience profile was evident, as I led the Jamaican delegation at the recently concluded **Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction** in Geneva, Switzerland.

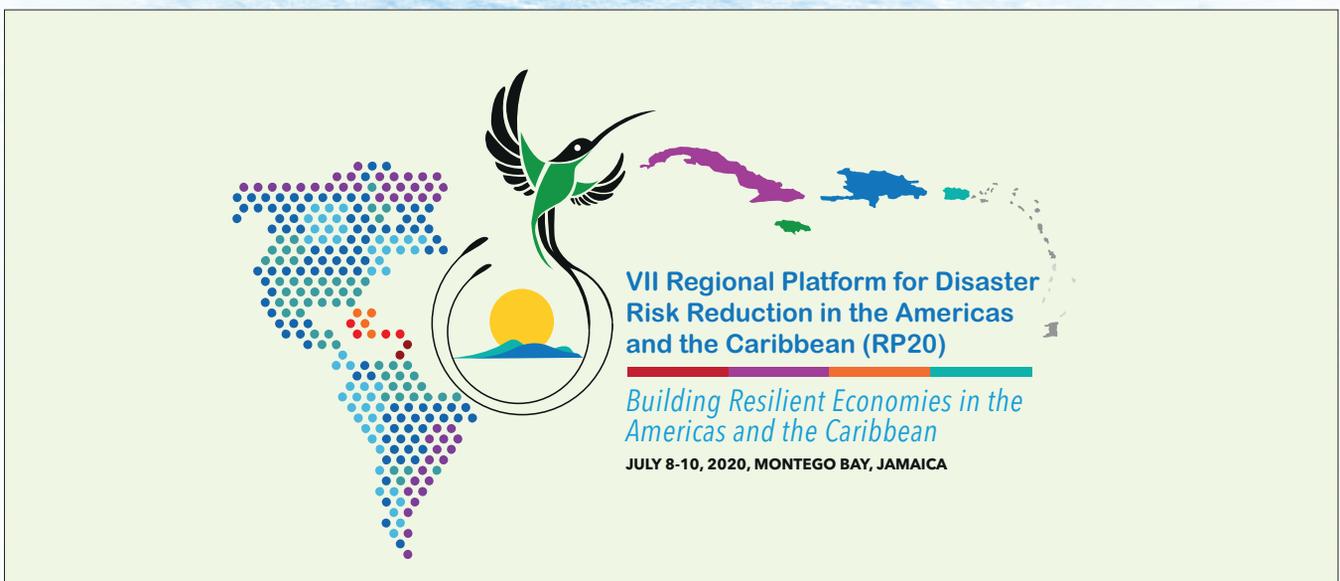
Last year, the ODPEM developed after due consultation the draft **Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Policy**, and continued the programme of **Integrating Disaster Risk Management in the Planning Process** in the Municipal Corporations. This vital initiative, which develops expertise in conducting Hazard Vulnerability Assessments, was piloted in the St. Thomas, Portland, Kingston and St. Andrew, St. Catherine and Portmore Municipal Corporations.



Hon. Desmond McKenzie (third left) and members of his delegation at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, held May 13 – 17, 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Agency also trained over 400 people in various agencies, public bodies and private sector entities in Shelter & Shelter Management, Initial Damage Assessment, Disaster/Emergency Communications, Basic Search & Rescue Techniques and Emergency Operations Centre techniques.

As the Government continues to work toward disaster mitigation as an operational reality and national culture **Mr. Speaker**, our efforts through ODPEM have attracted the attention of the international community. While attending the 6th Regional **Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas** in June last year, I was honoured to accept the invitation for Jamaica to host the 7th Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the Caribbean, which will be held in Montego Bay next year, 2020.



I am thankful to my colleagues for accepting my constant advocacy that the Caribbean is unique and should be included in the name of the conference.

This is a clear statement of respect and high consideration for Jamaica, by signatory countries to the Sendai Framework of 2015, and international and regional Agencies such as the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency. This is an opportunity to show what Jamaica is doing and will do to facilitate the next phase of the sustainable development agenda through disaster risk reduction, resilience and climate change adaptation.

It is also an opportunity to immerse our local participants and our international guests in the uniquely Jamaican experience, that continues to put our country's name on the lips of the world.

The planning of this critical conference, in collaboration with other arms of Government, private sector, regional and international partners is well on its way, and I will keep the House and the country informed as we count down to July next year.

Mr. Speaker, we will officially commence the 2019 Atlantic Hurricane Season in the next four days. The ODPEM has intensified its programmes and messaging through the **National Hurricane Preparedness Campaign**, as we work to ingrain a culture of preparedness in all our people.

I urge every Member of this House to seek the expertise that resides in the Agency, and in the Municipal Corporations through the Disaster Co-ordinators, to drive home the message and the requirements of preparedness to your constituents.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

- **Mr. Speaker**, the **SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION** continues to be faithful to mandate of community transformation.
- A culture of entrepreneurship is being rooted at the community level through the **Local Economic Development Support Programme**. **In the last financial year, 2,415 jobs were created, the majority being full-time jobs.** Through the **parish Inter-Agency Network**, over 8,000 residents benefited from special interventions which included Social Service and Health Fairs.
- Our citizens are also benefiting from the **Community Incentives and Grants Programme**. **Local Economic Development and related programmes, cumulatively valued at \$10.4 million** were approved in the last fiscal year.
- The Agency is also strongly encouraging improved governance at the community level, by working with existing Parish Development Committees (PDC's) and Development Area Committees to ensure their compliance with their mandate. I was very pleased to preside over the relaunch of the PDC's in November last year. **Thirteen are active, with 10 having held Annual General Meetings and elected new executives.**



Hon. Desmond McKenzie (fourth left) handing over the Local Governance Partnership Agreement to Mr. Michael Jackson, Chairman of the Westmoreland Parish Development Committee (PDC), while the Mayors and the Executive Director of the Social Development Commission Dr. Dwayne Vernon (sixth left) look on.

- As the official registrar for the PDCs, the SDC has established its operational structure to carry out this role and has been up and running since April this year.
- Under the **Community Research and Development Planning Programme, 682 Community Profiles were created and are available, with three new profiles now being drafted. This represents 88% of 775 Communities island wide. Additionally, 570 Asset Maps were developed.** The Agency's work led to 16 Community projects being completed, valued at \$2.8 million, 16 proposals approved at a value of \$6.8 million, while 53 community projects are now being implemented.
- I commend the work of the SDC across Jamaica, and we will continue to give it budgetary support, which has been revived since this Administration took office.

NATIONAL SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

Mr. Speaker, the National Solid Waste Management Authority continues to be a positive example of Government in action.

The Agency continues to practice sound Corporate Governance, with all outstanding audited financial statements and annual reports having been updated.

The NSWMA is on track to submit its **2018/19** audited financial statements and the corresponding Annual Report, within the timeline required by the Public Bodies Management and Accountability Act.

The Agency is also 70% compliant with current statutory requirements and life insurance, and nearly 80% of all disposal site workers, side men and drivers have been vaccinated.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to announce that the side men will receive an additional 28% salary increase, effective July 1 this year.

With regard to its core responsibilities, the NSWMA collected nearly 700 thousand tonnes of solid waste, or over 70% of the total solid waste generated islandwide. Adherence to the collection schedule of once per week in the last financial year was nearly 80%, and compliance with the sweeping schedule for major roadways and town centres was almost 90%.

The main reasons for this improved performance are the procurement and introduction of new collection units, and systematic repairs to dysfunctional units, 15 of which have been restored.

Since 2016, the NSWMA acquired 43 new units, the last 12 of which were officially handed over in February this year. Mr. Speaker, the NSWMA is in the process of leasing an unprecedented 100 collection units in this financial year. When this exercise is completed, Jamaica will be served by 143 collection units on the streets, working for our citizens.



Minister McKenzie delivers the keynote address at the handing over ceremony for twelve (12) brand new compactor trucks to the National Solid Waste Management Authority (NSWMA).

The NSWMA, through partnership with the Tourism Enhancement Fund also received two pick up trucks which were deployed to the North-Eastern and Western Regions. This has bolstered enforcement activities in the tourism corridor and further enhanced the tourism product.

Additionally **Mr. Speaker**, more Enforcement Officers are being sought for each Region, as we move closer to finalising the Regulations to the National Solid Waste Management Act. These are the **NSWMA (Public Cleansing) Regulations, the NSWMA (Disposal of Hazardous Waste) Regulations and the NSWMA (Disposal of Solid Waste Facilities) Regulations.**

The Agency has been prosecuting in partnership with the police, persons who breach the Act. In the last financial year, 1,017 litter tickets and 4,517 Removal Notices were issued. Over 25,000 residents and business operators were exposed to the proper techniques for managing solid waste.

MITIGATION AGAINST FIRES AT DISPOSAL SITES

Mr. Speaker, the NSWMA is ensuring the functional integrity and security of all Disposal Sites. In addition to the investments by the Government, I wish to publicly commend Red Stripe for its donation of a surveillance system worth J\$1 million, to enhance security at the Riverton Disposal site.

The NSWMA has continued to emphasise **STAFF DEVELOPMENT** **Mr. Speaker**.

Ninety-nine employees in the four regions were trained in nine disciplines including Procurement Laws and Regulations, Auditing and Commercial Monitoring.

I want to thank the Government of Japan, which through the Japan International Cooperation Agency is expanding technical capacity through solid waste management training.

The House is aware **Mr. Speaker**, that I have been championing **OWN SOURCE REVENUE** as a critical financing stream for the Local Authorities.

I must specially commend the Agency for developing and implementing a comprehensive business plan, and hiring three credit and collection officers to obtain the revenue from hauling commercial solid waste, enforcing disposal site and anti-litter tickets, and collecting special waste.

The revenue target of J\$407 million that was set for the last Financial Year, was exceeded by J\$62 million, for a total of J\$469 million. I congratulate the NSWMA Board, Management and staff, who continue to change the image of the Agency and the face of Jamaica through improved performance.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION: Local Government is Transforming National Life

Mr. Speaker, my passion as a local government practitioner is the development of people and their communities. No other form of Government can respond to people's needs like local government. If there is a fire at midnight, the Councillor is the first line of response. If funeral or schooling or other needs arise, the Councillor is at the front line.

Local Government is here to stay, and I will do everything in my power to improve peoples' lives right across the 228 Divisions and the Municipalities of Jamaica.

That is why we are implementing institutional change through innovation and major capital investment. We are not just doing things better - we are doing them differently!

That is why the lives of our people in Clarendon, Manchester and St. Elizabeth are being transformed through **Water Shops**, with more to come in other drought-stricken areas.

That is why, with new **CCTV systems, autoclaves, and more male and female wards**, the residents and staff in our infirmaries are experiencing an enhanced quality of life.

That is why we are making credible inroads **into the repair and rehabilitation of parochial roads**, with over J\$100 million invested and over J\$100 million to be spent this year. That is why our **markets are being expanded and transformed**, to become critical business, community development and spatial order hubs for our towns and cities.

That is why, **for the very first time, the National Solid Waste Management Authority will have 143 new garbage collection trucks in the field, working for our people.** That is why the **Municipal Social Assistance Programme** has been created, to give our Councillors and Municipal Corporations the financial muscle to serve the people. **Over 42,000 Jamaicans have directly benefited from this programme since it began two years ago.**

That is why the **Youth Summer Employment Programme, now in its third year, will interface with over ten thousand young people.**

It has given them a taste of working life, a taste of local government, and lit the flame of hope for their prosperous future here in Jamaica.

Local Government, working with central Government, is changing the psyche of our people, as this Administration takes on our social and economic challenges through hard work and innovation.

As we perform the peoples' will, I salute all the employees of my Ministry and its portfolio entities. They deserve every encouragement as they respond to human needs.

That is why the Ministry in consultation with the Ministry of Finance and Public Service is to introduce this year, a LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP, to provide financial assistance for the education of employees of the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development and its portfolio entities. Six scholarships valued at J\$2.1 million will be awarded every year, to selected applicants who will pursue an area of study that is in keeping with the priorities of the Ministry.

The focus here Mr. Speaker is in strengthening the urban planning and technical services capacity of the Ministry and its portfolio entities.

I close my presentation as I began, as a proud member of a Government that is demonstrating its commitment to helping our people prosper. In the face of challenges, frustrations and great odds, we persevere.

I am inspired by the simple words of the former British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill:

“Never, never, never, never give up.”

We are on the journey to **prosperity**, humbled by the increasing faith of our people. **When it seems as if the soil of hope is cemented over by challenges, we look to the north, the south, the west and most recently the east, and realise that the green, green grass is breaking through.**

Thank You Mr. Speaker.

Desmond McKenzie CD, JP, MP

Minister of Local Government and Community Development

May 28, 2019