

PATH Disbursed \$5.3 Billion

DURING THE 2018/2019 financial year, the Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH) paid out \$5.3 billion to more than 130,000 families or 340,000 beneficiaries.

This was disclosed by Minister of Labour and Social Security, Hon. Shahine Robinson, during her contribution to the 2019/20 Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives, on July 9. She also informed that since June 2019, PATH benefit levels were increased by an average of 17 per cent, and in September 2018, the Ministry introduced the PATH back-to-school grant for each child registered in school.

"This grant will continue with over \$500 million projected to be spent in the



Minister of Labour and Social Security, Hon. Shahine Robinson, makes her contribution to the 2019/20 Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives on July 9.

2019/20 financial year. As facilitate direct electronic transfers of benefit pay-

ments, commencing with the August 2019 payment," Mrs. Robinson said.

She noted that this will represent a saving on both sides as well as being more discreet and convenient for the families.

Meanwhile, under the Steps to Work Programme, the Ministry continues to support the entrepreneurial activities of PATH clients, in order to provide a platform for families to move towards economic independence.

Mrs. Robinson said for this financial year, Steps to Work will target 800 PATH households to benefit from upskilling initiatives, and another 600 for on-the-job training.

Additionally, under this programme, a further 1,100 PATH clients will receive financial support to establish micro businesses.

Minister Grange Tables Sexual Harassment Bill

THE SEXUAL Harassment Bill was tabled in the House of Representatives on Tuesday, July 9 by Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, Hon. Olivia Grange.

Minister Grange said the Bill is intended "to protect women and men whose quality of life is affected by intimidating, hostile, or offensive environments caused by unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favours and crude sexual behaviours."

As stated in the Memorandum of Objects and Reasons, the legislation is necessary to address concerns about sexual harassment that is employment-related, occurring in institutions, or arising in the landlord and tenant relationship.

The Bill outlines the types of conduct that constitute sexual harassment and



Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, Hon. Olivia Grange.

prohibits certain related behaviours.

It further makes provisions for the making of complaints by persons who are aggrieved by sexual harassment. These are to be heard by the newly created Sexual Harassment Tribunal.

The Bill is to be referred to a Joint Select Committee shortly.

National Child Diversion Programme to Roll Out by November

THE NATIONAL Child Diversion Programme, which deals with children who have come in conflict with the law, is to be fully rolled out by November this year.

This was disclosed by State Minister for National Security, Hon. Rudyard Spencer, at a stakeholders' sensitisation session on the programme at the University of the West Indies Regional Headquarters in St. Andrew on July 10.

He said that the initiative is being implemented by the National Security and Justice ministries.

Child diversion is the process of implementing measures dealing with children who are alleged, accused or recognised to

have infringed on the law, without resorting to formal judicial proceedings.

The national programme aims to, among other things, reduce the number of children who are charged with offences, and exposed to the formal criminal justice system as a result; and increase the use of diversionary programmes that rehabilitate children as a response to crime and wrongdoing.

Mr. Spencer said that by implementing the programme, the Government is "taking a more practical approach to rehabilitate children as a response to crime and deviant behaviour".

He noted that the move will also ensure that detention and institutionalisation of chil-



State Minister for National Security, Hon. Rudyard Spencer, addresses a Child Diversion Programme stakeholders' sensitisation session hosted by the Ministry of Justice at the University of the West Indies Regional Headquarters in St. Andrew on July 10.

dren "become a last resort in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child".

Mr. Spencer said that the programme will incorporate

the use of restorative justice, and a care plan with specific treatment guidelines for each child will be designed.

Assistance for Drought Hit Farmers

THE MINISTRY of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, through the Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA), will be providing urgently needed direct assistance to farmers valued at \$15 million, to help provide immediate relief from the current drought conditions.

This was disclosed by Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry, Hon. J.C. Hutchinson, during his contribution to the 2019/20

Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives on July 9. He further informed that proper assessment is being done to determine further assistance or interventions.

Mr. Hutchinson also noted that under the Ministry's Production Incentive Programme, a further \$19.95 million is to be allocated via the Members of Parliament to provide further inputs to support farmers islandwide.



Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. J.C. Hutchinson, displays a bamboo straw as he makes his contribution to the 2019/20 Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives on July 9.



Minister Henry Meets Formula 1 Driver

Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister, Hon. Mike Henry, displays a poster presented to him by Formula 1 driver, Alex Powell, during a courtesy call at Jamaica House on July 11. Eleven-year-old Alex has earned the distinction of being the only Jamaican to be signed with a Formula 1 team, joining the Mercedes Benz junior programme earlier this year.

Research Funds to Finance Entrepreneurial Activities

THE \$200 million allocated by the Government for research is expected to be used to finance business and entrepreneurial programmes at tertiary institutions taking up the offer.

The funds, earmarked in the 2019/20 Budget, are part of the Administration's thrust to drive entrepreneurship through research and development.

"We will rely on you (tertiary institutions) to run the transparent research application processes," said Minister of Finance and the Public Service, Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke.

"We will allocate those funds across the university

space in a way that is transparent... and leave it to the universities [supported by] a Memorandum of Understanding [with the Ministry] that is very general," he added.

He was speaking during the opening ceremony for the Mona School of Business and Management's (MSBM) fourth business and management conference at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel in New Kingston on July 10.

Dr. Clarke noted that entrepreneurship is central to the programmes and activities of several countries whose administrations are focused on enhancing the



Finance and the Public Service Minister, Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke (right), in dialogue with Mona School of Business and Management (MSBM) Executive in Residence, James Moss-Solomon, during the opening ceremony for the MSBM's three-day business and management conference, at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel in New Kingston, on July 10.

welfare of their citizens through sustainable economic growth.

Acknowledging Jamaica's macroeconomic stability and progress to date, he said the Administration is keen on generating high value-added economic activity that is underpinned by innovation that causes "disturbance".

"This [disturbance] is where somebody is seeing a gap in the market and providing a good or service in a way that is delivering significant value [that], more often than not, comes out of some kind of research," he noted.



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