

Jamaica Creating a More Cohesive Society - PM

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness says Jamaica is pursuing several policy and legislative measures designed to create a more cohesive society and resilient economy.

"Our major goals are the promotion of inclusive sustainable growth, economic opportunities, peaceful society, social harmony and citizen security. We are working to make this a reality for every Jamaican," he said.

Mr. Holness was delivering the policy statement during the general debate at the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York on September 27.

He noted that greater investment in human capital will undoubtedly yield expo-

stantial returns for national development.

"Empowerment of our people will facilitate participation in the growth and development of Jamaica, our region as well as the wider international community," Prime Minister Holness said.

The Prime Minister pointed out that Jamaica has made significant advances in universal enrolment at the pre-primary, primary and secondary levels of education, through a strategic and integrated programme of education and training.

Mr. Holness further shared that in addition to cutting youth unemployment in half over the last three years, Jamaica has achieved a record-low unemployment rate



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness delivering the policy statement at the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York on September 27.

of 7.8 per cent; 18 consecutive quarters of economic growth; low and stable inflation; and a reduction in its debt-to-Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ratio from 147 per cent to 95 per cent.

"Jamaica is determined to achieve economic independence and social equity, working collaboratively with our bilateral and multilateral partners," he said.

Thousands of Public Healthcare Users to Get Free Diagnostic Services

THE MINISTRY of Health and Wellness, on September 25, signed framework agreements with 10 radiology providers, which will facilitate increased access to certain diagnostic services for persons within the public healthcare system.

The initiative falls under the Enhancing Healthcare Services Delivery Project, which forms part of the Government's strategy for the reduction in wait time and overcrowding in hospitals.

Services to be provided under the agreements are computerised tomography (CT) scans, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), ultrasound, endoscopy and histopathology.

Participating providers are Apex Radiology; Danhope Radiology Services; Dynamic Imaging Associates; Island Radiology; North Coast Imaging; Radiology West; Erin Radiology Services;

Kris Radiology Services; St. Wellness, on September 25, signed framework agreements with 10 radiology providers, which will facilitate increased access to certain diagnostic services for persons within the public healthcare system.

Speaking at the signing ceremony and official launch of the project at the AC Marriott Hotel in Kingston, Portfolio Minister, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, said the objective is to enable patients to access certain diagnostic services free of cost through private providers, in cases where the public hospital does not have the equipment or they are not working.

He noted that this intervention will ensure that Jamaicans who use the public health system, will not be denied treatment.

"We estimate that over 60,000 will benefit and it will cost the Government approximately \$200 million in the first year," he indicated.



Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton (seated left), and Medical Director, Imaging Intervention Associates, Dr. Duane Chambers (seated right), sign a framework agreement that will facilitate increased access to certain diagnostic services for persons within the public healthcare system, during a function held at the AC Marriott Hotel in Kingston, on September 25. Observing are Director, Health Services Planning and Integration, Dr. Naydene Williams; and Technical Advisor, Enhancing Healthcare Services Delivery Project, Professor Archibald McDonald.

First-Ever Jamaica Survey of Establishments Launched

THE FIRST-ever Jamaica Survey of Establishments (JSE) Report was launched at the AC Marriott Hotel in Kingston, on September 25.

The 2018 JSE, a pioneering initiative that was executed under the Planning Institute of Jamaica's (PIOJ) Foundations for Competitiveness and Growth Project (FCGP), is intended to provide valid empirical data on the total number of establishments participating in commercial, business and other similar engagements across Jamaica.

This is expected to assist the public and private sectors in strategy, policy and programme formulation.

The survey's findings will be used as an input for the Statistical Business Register (SBR), which is maintained by the Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN) and was conducted by the JSE between July and December 2018, with funding support from the World Bank, which finances the FCGP.



Minister of Finance and the Public Service, Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke (centre), is presented with a copy of the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) 2018 Jamaica Survey of Establishments (JSE) Report by PIOJ Director General, Dr. Wayne Henry, during the document's launch at the AC Marriott Hotel in Kingston on September 25. At left is Minister of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. Audley Shaw.

In his remarks, Minister of Finance and the Public Service, Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke, said the JSE provides a baseline for related future surveys.

He said the report will, for the first time, provide scientific

ally collated data in a verifiable format that will be useful going forward.

For his part, PIOJ Director General, Dr. Wayne Henry, said the JSE will provide invaluable data that will aid in identifying and

understanding economic trends and improve the robustness of policy prescriptions.

Additionally, he said it will provide data-driven options for business growth and expansion.

NWC Customers to Benefit From Debt Write-Off

THE NATIONAL Water Commission (NWC) will be writing off the debt of some customers who have been severely affected by the recent drought conditions.

Minister without portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Senator the Hon. Pearnel Charles Jr. made the announcement during a press conference at his New Kingston offices on September 24.

"The Government does recognise that this prolonged

"The NWC will be collaborating with the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF) to deliver a debt write-off to residents of the most hard-hit communities..."

drought has had an intense impact on several communities. Residents in communities that were subjected to the



Minister without portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Senator the Hon. Pearnel Charles Jr (right), holds a copy of the National Water Sector Policy and Implementation Plan at a press conference at the Ministry's New Kingston offices on September 24. Seated beside him is Director, Meteorological Service Division, Mr. Evan Thompson.

frequent and prolonged service disruptions will be the beneficiaries of a bill redemption system under very specific conditions, and through specific procedures," he said.

"The NWC will be collaborating with the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF) to deliver a debt write-off to residents of the most hard-hit communities, and, so far, the NWC has written off in excess of \$50 million from these communities," he noted.

For his part, NWC President, Mark Barnett, said

the write-off will cost between \$100 million and \$150 million. He said the notifications to customers who will benefit from the measure will be done through the Revenue Department of the NWC. He said that customers' accounts will be adjusted internally and they will not have to visit the NWC offices.

"We already have a database with all of the customers within the particular areas, and that is how we will be handling it," he said.

Office of the DPP to be Renovated and Expanded

THE OFFICE of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) is to be renovated and expanded at a cost of just over \$626 million.

The contract for the undertaking was signed on September 26 during a quarterly press briefing at the Ministry of Justice, Constant Spring Road, in St. Andrew.

YP Seaton and Associates Company Limited will undertake the project, which is expected to get under way shortly and should be completed within eight months.

Funding for the project will be taken from the Government of Jamaica funds allocated in the Ministry's 2019/20 budget.



Minister of Justice, Hon. Delroy Chuck (2nd left), and Director of Public Prosecutions, Paula Llewellyn (2nd right), sign the contract valued at \$626 million for the renovation and expansion of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP). The signing was done on September 26 during a quarterly press briefing at the Ministry's Constant Spring Road offices, in St. Andrew. Observing (from left) are Director, YP Seaton and Associates Company Limited, Calvert Mundle and Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, Sancia Bennett Templer.

On completion, the new building will boast meeting rooms, offices, lobbies, registry, cafeteria, bathrooms, security posts, extended library and conference rooms, and asso-

ciated services, such as electrical, air conditioning, plumbing, fire services, external works and landscaping.

In his address, Portfolio Minister, Hon. Delroy Chuck, said the expansion will ensure that all the staff of the DPP and their personnel will be accommodated.

"The facilities at the Court of Appeal... are first-class facilities, just completed by the same contractor, YP Seaton, and we expect no less at the DPP. We expect the DPP offices to be first-class facilities," he added.

Expansion of the Office of the DPP will complete the transformation of Public Building West, as upgrading of the island's Justice Infrastructure continues.

Edward Seaga Scholarship Awards Launched



Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie (left), looks on as Christopher Seaga, son of late former Prime Minister, the Most. Hon. Edward Seaga, presents a scholarship award to Wolmer's Girls' student, Lutonya Shelton. Occasion was the launch of the Edward Seaga Scholarship Awards at the Spanish Court Hotel in New Kingston on September 25.