

Governance Framework Developed for CMU

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness say measures are being implemented to improve the governance and management of the Caribbean Maritime University (CMU).

He noted that many of the measures, which cover human resource management, procurement, records management and financial accountability, are being implemented in response to recommendations by the Auditor General in her report on the operations at the institution for the period 2016-2018. Other measures pre-date the report.

The Prime Minister, who was speaking in the House of Representatives on January 28, said a governance framework has been developed to guide the operations of the university. This will, among other things, ensure that appropriate monitoring systems are in place and that board meeting minutes and other required reports are submitted to the portfolio ministry on time.



Prime Minister the Most Hon Andrew Holness speaking in the House of Representatives on January 28.

In respect of the recommendations for steps to be taken to strengthen control over the management of CMU's bank accounts and to consider the appropriateness of maintaining 22 such accounts, Mr. Holness said that the new council will be asked to reduce the number

and regularise signatories on those accounts.

On the matter of procurement, the Prime Minister said that extensive training sessions have been carried out in the areas of procurement rules and practices, human resource rules and practices, finance and

administration, and overseas travel.

"I believe the corrective actions taken, to date, demonstrate the seriousness with which the Government regards the developments at the CMU and the imperative of improving the general administration of the university to restore the confidence of all its stakeholders," he said.

Fitch Ratings Affirm Jamaica at 'B+', Revises Outlook to Positive

FITCH RATINGS Agency, on January 29, affirmed the Government of Jamaica's Long-Term Foreign-Currency Issuer and Local Currency Issuer Default Rating (IDR) at 'B+' and revised the outlook to "Positive" from "Stable".

Finance and the Public Service Minister, Dr. the Hon Nigel Clarke, said, the revised outlook is great news for Jamaica.

"Jamaica is making consistent economic gains that are reflected in the revision by Fitch of Jamaica's economic outlook to positive," Dr. Clarke said.

The Rating Agency indicated that the revised outlook reflected Jamaica's efforts in maintaining the debt-to-Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on a downward trajectory supported by the Government's successes in running large primary surpluses.

Fitch recognised the efforts to ensure policy continuity in a post IMF environ-



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

ment, with the commitment to establish a fiscal council and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Economic Programme Oversight Committee (EPOC) as positives.

In explaining the affirmation of the "B+" ratings, Fitch pointed out that the high debt-to-GDP and low growth levels were constraining factors. However, prospects for growth have improved and it is expected that growth will move steadily to 1.5 percent by 2021.

Jamaica Prepared to Handle Coronavirus

HEALTH AND Wellness Minister, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, says the country is not at a disadvantage regarding its state of readiness for any eventuality of the coronavirus.

Following a tour of isolation facilities and equipment at the National Chest Hospital and the Norman Manley International Airport, (NMIA)

on January 30, Dr. Tufton noted that the country has what is necessary to guard against infectious diseases, both at the hospital level and at the ports of entry.

"I'm very comfortable that we have the personnel and we have the infrastructure... to scan, to monitor and to deal with the threat that the

coronavirus is presenting now for the world. There's always margins of error, of course these things will always include some risk but...I saw for myself today and I'm satisfied," Dr. Tufton said.

The two-room isolation unit at the National Chest Hospital was originally designed to manage two cases of multidrug resistant tuberculosis.

Dr. Tufton said that while every hospital has an isolation area, the Chest Hospital remains the specialist institution to deal with respiratory ailments.

Meanwhile at NMIA, the Minister got first-hand experience with the thermal and hand-held fever scanners being used at the airports. He also toured the NMIA's isolation unit consisting of a total of six beds in three rooms.



Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton (left), tests the hand-held thermal scanner on Public Health Nurse, Deborah Udo Udo, during a tour of the isolation unit at the Norman Manley International Airport on January 30.

Gov't Receives Two Additional Vehicles For Mobile Justice Programme

THE MINISTRY of Justice will be expanding mobile justice services to members of the disabled community and the elderly with the addition of two specially retrofitted units.

This is in keeping with the Ministry's thrust to facilitate access for all citizens through enhanced service delivery.

The units, valued Can\$420,000, each seat 14 persons and comprise two enclosed office compartments furnished with a desk and three seats. Each vehicle has also been retrofitted with a lift to provide access for persons in wheelchairs.

Other features include Wi-Fi access, air-conditioned units, generators, electrical outlets, microphone systems, television monitors, DVD players and refrigerators. Additionally, each unit is equipped with a wheelchair.

The units were funded by the Canadian Government through the Justice Undertakings for Social Transformation (JUST) programme.

The vehicles, which bring the total number in operation to three, were officially handed over during a ceremony in the Ministry's car park on Constant Spring Road in Kingston, on January 29.

Portfolio Minister, Hon. Delroy Chuck, who spoke, said the units will assist in boosting service delivery, particularly in rural and underserved communities islandwide.

"We want to ensure that our people enjoy their rights

and freedoms. These buses will not only offer legal services but also information on [persons'] constitutional rights and freedoms. It is important that people know their rights," he emphasised.

Noting several reports by the executing agency, the Legal Aid Council, Minister Chuck said some 4,124 persons received assistance through the Mobile Justice Unit since 2017.



Justice Minister, Hon. Delroy Chuck (left, foreground), and Canada's High Commissioner to Jamaica, Her Excellency Laurie Peters, display a wheelchair on the ramp of one of two newly acquired retrofitted mobile justice units, which were handed over during a ceremony in the Ministry's car park on Constant Spring Road in Kingston on January 29.

Head of JIS Wins Award for Public Service

CHIEF EXECUTIVE Officer, Jamaica Information Service (JIS), Donna-Marie Rowe, was one of four award recipients at the annual RJRGleaner Communications Group 40th Honour Awards Luncheon, held on January 30.

The announcement was made at The Gleaner Company Limited's head office at North Street in Kingston, during the event. Mrs. Rowe was awarded in the category of Public Service.

The recipients in the other categories are the August Town Community for the Voluntary Service Special Award, which was collected by a resident, Joan Campbell; the Violence Prevention Alliance for Voluntary Service, which was collected by its Executive Director, Deanna Ashley; and for Science and Technology, Basil Fernandez.

Integration Editor, Gleaner Media Limited, Damion Mitchell, who announced the winners, said Mrs. Rowe was selected based on "her inspiring leadership of the Jamaica Information Service, managing its transformation into a modernised government agency".

"Mrs. Rowe guided the landmark change in format of JIS programmes on radio; introduced a systematic and



Chief Executive Officer, Jamaica Information Service (JIS), Donna-Marie Rowe (right), collects her 'Public Service' award from Head of Corporate Affairs, Red Stripe, Dianne Ashton-Smith, at the RJRGleaner Honour Awards Category Luncheon, held at The Gleaner Company in downtown Kingston, on January 30.

consultative approach to the strategic planning process; has consistently achieved organisational targets since 2010; driven strategies that led to high favourability ratings among the public and opinion leaders in 2019; and has led the media management of State and official events, including the visits of Prince Harry and US President Barack Obama," Mr. Mitchell said.

In her response, Mrs. Rowe said she feels very

"heartened for being selected for this very prestigious award".

She thanked the RJRGleaner Communications Group for selecting her for the award, and also her "families – the JIS family, the Rowe family and extended family of mother, brother and sister", who have supported her throughout the years, and have enabled her to serve in the way she now does.

Local Gov't Minister Hands Over Two Indigent Houses



Local Government and Community Development Minister, Hon. Desmond McKenzie (left), cuts the ribbon to symbolically open the house handed over to Vernice Dell (2nd left) and Lloyd Dell (4th left) during a ceremony in Martha Brae, Trelawny, on January 29. Sharing in the moment is Councillor for the Martha Brae Division, Phillip Service.