

# JA Will Emerge From Covid-19 a Stronger Nation - PM

**P**RIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness says he is confident that the country will come out of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic a stronger nation.

"We are not going to waste the crisis; the crisis gives us the opportunity to reflect on ourselves and our country to see some of the weaknesses and to correct them. So I feel that we are going to be even stronger out of the crisis," he said.

The Prime Minister was speaking on March 31, as he tabled the Disaster Risk Management (Enforcement Measures) (No. 2) (Amendment) (No. 2) Order, 2020 in the House of Representatives.

The Order outlines new measures to guard against or mitigate the threats or effects of COVID-19 and the possible consequences thereof.

Prime Minister Holness said that based on information from scientists and experts, the virus and the disease that it causes "will be with us for some time".

**"We are not going to waste the crisis; the crisis gives us the opportunity to reflect on ourselves and our country to see some of the weaknesses and to correct them."**

He noted, however, that "we can overcome it by practising the simple hygiene and social distancing methods, which we have taken for granted".

The Ministry of Health and Wellness recommends practising good personal hygiene and food safety, maintaining a safe distance of approximately three feet from others, and exercising caution while travelling as ways to avoid contracting COVID-19.



**Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness addresses the House of Representatives on March 31.**

## Farmers to Benefit From \$400-Million Drought Adaptation Programme

MORE THAN 13,000 farmers are slated to benefit from the \$400-million Drought Adaptation Programme being implemented by the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries.

Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry, Hon. J.C. Hutchinson, made the disclosure during a digital media conference on March 31.

The programme aims to increase agricultural production for vegetables, fruits, condiments, roots and tubers by at least five per cent over a 12-month period.

Farmers in the parishes of St. Elizabeth, Manchester, Trelawny, Clarendon, St. Catherine, St. Ann and St. Mary will be targeted under the programme.

Turning to other initiatives, Minister Hutchinson said the Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA) will implement a Backyard

**"The programme aims to increase agricultural production for vegetables, fruits, condiments, roots and tubers by at least five per cent over a 12-month period."**

Garden Kit programme to encourage the growing of vegetable crops at home, in order to provide additional dietary and budgetary support to urban and peri-urban populations.

He said at least 5,000 backyard gardening kits will be available to beneficiaries later this year.

Mr. Hutchinson said RADA will ensure continuous delivery of extension services during this period and beyond.

## Final Arrangements Being Made for Implementation of Stimulus Package

**T**OURISM MINISTER, Hon. Edmund Bartlett, says the Government is finalising arrangements for the implementation of the \$25-billion stimulus package, which includes a \$10-billion coronavirus (COVID-19) contingency provision.

This will provide support for individuals and entities that have been or are likely to be adversely impacted by COVID-19.

"Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness and Minister of Finance and the Public Service, Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke, have given April 9 as the date for the commencement, and we are all working to achieve that," Mr. Bartlett said.

He was speaking during a digital media briefing, hosted at the Ministry on April 2.

Mr. Bartlett assured that all target stakeholders who are

affected will benefit from the contingency provision.

"The package is going to be comprehensive, in terms of how it impacts every single worker of the industry. So, if you are a contract worker, a full-time worker, a craft vendor, a transportation partner/stakeholder, or a small hotel owner you will get a benefit [because] we have looked at it in a broad way to ensure this happens," he added.

Among the contingency provisions are \$1.2 billion in grant support for small business operators, and grants to support businesses retaining employees with taxable income of \$1.5 million or less.

Meanwhile, several local tourism industry stakeholders have further bolstered the Government's COVID-19 response programme with the provision of more than US\$1 million.



**Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. J.C. Hutchinson**



**Tourism Minister, Hon. Edmund Bartlett**

## Municipal Corporations to Get Funds for Sanitisation

**A**S THE Government ramps up the effort to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), municipal corporations across the country will be provided with some funding to assist with continued sanitisation within market districts.

This was disclosed by Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie, during a digital town hall meeting on March 31.

"We won't be able to give it to all the markets, but we are going to provide some funding for that [exercise]," he said.

Mr. McKenzie also informed that he will be meeting with the National Solid Waste Management Authority (NSWMA) to discuss improving garbage collection

within major markets across the country.

The Minister further informed that the Ministry is securing a number of temperature machines to assist in the process of screening individuals who may be exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. A high fever is known to be one



**Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie**

**Mr. McKenzie informed that he will be meeting with the NSWMA to discuss garbage collection within major markets.**

of the symptoms of the virus.

"I don't know how feasible it will be to do that temperature check at all the markets but... [for] the markets where the access is limited, we could explore the possibility of doing so, because that itself will be a part of what we do as a municipality right across the country in our efforts," he said.

## KPH Gets Protective Equipment From Chinese Community In Jamaica



**Regional Director, South East Regional Health Authority (SERHA), Maureen Golding (left), points out a feature on a box containing medical masks to Board Chairman, SERHA, Wentworth Charles (centre), and member of the Chinese community in Jamaica, Zipling Chen. Occasion was the official handover of personal protective equipment donated by the Chinese community to the Kingston Public Hospital (KPH), at Garmex Free Zone in Kingston on March 31.**

## Additional Protective Equipment Coming

**M**INISTER OF Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, has informed that although there is an adequate supply of protective equipment in inventory for front-line medical staff, additional supplies are slated to arrive in the island shortly.

He stated that a virtual meeting, chaired by Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness was held on April 1, with the executive of the Medical Association of Jamaica (MAJ), where the issue of personal protective equipment (PPE) was discussed.

"I think there was general consensus, because we presented the actual inventory list that we have adequate supplies to last us two to

three weeks based on the usage rate that was determined, and that in the process there were additional supplies on order and some would be coming in next week and the following week," Dr. Tufton said.

The Minister was responding to questions posed



**Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton**

by Opposition Spokesperson on Health, Dr. Morais Guy, regarding the adequacy of (PPE) in the health sector, during a Special Select Committee meeting to review developments relating to COVID-19, in the House, on April 2.

He explained that there were one or two items "we felt may have been under the two to three weeks, and so we had to do some rush arrangements to get them. I think one of them is face shields".

Dr. Tufton added that the Ministry is also looking at the possibility of engaging a local manufacturer to make and supply the Ministry with face shields.