



Ministry of
Culture, Gender,
Entertainment
and Sport

Better and Stronger

Presented by
The Honourable Olivia Grange, CD, MP
Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment
and Sport

June 8, 2021
Gordon House,
Kingston, Jamaica



// The sleeping giant of culture, entertainment and sport, caused to hibernate during this pandemic, will awaken and re-assert itself, unleashing a ferment of Better and Stronger activities that will serve to re-position, purposefully, the national agenda of prosperity for all. //

The Honourable Olivia Grange, CD, MP
Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport



Better and Stronger

Contribution to the 2021/22 Sectoral Debate
By the Honourable Olivia Grange, CD, MP
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Opening statement



The Honourable Olivia Grange, CD, MP

Madam Speaker, we have been taught that it's when we are going through trials and tribulations that we must especially give thanks. And so in the midst of our challenges, let us continue to give God thanks.

I think of 1 Thessalonians 5:18: "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

Madam Speaker, the theme of my presentation in the Sectoral Debate for the last fiscal year was 'Re-group. Re-engineer. Re-open'. That succinctly captured the focus of the Ministry's work in a year like no other. Having re-grouped and re-engineered, we have been able to resume some activities and we're getting ready to re-open the wider entertainment sector. The re-opening will look and

feel different — because we have to be different to protect ourselves and each other.

Additionally, we have engaged in wide consultations to ensure that the protocols will help us all to be safe.

Entertainment and sports aren't just fun and games — they're businesses on which many of our people depend to put food on the table. Entertainment and sports also provide therapy and release as we navigate these challenging times.

This pandemic has shown us, in so many ways, why we must change things that we normally do and/or accept in Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport. We have to re-evaluate what we consider to be of value. We have to devise a better deal for our creative and athletic people. We have to strengthen

our mechanism to support and facilitate the people in our sectors. In short, Madam Speaker, we have to be, *Better and Stronger*.

I give thanks for the support and guidance of the Prime Minister, the Most Honourable Andrew Holness, as we work towards Building Back Stronger.

I give thanks for my colleague Ministers in the Cabinet and the ways in which we've been able to work together, as one united team, in the interest of all the people of Jamaica.

I give thanks for my Minister of State, the Honourable Alando Terrelonge; the members of the respective Commissions, Boards of Management and Advisory Boards; the Permanent Secretary and the team across the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport and our agencies for all that you continue to do for the people and sectors we represent.

I give thanks for my Central St. Catherine family, including my hardworking Councillors and Councillor/Caretaker for their support and resilience as we work together daily to ensure the safety of the constituents in these times.

I give thanks to my family for their love, their understanding and their

support.

I give thanks for all stakeholders in Culture, Gender Affairs, Entertainment and Sport. You are the reason we are here: to inspire you, to be inspired by you, and to serve you—*Better and Stronger!*

Madam Speaker, I thank you, the Acting Clerk and staff of the Houses of Parliament.

I also use this opportunity to thank and pay maximum respect to our frontline workers who have worked so hard to keep us safe and healthy during this pandemic. I was very pleased to work as part of a united team of members of the entertainment community, members of the Jamaican Diaspora and government entities to stage *Telethon Jamaica: Together We Stand* which raised J\$60M to assist the fight

against covid-19. After fees, charges and other expenses, we were able to transfer J\$54M to the National Health Fund.

As we continue to show appreciation, I have been asked by the Minister of Health and Wellness to commission a special medal to recognise the dedicated service of our heroes on the frontline in the fight against covid. We believe it is fitting that we make this special award to those who have given great service to our nation during this pandemic. We're finalising the arrangements and will provide fulsome details in due course.



Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, Hon Olivia Grange, confers with Minister of State, Hon Alando Terrelonge

A year like no other

2020 was a year like no other. It was a horrible year; the first year of the covid pandemic; the kind of year we never wish to see again.

It was the year in which we lost several of our icons, including the man who gave Reggae its name, the great singer, songwriter, performer and producer, Toots Hibbert.

We also lost the outstanding: Bob Andy, Millie Small, Dobby Dobson, Gil Bailey, Bobby Digital, Dalton Browne, and many others whom I am unable to name because of time constraints.

And earlier this year, we lost DJ extraordinaire U-Roy, the great Bunny Wailer, the pioneering Les Laing — all left a void in the culture, entertainment and sport sectors that will never be filled.

In the circumstances where anything that entails close bodily contact has had to be restricted, several people in the culture, entertainment and sport sectors have not been able to work as they normally would. Museums, theatres and cinemas have had to close. Live music — through which artistes make much of their earnings — has been put on hold. And there's also been a prohibition against mingles, parties and round robins.

Across the cultural and creative industries, people have been home on furlough.

Last week in its quarterly briefing, the Planning Institute of Jamaica reported that “since the

onset of the covid-19 pandemic a total of 74,300 fewer people were employed as at January 2021 relative to January 2020”.

The PIOJ also reported that “nine of the fifteen industry groups recorded lower employment levels” including Arts, Entertainment, Recreation & Other Services which had 18,800 fewer people employed. We know that several people in culture, entertainment and sport operate informally, therefore we can say with certainty that the pandemic has affected lives and livelihoods of many more people in these sectors than the official numbers suggest.

Gender affairs is also significantly affected. Of the 74,300 people who have lost jobs, 40,200 are women and 34,100 are men.

The effects of the pandemic have been particularly hard on women. Many women have been let go or have had to leave employment to care for children or the elderly. Additionally, the isolation and stay at home requirements have had the unintended consequence of locking vulnerable women and children away with men who abuse them.

Under the circumstances, the Bureau of Gender Affairs has seen a twofold increase in the number of women attending its offices for help ranging from leaving an abusive relationship, housing assistance, legal advice, financial

“The Bureau of Gender Affairs has seen a twofold increase in the number of women attending its offices for help”

assistance, assistance with groceries, household items, counselling and other services.

Madam Speaker, the people and sectors that the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport represents have been especially affected by the crisis caused by the pandemic. Some argue, quite rightly, that we've been hit the hardest. This is the context in which our budget for the 2021/2022 financial year was developed.

Our priorities for the year are to strengthen mechanisms to protect and help vulnerable women and men across our sectors; to facilitate a safe re-opening of the wider entertainment sector; and to improve the enabling environment for our sectors to sustainably *Build Back Stronger*.

Our mantra this year is *Better and Stronger*.

Some of those who left us



U-ROY



BUNNY WAILER



TOOTS HIBBERT



BOBY ANDY



LES LAING



SHAHINE ROBINSON



JEANETTE GRANT WOODHAM



GRETA BOGUES



MILLIE SMALL



YVONNE STERLING



WAYNE DACOSTA



BOBBY DIGITAL



DOBBY DOBSON



BARRY O'HARE



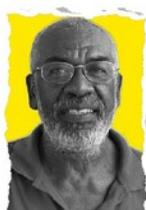
BERT ROSE



BUNNY LEE



GIL BAILEY



NEVILLE MYTON



TREMAINE STEWART



DALTON BROWNE

Walk good!

Stronger laws for better outcomes

As representatives of the people, our first responsibility is to protect the vulnerable.

This period has highlighted the vulnerability of some women and girls. On too many occasions, I have had to come to this House to denounce horrific acts of violence against women and girls.

We continue to improve our services to victims while working to improve protection mechanisms for the vulnerable and eliminate the violence.

Key in the strategy to protect vulnerable women and girls is the strengthening of laws that serve as a deterrent.

In this regard, this year, we are addressing two critical pieces of legislation for which the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport has responsibility; namely *the Domestic Violence Act* and the *Sexual Harassment Act*.

The amendments to the Domestic Violence Act will include a new definition of domestic violence as not only physical, but also psychological, emotional and sexual.

The effect of this important update will mean that for the first time, men or women who control their partners through threats or by restricting their personal or financial freedom, could face sanctions in the same way as those who are physically violent towards them.

We will also widen the threshold to be met in obtaining protection orders from the Court, to give greater protection to those who need the orders to keep abusers away.

We will increase the penalty for breach of a protection order from J\$10,000 to J\$1,000,000.

We are serious about ending domestic violence. The Chief Parliamentary Council is preparing the amendments, which I expect to bring to this House before the end of June.

Today, I table the Report of the Joint Select Committee established to consider the Anti-Sexual Harassment Bill. The Report contains our recommendations following extensive consultations. When this Bill becomes the law, it will deal a blow to sexual harassment by bringing relief to victims, punishment to perpetrators, while acting as a deterrent to others.

We know that members of the public are eager for the finalisation and implementation of Anti-Sexual Harassment legislation. Therefore, I propose to begin the debate on the Report and the amendments at the next sitting of the House.

We anticipate that the passage of the Anti-Sexual Harassment legislation and the amended Domestic Violence Act will lead to an increase in the reports of cases of abuse as victims who are now suffering in silence will

be emboldened to make a complaint.

I urge us as a nation, to consider how we treat with any person who says that he/she has been a victim. These are instances that require great sensitivity as we examine the claim and counter claim.

In addition to legislative action, we are also strengthening policy initiatives to give greater protection to vulnerable women.

In the last financial year, we opened the first National Shelter for victims of gender-based violence. In this financial year, we continue work towards the opening of two Regional Shelters.

We are also improving our helpline services to women and men who need assistance. We've recently received a toll-free number from Flow and we have recruited helpline specialists to ensure that the lines will be manned 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

We do not only respond to domestic abuse after it's already happened. We focus on prevention through our sensitisation programmes that target both women and men, including the #MentorMe2020 Mentorship Programme for school-age boys, which is being piloted at Haile Selassie High and St. Andrew Technical High.

This year, we will also strengthen the Refocus intervention programme that



One of the rooms at the National Shelter for Victims of Gender-based Violence

targets perpetrators of domestic violence who wish to change their behaviour.

A very critical part of our strategy to protect vulnerable women is to help them to become independent. Through the Women's Entrepreneurship Support Project we will provide ten grants to vulnerable women to start, build businesses and

achieve their independence. I thank UNWomen and the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce for their partnership in this important intervention. I look forward to their continued support as we enable other women to achieve their independence. No woman should have to be totally dependent on any man.

I repeat my call for all of us — family, friends, neighbours, the community, the church, co-workers — to be more vigilant and supportive of women in situations of abuse. Our intervention can make the difference between life and death. Our silence protects only the perpetrator.

Madam Speaker, please allow a quick update on the St. Elizabeth family that came to national attention following a case of child sexual abuse. The family was living in really desperate circumstances.

We provided temporary housing as we worked to provide a permanent solution.

I am pleased to announce that through the Social Housing Programme, we have constructed a 5-bedroom house for them; and in the matter of a week, we expect that the Prime Minister will be able to present them with their keys.

This is how we serve *Better and Stronger*.



Enabling our people to survive, thrive and prosper

Another of our first responsibilities as representatives of the people is to facilitate them in pursuit of their dreams. Our people must not only survive; they must thrive and prosper!

As the pandemic caused our sectors to close, we sought to provide relief to our most vulnerable.

The Honourable Minister of Finance and the Public Service had approved a special support package in the sum of J\$40M for the Entertainment, Culture and Creative Industries.

Unfortunately, members of the sectors were unable to access the fund due to technical issues with the electronic portal.

We have now migrated to a different platform and we're in the final phase of developing an app that will allow more members of the Entertainment, Culture and Creative Industries to register to the e-Registry and apply for grants.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to announce that the promised J\$40M has now grown to J\$50M.

I am still in dialogue with the Minister of Finance to see how we can further increase funding for the sector as the needs are many,

The technical challenges that we experienced last year must not be taken to mean that members of the Entertainment, Culture and Creative Industries did not receive support from their

government. We were still able to provide grants to 700+ practitioners through the CARE programme and through special grants from the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport. Additionally, my Ministry invested J\$14M in Jamaican creatives via direct sponsorship.

We are also providing direct financial support in excess of J\$40M to our athletes as they prepare for the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games. So far, through the Institute of Sports, we have paid out a little over J\$16M in monthly payments to 87 athletes under the Athletes Assistance Programme with exactly 45 days to go before the start of Tokyo 2021.

We saw the toll of these challenging times on our athletes and sought to provide them with support to get them in the best frame of mind as they prepare for upcoming competitions. We worked closely with Optimisation Hub, which operates out of Australia, and with local mental health specialists to develop a mental health programme for athletes, coaches, and their support teams.

We staged a successful online seminar *Elevate the Game: Building the Muscle of the Mind*. I'm happy to report the outcomes of this intervention:

- athletes, coaches and their support teams were given the skills to cope;

- and, importantly, there will be a new programme related to mental health for coaches and athletes at the GC Foster College of Physical Education and Sport.

The Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport will subsidise this programme in the sum of J\$2.2M.

My Ministry is also giving support to the sports sector through Independence Park Limited, which manages sports facilities at the National Stadium.

IPL has been subsidising the cost of using these facilities—by as much as 50 per cent. IPL has supported the staging of several development meets organised by the JAAA in the sum of J\$13.5M. We will support the National Senior Championships in the sum of J\$12M in direct funding, in addition to the subsidy for use of the facilities at the National Stadium.

We also assisted with the staging of Boys and Girls Champs this year and we're giving support to the National Premier League. The Ministry is offering the Premier League Association a 50 per cent discount on rental of Independence Park facilities.

Premier League clubs were among first to receive assistance in the early days of the pandemic when each club was granted J\$500,000 to help with expenses.

My Ministry's investment in the provision of first rate

infrastructure at the national, community and school level is essential in enabling our sportspeople to achieve global success. Therefore, Madam Speaker, please permit me to give an update on the maintenance and development of sports infrastructure.

We are procuring a new pump for the pool at the National Aquatic Centre. It should arrive and be installed by the end of the month. In the meantime, we hired divers to clean the pool so that our aquatic athletes are still able to use the facility.

We recently resurfaced the running track inside the National Stadium at a cost of J\$60M. The track manufacturers also created and installed an outdoor basketball court — made especially for Jamaica. We will be monitoring the performance of the surface to see if it would be a suitable material to replace the

outdoor netball courts which are currently far from ideal.

We continue to pursue the redevelopment of the National Stadium and the Trelawny Stadium. Our development proposal which is currently going through the Public Investment Management system will see both facilities being transformed over a period of five years into modern stadia with state of the art facilities that will be able to sustain their operations.

The Trelawny Stadium will be at the centre of sports tourism and entertainment.

We continue to invest in facilities at the grass roots. During the last financial year, through the Sports Development Foundation Jamaica, we spent J\$117M to put in and upgrade sports facilities in 20 schools and communities.

However, our major challenge and greatest success was

working with the various federations as well as the Ministry of Health and Wellness, the Ministry of National Security, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, and the Office of Disaster Management and Emergency Management to achieve the safe re-opening of the sport sector. The well designed protocols have served to keep our athletes, coaches and officials safe.

The Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport has also facilitated the vaccination of several of our athletes and coaches as they get ready for local and international competition. I use this moment to encourage everyone to continue to observe the protocols, whether they are vaccinated or not. I encourage athletes who are not yet vaccinated to do so now.



Artist's impression of proposed development of Trelawny Stadium

Safe re-opening of entertainment

Our major challenge this year continues to be the re-opening of the wider entertainment sector. “We know not the hour...Yet signs all foretell that the moment is nearing.”

Prime Minister, the Most Honourable Andrew Holness will make an announcement on the reopening of entertainment in this House on Tuesday, June 22, 2021.

In preparation for the re-opening of the wider entertainment sector, we have engaged in consultations with members of the sector as well as colleagues in the Ministry of Health and Wellness, the Ministry of National Security, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management on the prevailing health conditions in the country as well as the specific protocols that would have to be employed for particular activities.

I thank the Prime Minister for his involvement, guidance and support in the consultations.

As with the resumption of sports, the resumption of entertainment will have to be a gradual process and we will also have to consider capacity limits as well as authorised venues where the necessary safety protocols can be implemented. In this regard, the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport has proposed a list of venues that can be retrofitted to

comply with the proposed protocols.

We will also be moving to declaring additional Entertainment Zones and venues.

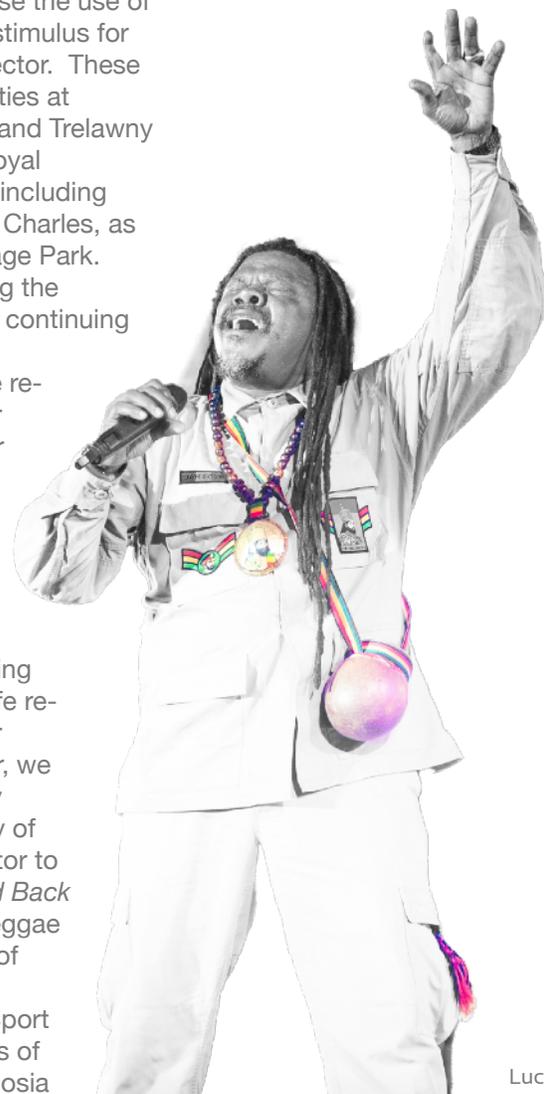
Additionally, as with the sport sector, the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport is offering to subsidise the use of these facilities as a stimulus for the entertainment sector. These venues include facilities at Independence Park and Trelawny Stadium, the Port Royal Entertainment Zone including Fort Rocky and Fort Charles, as well as Seville Heritage Park.

We’re still finalising the arrangements, while continuing consultations with stakeholders, for the re-opening of the wider entertainment sector and will make the appropriate announcements soon.

While we have spent months discussing and refining proposals for the safe re-opening of the wider entertainment sector, we have also been busy building the capacity of members of the sector to enable them to *Build Back Stronger*. During Reggae Month, the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport hosted four Business of Entertainment Symposia

as part of our capacity building initiatives.

Additionally, through the Creative Production and Training Centre, we have provided scholarships to enable six audio engineers to up-skill and receive certification.



Luciano

Transformation and celebration through Public Art

There's a transformative power in art which we want to unleash on communities across Jamaica.

The 'Jamaica Creative: Paint Up Yuh Creative Space' mural project which commenced in December 2019 has been engaging communities in the Kingston Metropolitan Region, through strategically located works of public art, while simultaneously providing economic opportunities.

Under the project, murals have been mounted at the Norman Manley International Airport, at Temple Lane in Downtown Kingston, in Port Royal, at Sabina Park, and at the complex of the Public Broadcasting Corporation of Jamaica in Half-Way-Tree. The project has, so far,

engaged 40 Jamaican muralists, including our internationally acclaimed Taj Francis and Matthew McCarthy.

In partnership with the Carib Cement Company and the Embassy of Mexico in Jamaica, the next phase of the project will see a mural being erected on a silo located at Rockfort complex. The mural will be unveiled as part of Jamaica 60 celebrations.

Our public art initiative has also included the erection of statues in tribute to outstanding Jamaicans, including Usain Bolt and Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce.

This year, we will erect a life-size bust in Duanvale, Trelawny, in tribute to Violet Moss Brown, affectionately called Aunt V. She was the record holder for world's 'Oldest living person' and 'Oldest

living woman' until her passing in 2017, at the age of 117 years and 189 days.

In partnership with the Urban Development Corporation, we will also be developing public art for the newly opened Harmony Beach Park in Montego Bay, St James. In this regard, we will be relocating Fitz Harrack's piece 'Sprit of Togetherness' which the Most Honourable Edward Seaga had commissioned to celebrate Jamaica 21, from outside Sangster International Airport to the entrance of Harmony Beach Park.

We will also soon announce plans for a series of monuments to outstanding Jamaicans as part of the Jamaica 60 legacy programme.



Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, the Honourable Olivia Grange and Sculptor, Pamrie Dwyer admire the maquette of bust of Violet Moss Brown (Aunt V)



'Wall of Fame' mural in progress at Sabina Park

Stronger institutions, better service

We have used this period to strengthen our institutions to offer better service to the people and sectors that our ministry represents.

Our efforts at modernising the **Jamaica Cultural Development Commission** are bearing fruit.

The JCDC is now 95 per cent digitised in its processes.

For the first time, this year the Commission will accept entries for its various competitions

leading up to Jamaica Festival in a completely digital form.

Additionally, we are investing in an e-commerce platform for the JCDC's website where it will be able to sell products to support its operations.

We have invested heavily in the Commission's livestream capability to the point where it is now beginning to earn revenue from streams of various activities of the JCDC and the Ministry of

Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport.

And, Madam Speaker, we have put the necessary processes in place to enable the JCDC, for the first time, to have the entries in its Festival Song Competition available for purchase and streaming on 30 digital platforms across the world. The JCDC is now earning royalties; and the competitors are also earning royalties.



Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport presents Jamaica Festival Song 2020 winning trophy to Buju Banton

We have made the JCDC *Better and Stronger* — and there's more to come!

The ***Creative Production and Training Centre*** continues to play a major role in national life. It facilitates the National Political Debates and produces hundreds of hours of national events programming as well as cultural content each year, including Reggae Month, the Independence Grand Gala, Hill an' Gully Ride, among others.

The CPTC is now in need of retooling. With the support of the CHASE Fund, we are modernising and strengthening the CPTC with new studio and ENG equipment as well as Outside Broadcasting facilities.

The CPTC must be *Better and Stronger*.

The Jamaica National Heritage Trust has produced a second edition of the very well done *Jamaica: Heritage in Pictures* publication. This new edition includes a special feature

on the Blue and John Crow Mountains, Jamaica's only World Heritage Site.

The Trust is also finalising the dossier to nominate the Sunken City of Port Royal to the World Heritage List. It is also undertaking important development work at Fort Rocky and the Seville Heritage Park. The JNHT is *Better and Stronger*.

We have made exciting upgrades to the ***National History Museum of Jamaica*** which needed extensive refurbishing. It is now a state-of-art space highlighting some of Jamaica's unique biodiversity.

The gallery now incorporates special effects, multi-media interactive technology, 3D imagery and nature sounds. I thank the CHASE Fund, The Tourism Enhancement Fund, Government and People of Japan and Amazing Concrete Finishes for support in the upgrades to the National History Museum of Jamaica.

We look forward to the Prime Minister officially opening the facility and new exhibition when we are able to resume the operation of museums across the country.

At that time we will continue with the *Jamaica Jamaica!* exhibition at the ***National Gallery of Jamaica***. In the meantime, the National Gallery is putting together a virtual *Jamaica Jamaica!* for all of us to view and be inspired by the evolution of our popular music.

The Institute of Jamaica and its Agencies are *Better and Stronger*.

Madam Speaker, the ***Jamaica Anti-Doping Commission*** is now fully compliant with the World Anti-Doping Agency. What this means is that Jamaica's credibility can no longer be questioned when it comes to doping in sports.

The JADCO 2021 rules have been prepared, sent for gazetting and will soon come into effect.



Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, Honourable Olivia Grange (centre) in a moment of prayer for the national anti-doping mobile unit. Also pictured (l-r) are Minister of State, Honourable Alando Terrelonge; Olympic Sprint Hurdler, Megan Tapper; JADCO Chairman, Alexander Williams and JADCO Executive Director, June Spence Jarrett

I urge athletes and their coaches to get familiar with the new rules as they most certainly will get familiar with JADCO's new mobile unit — one of only two mobile anti-doping testing facilities in the world.

The unit has been put to use at athletics meets taking place at the National Stadium. JADCO is *Better and Stronger!*

Madam Speaker, I continue to talk about the transformation of the *Institute of Sports*, which was once considered a rogue agency.

For the first time in 30 years, Insports has prepared Annual Reports. The reports cover the period 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20. Pending an audit, I expect to table the reports in the House soon.

Despite the pandemic, Insports is still fulfilling its mandate of developing sports at the grassroots. Last year, it staged its popular summer sports programme in small groups across the island featuring netball, football, cricket, tennis, golf, surfing and other disciplines — and will do it again this year.

Insports is also developing a virtual Physical Education Programme to be broadcast on air and online. Insports is *Better and Stronger*.

The *Women's Centre of Jamaica Foundation* helps teenaged mothers and pregnant teenagers to complete their education and put their lives back on track.

The Women's Centre recently completed construction of its new facility in Santa Cruz, St Elizabeth at a cost of J\$36M.

The Centre is now looking to furnish the property to facilitate school with the young mothers and their babies.

Additionally, the Centre is looking to equip each of the 300 girls on its register with tablets to facilitate their learning. In this regard, we thank Scotiabank for assisting the effort with a donation of J\$2M.

The Women's Centre is *Better and Stronger*.



Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, Honourable Olivia Grange presents a 'dignity package' to an adolescent mother registered with the Women's Centre of Jamaica Foundation

Celebrating resilience

As I wind down, I want to spend a few moments reflecting on our people's resilience and their ability to rise above challenges.

When a teenager becomes pregnant, it can feel like her life has ended. But we are here to help give adolescent mothers another chance at education while helping them to be good parents. I am pleased to report that the first adolescent mothers who received scholarships through the Women's Centre of Jamaica's A-STREAM Programme to do tertiary studies have successfully completed their courses of study; one is a Registered Nurse and the other is a science teacher.

We celebrated the publication, 'New Voices: Selected by Lorna Goodison', Jamaica's Poet Laureate (2017-2020) which won the Caribbean Reader's Award for 2020. We welcome our new Poet Laureate, Olive Senior; and announce that soon there will be a Junior Poet Laureate of Jamaica, as we're expanding the programme.

His lyrics were poetry, and we're happy that Toots Hibbert won the Grammy for Best Reggae Album this year. He would've been thrilled.

We're thrilled that Toni-Ann Singh created history. She's Miss World for two years in a row after covid disrupted her reign and our lives.

Reggae Girl Khadija Shaw lifted our spirits when she scored 22 goals to win the French League's Golden Boot for top goalscorer of the season.

In a matter of 6 days Brianna Williams set 3 national under-20 100 metres records. Well done to her for that outstanding achievement.

And Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce set one of the best records of all. She clocked 10.63 in the 100 metres, right here in Kingston on the weekend, to become the fastest woman alive.



Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, CD

Concluding statement

Madam Speaker, it has been a hard road to travel but we have never been daunted by the challenges that come our way.

We boast an ancestry of resilience and pride. We have overcome very serious obstacles in our journey to freedom, Independence and global acclaim. We have given some of our best minds to the world while providing the world with the global mantra of One Love.

Through investment in culture, entertainment and sport, where we have global competitive advantage, supported by a robust programme to reduce gender violence and promote gender equality, we are determined to create a platform on which our people will rebuild their lives and livelihoods — *Better and Stronger*.

Madam Speaker, the upcoming celebrations of our 60th anniversary of Independence in 2022 along with the commemoration of the 215th anniversary of the abolition of the Trans-Atlantic Trade in Africans, and the 190th anniversary of the Sam Sharpe War, all provide the impetus for the excitement that will surround our reopening *Better and Stronger*.

Nothing has stimulated our sector more than having to overcome obstacles. Much of what we have created emerged in periods of social and

economic challenges. Some of our greatest creations and expansive global achievement have resulted from our response to obstacles placed in our path.

From Marcus Garvey to Bob Marley to Jimmy Cliff to Orlando Patterson to Louise Bennett to Aggie Bernard to Usain Bolt to Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, among so many others, our Brand has remained formidable, dynamic and extraordinary.

We created Reggae music and used it to re-define the world as we now know it. Everywhere ‘irie’ became a part of Brand Jamaica as culture, entertainment and sport asserted themselves as the foremost elements of our nation brand and revenue.

And so, our sectors are ready to reopen *Better and Stronger*.

The past year has taught us, among other things, that nothing will be excluded as long as it assists in raising the bar. As such, we are committed to leaving no one behind. It will be all hands on deck — *Better and Stronger*.

Starting with Jamaica 59 this summer and then onwards to Jamaica 60, we will combine virtual and physical platforms, secure portals and applications, that will

ultimately ensure that we harness our dynamic cultural force and create a windfall of income for our people and revenue to our country. In all this, the sleeping giant of culture, entertainment and sport, caused to hibernate during this pandemic, will awaken and re-assert itself, unleashing a ferment of *Better and Stronger* activities that will serve to re-position, purposefully, the national agenda of prosperity for all.



‘Grounded’ by Katrina Coombs



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