

# United States to Invest Over US\$30M in Jamaica

JAMAICA IS set to benefit from investments of over US\$30 million from the United States (US).

The development follows a meeting between US Vice President, Kamala Harris, and Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, at the White House on March 30.

The investment by the US government includes US\$20 million to boost commerce between the two nations, and a further US\$10 million to address human capital development and violence reduction for at-risk youth.

An additional US\$10 million will also be provided for regional energy resilience and the US has also committed further support to Jamaica's COVID-19 recovery efforts.

Prime Minister Holness said that the areas of cooperation discussed by himself, and



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness speaks at a joint press conference with United States Vice President, Kamala Harris, following discussions at her office located in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, on the White House complex on March 30.

the Vice President included violence prevention through intelligence and information-sharing and investment in violence reduction programmes, targeting at-risk youth; human capacity development, particularly in relation to cybersecurity and digital technology; and regional energy security and infrastructure.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Holness said the US and Jamaica enjoy a strong people-to-people, economic and development partnership and "we are very proud of our continued strong relations".

"Jamaica will redouble our efforts in tackling illegal trafficking of weapons, per-

sons, lottery scamming and other transnational crimes. To address this in a decisive way, we are seeking to foster increased partnerships and collaborations on information and intelligence sharing, extradition, and other law enforcement efforts," he stated.

## American Airlines Introduces Flights to Ian Fleming International Airport

MINISTER OF Tourism, Hon. Edmund Bartlett is welcoming the move by American Airlines to introduce twice weekly non-stop flights from Miami International Airport to the Ian Fleming International Airport starting in November.

The announcement comes in the wake of a recent meeting between senior executives of American Airlines and several Government and Private Sector officials in Montego Bay.

"This is a game-changer for Jamaica's tourism but especially for the Ocho Rios area which has been looking forward to such a development for quite some time. It also justifies the vision that we had in expanding the airport," Mr. Bartlett said in a release from the Ministry.

The flights will be operated by an Embraer E-175 aircraft, which can seat between 76 to 88 passengers in business and economy class and operate non-stop between Miami and Ocho Rios on Wednesdays and Saturdays.



Minister of Tourism, Hon. Edmund Bartlett

"This non-stop service between the United States of America and our third international airport is a very valuable addition that will help to meet the aviation needs of Jamaica, and will no doubt encourage other airlines with that size aircraft to fly into that airport and take up the route," said Mr. Bartlett.

He added that having a viable third airport will also help to boost tourist arrivals and facilitate travel and the development of the north-western belt of St. Mary and Portland.

## New \$22M Intelligence Management System for JCA

THE BORDER protection capabilities of the Jamaica Customs Agency (JCA) have been significantly bolstered with the British Government's provision of a \$22-million grant to acquire a replacement intelligence management system.

This system will boost the JCA's intelligence and risk-based targeting framework, which is vital to tackling cross-border-related crimes.

The Agency has also received radiation kits, among other provisions, which will aid in safeguarding officers against high-harm goods and other substances that they may encounter during their work.

The grant is being facilitated through the British Home Office via United Kingdom Border Force International under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

The MOU was signed by British High Commissioner to



Jamaica Customs Agency (JCA) Chief Executive Officer, Velma Ricketts Walker (right), signs a Memorandum of Understanding for the British Government's provision of a \$22 million grant. Looking on is British High Commissioner to Jamaica, Her Excellency Judith Slater. The signing took place at the JCA's head office in Kingston on March 29.

Jamaica, Her Excellency Judith Slater, and JCA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Commissioner of Customs, Velma Ricketts Walker, at the Customs Agency's head office in Kingston, on March 29.

Several pieces of the equipment and kits were also presented.

In her remarks, Mrs. Ricketts Walker said the support to boost the JCA's intelligence and risk-based targeting capabilities is consistent with the Agency's thrust towards a fully smart customs entity and the Government of Jamaica's objective of establishing a digital society.

She said the acquisition of a new intelligence analysis database will also allow the JCA to pull on the treasure-trove of data stored in the entity's Automated System for Customs Data, (ASYCUDA), combine that with other data sources "and provide a more complete picture as it relates to suspected bad actors, their associates, and their associations".

## STATIN Reports 6.7 Per Cent Growth for October to December Quarter

THE STATISTICAL Institute of Jamaica (STATIN) is reporting a 6.7 per cent growth out-turn for the October to December 2021 quarter as Jamaica continues to rebound from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is the sixth consecutive quarter of growth since a 15.6 per cent decline in the June 2020 quarter.

The expansion in economic activity for the review period, which was a 1.4 per cent increase over the July to September quarter, was driven by growth of nine and 0.5 per cent, respectively, in the services and goods producing industries.

STATIN, in a statement on March 31, noted that the economy was positively

impacted by the relaxation of some COVID-19 measures, including the easing of global travel restrictions and reduced curfew hours.

All services industry subsectors grew during the December 2021 quarter, except for the Producers of Government Services, which declined by 0.1 per cent.

The Institute said improved performances were recorded for 'hotels and restaurants', up 79.5 per cent; 'wholesale and retail trade, repairs, installation of machinery and equipment', up 10.6 per cent; 'transport, storage and communication', up 10.1 per cent; 'other services', up 10.4 per cent; 'electricity and water supply', up 5.8 per cent; finance and insur-

ance services, up 2.7 per cent; and real estate, renting and business activities, up 2.1 per cent.

**"It is the sixth consecutive quarter of growth since a 15.6 per cent decline in the June 2020 quarter".**

## 30 Schools to Benefit from Energy-Efficient Retrofits Under Pilot Project

THIRTY SECONDARY schools across the island will benefit from a pilot project, which aims to reduce electricity costs by 40 to 70 per cent and increase energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources.

The 'Schools Energy Efficiency (EE) and Solar Pilot Project' will be implemented through the Ministry of Education and Youth, the National Education Trust (NET) and Canada-based renewable energy company, Roswall Development Inc.

Under the project, the schools will be retrofitted

with LED lighting, inverter air-conditioning units, solar photovoltaic (PV) systems, among other solutions.

The project will be executed under an energy savings performance contract, which was signed at the Development Bank of Jamaica (DBJ) in Kingston on March 29.

Minister of Education and Youth, Hon. Fayval Williams, in her remarks at the function, said that "global instability in the world's supply of fossil fuels with resultant high prices [and] concerns about the impact

on the environment are imperatives to getting this project under way".

She noted that the dependence on utility-supplied electrical power "must [be] reduced," while increasing the use of renewable energy sources.

"The Ministry will be encouraging the schools under this project to treat it with seriousness and work with other public education institutions to adopt and implement measures that will reduce their electricity bills," she said.



Minister of Education and Youth, Hon Fayval Williams (standing centre), and other stakeholders, witness the signing of the energy savings performance contract for the 'Schools Energy Efficiency (EE) and Solar Pilot Project', held at the Development Bank of Jamaica in Kingston on March 29. The signatories are Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, Maureen Dwyer (seated right), and Managing Director of Roswall Development Inc, Daniel Roscoe (seated left).

## Help for Flood Victims in St. Mary



Minister of Labour and Social Security, Hon. Karl Samuda (left), presents a cheque to recipient, Angella Lawrence (right), as part of the Ministry's efforts to assist individuals in Port Maria, St. Mary, who were negatively impacted by recent flood rains. Occasion was a cheque handover ceremony at the Port Maria Parish Office. In the background is Manager of the Ministry's St. Mary Parish Office, Charmaine McFarlane.

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