

Housing Developers Urged to Join Guaranteed Purchase Programme

PRIIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness has called for more housing developers to come on stream with the National Housing Trust's (NHT) Guaranteed Purchase Programme (GPP).

The NHT introduced the GPP in November 2018. Under the programme, developers conceptualise and execute their development plans, while the NHT absorbs the market risk by purchasing units in the development.

"We want more developers to join in... I know developers are sceptical of the programme because it locks off the ability to gain on the appreciation after the units are built, but that is not going to help the people who want the units. So, we want our developers to come in and maximise on the efficiency on construction, so that the people of the country can get the units at affordable prices," he said.

Mr. Holness added that the Government has minimised the political, fiscal and the policy risks for



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (third left) breaks ground on November 9, for The Howard Apartments that will be constructed in St. Andrew South West. Also participating are (from left) Managing Director, National Housing Trust (NHT), Martin Miller; Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Jamaica, His Excellency Daojiang Chen; Chairman, NHT, Lennox Channer; Member of Parliament for St. Andrew South Western, Dr. Angela Brown-Burke, and Managing Director, Centauri Real Estate Company Limited, Julian Zhu.

private-sector investors to participate in the initiative, which will have a positive social impact on the beneficiaries.

The Prime Minister was speaking at the ground-

breaking ceremony for 'The Howard Apartments' in St. Andrew South West.

A total of 248 studio apartments will be constructed under the Guaranteed Purchase Programme.

The project is expected to be completed by October 2024 and is projected to cost \$2.4 billion.

The NHT has engaged with developers Centauri Real Estate Company Limited for construction of the project.

Six Housing Units Handed Over in Clarendon and St. Catherine

SIX NEW homes were handed over to residents in sections of Clarendon and St. Catherine on November 10 under the New Social Housing Programme (NSHP).

Located in Kellits, Clarendon and Cotton Piece, Forte Street, Gordon Pen and Brunswick Avenue in St. Catherine, the units bring the number of houses now delivered under the programme to 110.

During a ceremony for the presentation of a two-bedroom unit to Jordeen Mason in Kellits, Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness reiterated the objective of the programme, which is to deliver quality and secure housing to society's neediest citizens.

Mr. Holness said that since its inception, the programme has seen significant improvement in building time and efficiency, with an overall enhancement in the procurement process.

"The contracting has improved, contractors understand what is to be done, and they are able to mobilise very quickly and get the job done. Before, we have taken up to a year to build a unit,



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (second right) listens as beneficiary of a new unit under the New Social Housing Programme in Gordon Pen, St. Catherine Central, Louise Parkes (second right), expresses her appreciation, after receiving her house on November 10. Others (from right) are Member of Parliament for the area and Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport Hon. Olivia Grange, Government official from Trinidad and Tobago, Ian Pollard, and the beneficiary's grandchildren.

now we are building units in six weeks," the Prime Minister said.

The Government is looking to increase the budget for the programme to boost the

number of units delivered from 300 to 1,000 per year.

"When we sit down to figure out what will be the budget next year, this will be one of the programmes that

would recommend itself highly because it delivers for the people," Mr. Holness said.

The NSHP was established in 2018 by Prime Minister Holness.

40 Clinics Adopted for \$175 Million

THE GOVERNMENT'S Adopt-a-Clinic Programme has, so far, raised approximately \$175 million to benefit 40 health centres islandwide.

Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, made the disclosure while addressing a ceremony for the adoption of the Dr. Kenneth Baugh Health Centre in Point Hill, St. Catherine, on November 9.

Dr. Tufton said the programme is growing and fostering important partnerships with Jamaicans in the island and across the Diaspora, to improve health care delivery.

He noted that the initiative is about improving primary health institutions, by allowing a set of resources to enter the facilities over a period of three years for repairs and maintenance.

"This [Dr. Kenneth Baugh Health Centre] adoption is the 40th facility... we want to get to 100. People are



Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton (centre), leads in celebrating the adoption of the Dr. Kenneth Baugh Health Centre in Point Hill, St. Catherine on November 9. Others (from left) are: member of the Jamaican Diaspora, Tony Gray; Consul General to Miami, Oliver Mair; Nurse Supervisor at the health centre, Joycelyn Brown-Kerr; and member of the Jamaican Diaspora, Dr. Sandra K. Gibson.

buying into [the initiative] and we are seeing persons coming forward to participate in these adoptions. It means that you commit to giving support and you are establishing relationships with the facility and the people

who benefit," Dr. Tufton said.

The health centre has been adopted by Jamaica's Consulate General in Miami, United States, and will receive support from the institution's Jamaica Hi-5 K Run/Walk on November 19.

Dr. Tufton said Consul General, Oliver Mair, and his team, have done a "great job" and have been able to adopt five health centres across the island.

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\$60 Billion Added to Budget

THE GOVERNMENT will be increasing budgetary spending by approximately \$60 billion during the current 2022/23 fiscal year.

The details are contained in the First Supplementary Estimates of Expenditure, tabled by Minister of Finance and the Public Service, Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke, in the House of Representatives on November 8.

Parliament had previously approved a budget of \$912 billion for the 2022/23 fiscal year.

Dr. Clarke explained that the Supplementary Budget reflects amounts provided to cushion the impact of the ongoing Ukraine-Russia conflict on vulnerable Jamaicans. The increase results in a proposed revised budget of \$971.98 billion.

This includes expenditure of \$2.2 billion under the Energy Co-Pay initiative. Dr. Clarke informed that subsequent to the approval of the 2022/23 Budget, additional measures were announced including back-to-school grants valued at \$1.2 billion.

The Supplementary Estimates also includes \$21.1 billion for employees under



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

the compensation review programme.

There are also increased allocations to Ministries and entities. This includes \$5.1 billion to the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation; \$3.6 billion to the Ministry of Health and Wellness to support the payment of arrears for goods and services and procurement of drugs and medical supplies; and \$6 billion to the Ministry of National Security, with \$1.5 billion for the Jamaica Defence Force (JDF), \$3.3 billion for the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF), and \$862 million for the Department of Correctional Services (DCS).

UK is Fastest Growing Recovery Market for Jamaica

MINISTER OF TOURISM, Hon. Edmund Bartlett, has announced that the United Kingdom (UK) is the fastest growing recovery market for the island.

Speaking at the launch of the new advertising campaign dubbed 'Come Back', in London on November 7, Minister Bartlett said the market was trending ahead of 2019 figures.

"In 2019, we did 225,000 visitors and right now we are trending to make in excess of 230,000 visitors and earn £326 million. This means the market is set to earn ten per cent more than 2019 when we earned £295 million. So, the UK market is good, and we are happy for that," he said.

"The growth we are seeing is phenomenal and is being reflected in both arrivals and earnings and is taking us into 2023 with a strong destination position," Mr. Bartlett added.

The Minister was speaking to travel agents and participants at the World Travel Market.

According to the release from the Ministry, Director of Tourism, Donovan White said that the positive milestone for



Minister of Tourism, Hon. Edmund Bartlett

this market "speaks to the dedication and hard work of our team here in the UK".

Created by the Jamaica Tourist Board's advertising agency, Accenture Song, the campaign showcases Jamaica's picturesque natural attractions and its friendly, welcoming people working together to help visitors live their best lives.

The Jamaica Tourist Board, founded in 1955, is Jamaica's national tourism agency based in the capital city of Kingston.

Agriculture Ministry Gets Vehicle



Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. Pernell Charles Jr. (centre), checks out a new Toyota Hilux Pickup handed over to the Ministry on November 8, while State Minister, Hon. Franklin Witter (right), sits behind the wheel. Looking on is First Counsellor/Head of Cooperation, European Union Delegation to Jamaica, Aniceto Rodriguez Ruiz. The vehicle is intended for use in the 'A Jamaican Path from Hills to Ocean' project.

ADVT.