

Government to Invest Billions in Water Projects

THE GOVERNMENT is to invest over \$20 billion to improve the country's water infrastructure during the 2025/26 fiscal year.

Prime Minister, Dr. the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, made the disclosure during the groundbreaking ceremony for Phase 2 of the Whitehall to New Market Water Supply Project in North West St. Elizabeth.

Dr. Holness noted that under the Shared Prosperity through Accelerated Improvement to Road Network (SPARK) Programme, approximately \$2.5 billion will be spent on water infrastructure.

"The National Housing Trust (NHT) will be spending close to \$1 billion on improving existing housing



Prime Minister, Dr. the Most Andrew Holness (centre), breaks ground for the Whitehall to New Market Water Supply Project in St. Elizabeth recently. Also breaking ground are (from left) National Water Commission (NWC) St. Elizabeth and Manchester Regional Manager, Jermaine Jackson; St. Elizabeth Municipal Corporation Chairman and Mayor of Black River, Councillor Richard Solomon; Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Energy, Telecommunications and Transport and Member of Parliament for St. Elizabeth North Eastern, Hon. J.C. Hutchinson; Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Hon. Matthew Samuda; NWC Acting President, Kevin Kerr; and Project Manager, Timmy Daley.

"The objective of the NWC is to run their pipes into more communities, past more yards, so that you can connect to it."

infrastructure, including the water supply, to those housing schemes, which will include water and sewage," the Prime Minister said.

He further informed that Rural Water Supply Limited will expend \$1 billion on small water projects across Jamaica and the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF) will also invest significant

amounts for water projects in communities across Jamaica.

Prime Minister Holness said the National Water Commission (NWC) is looking to increase the supply of potable water islandwide from 78 to 85 per cent.

"The objective of the NWC is to run their pipes into more communities, past more yards, so that you can

connect to it," he noted.

"Now that's not an easy task. It took us over 100 years of making investment in pipes and water supply systems to get to 78 per cent, but the NWC also has another objective, which is to increase the reliability and efficiency of the service," he added.

The Prime Minister further informed that the NWC

already has \$2.9 billion worth of works in procurement, in addition to the over \$7.3 billion already under contract.

Approximately 8,000 residents of Whitehall, Lewisville and New Market are set to benefit from the \$342 million project, which is being spearheaded by the NWC, and is one of five being done in St. Elizabeth.

Distribution of 10,000 Water Tanks to Commence Shortly

IN A matter of days, needy households across Jamaica are to receive their share of 10,000 black tanks from the Government, to improve their water storage capabilities.

"The procurement is complete, which is the hardest part... so delivery to our poorer households of these 10,000 tanks, right across the length and breadth of Jamaica is expected to commence before

the end of February," said Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Senator the Hon. Matthew Samuda, who has responsibility for Water and the Environment.

He was speaking on February 21, at the Commissioning Ceremony for the Stanton Housing Scheme Water Upgrade Project in St. Thomas.

The black water tanks initiative was previously announced by Prime Minister, Dr. the Most Hon. Andrew Holness.

Minister Samuda explained that this means "approximately 150 [tanks] per constituency along with some areas that [are] totally outside of the utility footprint and are benefiting disproportionately".

"This is work that we are doing to ensure that our most vulnerable get the benefit that they must receive from a Government that has performed at a macro level," he added.

Furthermore, Mr. Samuda revealed that a pilot project for the installation of rainwater harvesting systems at the household level was undertaken in eastern and western St. Thomas.

"We did analysis of communities that were outside of what is called the utility footprint where the National

Water Commission (NWC) is not likely to come to anytime soon because of the distance [and] because of the costs, and we started installing some tanks with rainwater harvesting systems," he noted.

The Stanton Housing Scheme Water Upgrade Project was completed at a cost of just over \$7.5 million and is to alleviate water challenges faced by residents in the area for more than three decades.



Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Senator the Hon. Matthew Samuda, speaks during the Commissioning Ceremony for the Stanton Housing Scheme Water Upgrade Project in St. Thomas on February 21.



Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Senator the Hon. Matthew Samuda (centre) has a drink of water during the Commissioning Ceremony for the Stanton Housing Scheme Water Upgrade Project in St. Thomas on February 21. Also present are Member of Parliament, St. Thomas Western, James Robertson (third left); Member of Parliament for St. Thomas Eastern, Dr. Michelle Charles (third right); and other dignitaries.

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