

Government Increasing Environment Protection

JAMAICA IS on track to meet and exceed the goal of protecting 30 per cent of its land mass by 2030.

Prime Minister, Dr. the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, says 25 per cent of Jamaica's land mass has already been protected, up from eight per cent in 2016.

This aligns with the 30x30 initiative under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

The Framework is a landmark international agreement adopted at the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.

Speaking during the National Labour Day Project at Mason River Environmental and Research Park in Clarendon recently, Dr. Holness indicated that work has been undertaken to protect forestry areas and mangroves.

"We gave 14 new forestry orders, protecting forestry areas... declared the Cockpit Country Protected Area and... declared the Black River Protected Area. We intend to protect the mangroves in Southern Clarendon,



Prime Minister, Dr. the Most Hon. Andrew Holness plants a tree at the Mason River Environmental and Research Park in Clarendon on May 23.

and we are going to be declaring the Long Mountain area in Kingston as a reserve," he said.

Dr. Holness informed that the country's marine protection has reached 14 per cent, pointing out that, that will increase with the implementation of the Marine Spatial Plan, and the expansion of marine protected areas.

He further stated that the Government is actively strengthening and modernising policies to safeguard Jamaica's vital environmental assets.

He informed that the Beach Access and Management Policy is nearing completion and will soon be shared with the public, adding, "I believe that policy will solve many of the issues."

The Prime Minister also indicated that the National Swamp and Fresh Water Policy is being revised.

"We are currently working on the overarching protected areas policy and that will help us to declare some areas as sensitive areas, which would be another step towards pro-

tecting more of Jamaica's environmental assets," he pointed out.

Prime Minister Holness further stated that the Cays Management Policy will be enhanced.

Dr. Holness also highlighted Jamaica's achievement of several significant environmental milestones, including the completion of the National Biosafety Policy, the Emissions Policy Framework and the upgrading of the Climate Change Policy to make it more aligned with the Paris Declaration.

Rio Cobre Treatment Plant to Boost Water Resilience

PRIME MINISTER, Dr. the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, says the construction of the Rio Cobre Water Treatment Plant in Content, St. Catherine, will enhance water resilience for residents in sections of St. Catherine, Kingston and St. Andrew.

Dr. Holness was speaking while touring the project site on May 21, during which he expressed pleasure at seeing the plans for this critical infrastructure come to fruition after being conceptualised by the National Water Commission (NWC) in 2009.

Contractors and developers of the project, VINCI Construction Grands Projects, are currently carrying out excavation works for the plant's construction at a cost of US\$77 million (approximately J\$12 billion). The project is scheduled for completion within two years.

The facility is expected to deliver approximately 15 million gallons of water daily to more than 600,000 residents.

It will also provide much-needed relief to the strained conditions of key water infrastructure, including the Mona Reservoir and Hermitage Dam in St. Andrew.

"This is a critical development for water in this region. Already, many of our water distribution

and production facilities are under severe stress. The [reservoir] at Mona, that is under severe stress; several wells in Portmore and St. Catherine, which we rely on, those wells are overused, and the Hermitage Dam, a hundred-year-old piece of water infrastructure, that is compromised in certain areas," he highlighted.

Dr. Holness stated that the Rio Cobre treatment plant will also enable the temporary decommissioning of the Hermitage Dam for necessary repairs.

"So we will be able to repair [and] expand that. But it [also] gives us an opportunity to rest some of the wells on which we have been relying for far too long; so those wells will have an opportunity to replenish," he further indicated.

The Rio Cobre Water Treatment Plant's development is being funded through public-private partnerships, with support from Sagcor Jamaica Limited, Proparco Finance Company and Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Invest.

In addition to improving water supply reliability in sections of the targeted parishes, the plant will also strengthen the water sector's resilience during drought periods and support the growth of business and residential developments.

Thousands to Benefit from Investments in Water Systems

GROUND HAS been broken for several major water infrastructure projects, which will improve access to potable water to thousands of Jamaicans across the island.

For the 2025/2026 fiscal year, the National Water Commission (NWC) has earmarked \$10.1 billion for water systems development.

Prime Minister, Dr. the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, recently broke ground for the \$1.2-billion Munroe Road to Seaview Avenue Pipeline Project in St. Andrew.

The project, being implemented by the NWC, includes upgrades to potable water mains and the installation of new sewer lines.

The areas that will benefit include Old Hope Road, Retreat Avenue, Seymour Avenue, New Kingston, Seaview Avenue, Mona Road, Wellington Avenue and Munroe Road.



Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Hon. Matthew Samuda (centre), takes a sip of water from the new 50,000-gallon steel tank in Mount Prospect, St. Andrew, during the commissioning ceremony. Sharing the moment are Minister of State for National Security and Member of Parliament for St. Andrew West Rural, Hon. Juliet Cuthbert Flynn (left) and National Water Commission (NWC) Acting Vice President of Operations, Dr. Phillipa Campbell-Francis.

Dr. Holness said the project will enhance sewage collection in Kingston and St. Andrew while improving the reliability of water flow into homes.

Meanwhile, some 650 households across several communities in St. Andrew West Rural now have reliable access to potable water following the com-

missioning into service of the Mount Prospect (Mount Airy) Water Tank Replacement Project.

The 50,000-gallon water tank, which represents an investment of \$47 million by the NWC, will benefit residents of Mount Prospect, New Garden, Golden Spring, Mount Pleasant, Mount Friendship, Langley, Iron River, Mount Horeb, Mount Zion, Brandon Hill, and Mount James.

Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Hon. Matthew Samuda, said that "this 50,000-gallon steel bolted drum is ...a large investment designed to improve reliability and accommodate future growth."

Work has also commenced on the \$25.1-million Castleton Pipeline Project in St. Mary, following a groundbreaking ceremony recently.



Excavation work being carried out at the Rio Cobre Water Treatment Plant project site in Content, St. Catherine, ahead of the start of construction.

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