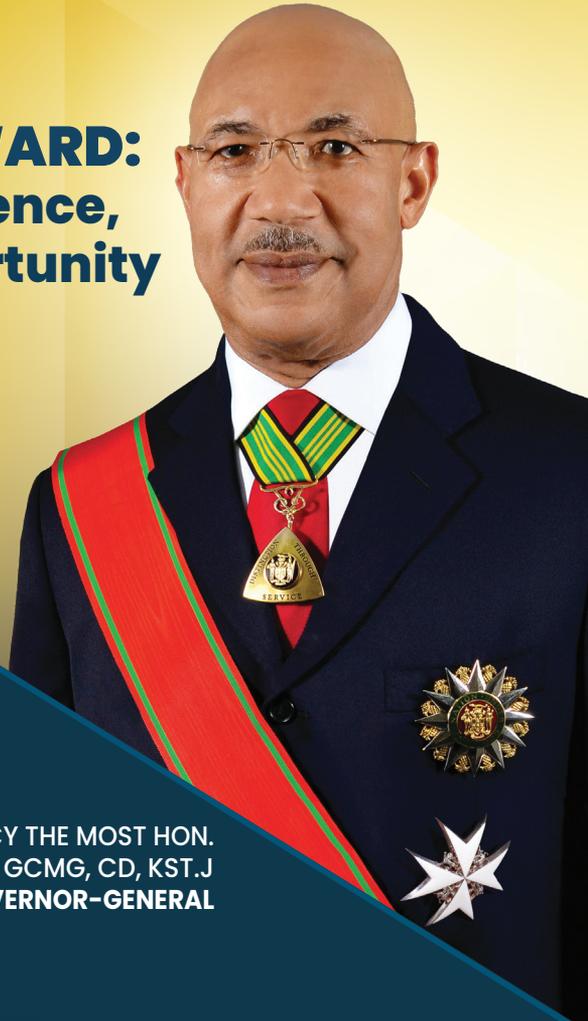




THRONE SPEECH 2026

BUILDING FORWARD: Enhancing Resilience, Expanding Opportunity



HIS EXCELLENCY THE MOST HON.
SIR PATRICK ALLEN, ON, GCMG, CD, KST.J
GOVERNOR-GENERAL

12

**FEBRUARY
2026**

Houses of Parliament
Gordon House
Kingston, Jamaica



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INTRODUCTION

Honourable Members,

We gather at a decisive moment in Jamaica's national journey. In the past year, our nation was tested by Hurricane Melissa — one of the most disruptive climate events in history. It tested our infrastructure, institutions, and communities; but it did not break **our indomitable spirit**.

It also revealed something fundamental: Jamaica has changed. We are no longer a country that merely reacts to crisis and recovers with delay. **Jamaica prepares, absorbs shocks, and rebounds with speed and purpose.**

“We are no longer a country that merely reacts to crisis and recovers with delay. Jamaica prepares, absorbs shocks, and rebounds with speed and purpose.”

Long before the hurricane made landfall, Jamaica had put in place a **multi-layered disaster-risk financing framework** — built on pre-positioned reserves, contingent credit, and insurance mechanisms. That preparation enabled the Government to respond immediately, financing relief and recovery with unprecedented speed and scale.

Within just five weeks of the hurricane, the **Government secured a US\$6.7-billion financing package** to support recovery and rebuilding — the largest and fastest mobilisation ever achieved by Jamaica.

This strength was underscored in the immediate aftermath of the hurricane, when all **three major international credit-rating agencies reaffirmed Jamaica's sovereign ratings** — an extraordinary vote of confidence in our policy discipline and institutional credibility.

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The months following Hurricane Melissa have reinforced a simple truth:

- preparedness matters
- institutional strength matters
- leadership matters

It is this hard-earned resilience that now allows Jamaica not only to recover, but to move forward — rebuilding smarter, strengthening national systems, and expanding opportunities.

The Government's plans for the year ahead go beyond reconstructing what was damaged to reimagining what is possible — building modern infrastructure with greater climate resilience and institutions designed for speed, scale, and opportunity.

This is about turning adversity into advantage; about shaping **a Jamaica that is stronger in the face of shock, more competitive on the global stage, and more inclusive in the prosperity it creates.**

The challenges ahead are real — but so too is Jamaica's ambition. With resilience as our foundation and opportunity as our direction, **Jamaica moves forward not merely to recover, but to rise:** confident in our capacity, disciplined in our choices, and determined to shape a future worthy of our people.

OFFICE OF THE CABINET

Honourable Members, the Government continues to drive effective coordination of national policy and public-sector reform by strengthening accountability, results-based management, and institutional capability across Government in support of Vision 2030 Jamaica. This has taken on heightened urgency in the aftermath of Hurricane Melissa.

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The widespread devastation caused by the hurricane underscored both the vulnerability of critical infrastructure, and the need for a more integrated and disciplined national framework for recovery and resilience. In response, the Government has established the **National Reconstruction and Resilience Authority (NaRRA)** initially as a department, pending the enactment of special-purpose legislation to constitute it as a statutory corporation.

Operating as a centre of technical excellence for project preparation and execution, NaRRA will serve as a single point of national coordination across Ministries, Agencies, and development partners, while providing a structured platform for public-private partnerships.

Through NaRRA, Jamaica will convert unprecedented levels of international financing into bankable, resilient projects — delivered with transparency, speed, discipline, and measurable impact. This Authority represents a new development architecture for Jamaica: one that embeds resilience into national planning, accelerates delivery, and ensures that reconstruction and resilience investments translate into lasting economic opportunity and sustained national strength.

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OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

Honourable Members, following Hurricane Melissa, the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM), supported by the Jamaica Defence Force, provided humanitarian support through a hub and spoke system. ODPEM also completed the **J\$1.87B Improved Emergency Communication System**, creating a secure national radio

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and data network for faster, more reliable emergency communication.

As Jamaica continues to strengthen its digital security architecture, the nation was recognised in the 2025 OAS/IDB Cybersecurity Report as the **English-speaking Caribbean's most cyber-mature nation**. In 2025/26, the National Identification and Registration Authority was established as a unified civil registration and national identification framework, incorporating the Registrar-General's Department and launched a new client portal.

The Government will pursue a mission-driven strategy for science, technology, and innovation that converts Jamaican talent into measurable national outcomes. The focus is Research for Development — science and technology deployed to solve Jamaican problems at speed and at scale. A unified national operating model will align government, academia, and industry so research moves from laboratories into real products, policies, and services.

The Government will pursue a mission-driven strategy for science, technology, and innovation that converts Jamaican talent into measurable national outcomes.

Key policies progressed, including the **Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Policy** (draft White Paper), the **National Logistics Plan**, and the **National AI Policy**. Legislative advances included the **Data Protection (Disposal of Personal Data) Regulations** and the **Cybercrimes (Amendment) Act**.

In 2026/27, priorities include developing the **National Continuity of Governance Plan**, broadening and accelerating implementation of the **Streamlining Processes for Efficiency and Economic Development (SPEED) Programme**, and tabling **Electoral Integrity Reforms** and reforms to the **Integrity Commission Act**.

MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE

Honourable Members, the Government recorded three major achievements in 2025/26. First, the Government monetised its portion of Sangster International Airport revenue, raising US\$400 million through a 10-year bond issued by Montego Bay Airport Revenue Finance Limited. This follows the successful 2024/25 monetisation of the Norman Manley International Airport revenue, which received Latin Finance's 2025 "Infrastructure Financing of the Year: Caribbean" award.

Second, Jamaica's **National Natural Disaster Risk Financing Policy** enabled an immediate response to Hurricane Melissa. All disaster risk financing instruments were triggered, and alongside deposits in the Contingencies Fund and the National Natural Disaster Reserve Fund, they financed relief, rehabilitation, and initial reconstruction, supplemented by donor flows.

Third, Moody's upgraded Jamaica's long-term issuer and senior unsecured ratings to Ba3 from B1 in December 2025, with the outlook revised to stable. This upgrade — delivered after Hurricane Melissa —

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— reflects strengthened institutional and policy frameworks, sustained fiscal discipline, stronger financial-sector oversight, and enhanced disaster-risk management. S&P Global and Fitch rating agencies reaffirmed their ratings of BB and BB minus, respectively, following Hurricane Melissa.

Legislative actions during the year included the tabling and approval of an Order to suspend the fiscal rules following Hurricane Melissa, and tabling of Bills to amend the **Income Tax Act** and **Assets Tax (Specified Bodies) Act** to change corporate income tax and assets tax filing and payment due dates.

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For 2026/27, priorities include: implementing procurement system reforms through the **Public Procurement Commission** and securing passage of the **Customs Bill**.

MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY AND PEACE

Honourable Members, the execution of the Government's security programme, **Plan Secure Jamaica**, continues to deliver strong results, most notably the significant decline in crime and violence, particularly murders and shootings.

Since 2023, Jamaica has recorded a sustained and accelerating reduction in homicides, with this momentum continuing into 2026. **In January 2026, murders declined by 55 per cent compared with the same period in 2025.** The long-held dream of a safer, more peaceful Jamaica is no longer distant — it is steadily becoming a reality that Jamaicans can see and feel in their communities.

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We continue to invest in strengthening the physical infrastructure of the Jamaica Constabulary Force to provide **modern, fit-for-purpose facilities** for both police officers and the public they serve. Over J\$17 billion in capital projects has been committed, and despite the impact of Hurricane Melissa, 27 restoration projects valued at J\$2 billion are already underway or scheduled to commence. Technology development also continues apace, with the **C5 Business Solution** to be implemented this fiscal year and the expansion of the **Ticketing Information Management System (TIMS)** to support improved public order.

We are also ensuring that the peace dividends are felt across the wider society, as all Ministries, Departments, and Agencies work collectively to sustain peace and good public order. Our regional and international partnerships remain critical, with

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Jamaica strengthening its leadership through initiatives such as hosting the inaugural CARITIP Forum, establishing a regional Anti-Trafficking Coalition, and advancing the National Small Arms Control Strategy under the SALIENT Jamaica Programme – a joint United Nations initiative.

Legislative reform remains a key pillar of our national security agenda. **Amendments to the Aliens Act**, the **Immigration Restriction Act**, and the **Firearms Act** are progressing, and priorities for the period ahead include reform of the **Corrections Act**, review of public-order legislation, expansion of security technology, upgrades to JamaicaEye, continued facility construction, and the commencement of a new Specialised Operations facility.

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

Honourable Members, the Government advanced a major reform agenda focused on digital transformation, improved justice service delivery, and legislative modernisation. A US\$4.5 million bilateral agreement with Rwanda was signed to implement an **Integrated Electronic Case Management System** over three years, modernising the courts, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Correctional Services, and related agencies.

Justice services remained robust. The **Restorative Justice Programme** concluded over 1,000 conferences and sensitised approximately 22,000 individuals. The **Victim Services Division** assisted over 3,000

new clients, delivered over 8,000 counselling sessions, and supported over 1,000 victims in court. The **Child Diversion Programme** engaged nearly 7,000 persons, while the **Legal Aid Council** provided representation to over 2,700 individuals. The strong promotion of **Alternative Dispute Resolution** continues to

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emphasise avoiding violence in settling disputes. Parliament passed amendments increasing penalties for murder through the **Offences Against the Person** and **Criminal Justice Administration Acts**.

Legislative priorities progressed, including the **Criminal Records (Rehabilitation of Offenders) (Amendment) Bill** expanding expungement eligibility; the **Mediation Bill** establishing a modern regulatory framework aligned with the Singapore Convention; and the **Jury (Amendment) Bill** increasing juror stipends.

For 2026/27, priorities include rehabilitation of damaged facilities, advancing constitutional reform toward a Republic, addressing judicial tenure, and undertaking major amendments to the **Sexual Offences** and **Offences Against the Person Acts**, including the introduction of new offences such as stalking.

MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Honourable Members, with Jamaica's strong job-creation gains and expanding capital programme, the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation has been renamed the Ministry of Economic Growth and Infrastructure Development to sharpen its focus on sustained economic expansion and national resilience.

Following Hurricane Melissa, the Government led major recovery efforts: clearing most of the over 400 impacted roads within five days after the event and restoring access for emergency response, utilities, and relief operations. This work now transitions into targeted repairs to hurricane-damaged roads, gullies, and drains — including Sandy Gully in St. Andrew and the North and South Gullies in St. James — supported by an expanded national drain-cleaning programme.

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Long-term infrastructure delivery continues to accelerate. By December 2025, the **SPARK Programme** had reached 20% completion.

Major national projects also advanced significantly: the **Montego Bay Perimeter Road** is 75% complete and scheduled to be completed in September 2026; the **Long Hill bypass** is scheduled to be completed in January 2027; **Barnett Street** in March 2027, among several others. The construction of the **Portmore Resilience Park** will also be finalised in 2026/2027.

Capacity expansion continues under the **Special Capital Expenditure Programme** including the dualisation of Braeton Road and Hellshire Main Road, and the phased Arthur Wint Drive–Tom Redcam–Camp Road upgrade. The **Accelerated Bridge Programme** will also begin replacing structurally vulnerable bridges.

Land, housing, and urban planning reforms remain central. The **Systematic Land Registration Programme** has produced over 13,000 titles, including over 10,000 delivered across St. Elizabeth, Manchester, and St. Catherine. Through strategic funding

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partnerships we will continue to increase the issuance of titles. Additionally, to improve efficiency the contract for the Electronic Titling System was signed and implementation is planned for 2027/2028. To improve our capacity, we are also advancing our partnership with the Koreans for our Surveyor Training programme. Under the New Social Housing Programme, 314 units (720 rooms) have been completed, benefitting more than 1,100 Jamaicans. Delivery of more housing units through different modalities will be achieved by using new building methods and systems, giving an opportunity to more small contractors, especially our young people.

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Legislative priorities include the **Quantity Surveyors (Registration) Act, Registration (Shared Community) Act**, and reforms to the **Real Estate** and **Rent Restriction Acts**, alongside policies on squatter management, urban renewal, construction-industry reform, and public-rights-of-way governance.

MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Honourable Members, even as it led national relief coordination, damage assessments and recovery efforts, the Government ensured uninterrupted delivery of PATH, National Insurance Scheme benefits, and social pensions.

Following Hurricane Melissa, the Government executed one of the largest and fastest social response operations in Jamaica's history. More than 75,000 damage assessments were completed within the first 100 days and over 90,000 by the first week of February using the upgraded JHDINA Lite platform and a real-time national dashboard, supported by over 700 committed volunteers, 400 of which were from other MDAs and citizen volunteers.

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Recovery efforts have now moved decisively into shelter restoration with the launch of the **Shelter Recovery Programme**, including the **Restoration of Owner and Occupant Family Shelter (ROOFS) Programme**, the largest housing-recovery initiative ever undertaken in Jamaica, with more than J\$10 billion initially allocated, of which J\$2 billion has already been disbursed.

Digital transformation also continued to expand access, accountability, and inclusion. The **“Am Alive” application** is scheduled for launch early in the new fiscal year to enable

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secure electronic life verification for pensioners. Additionally, the Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities launched the **“I AM ABLE” digital platform.**

The **Occupational Safety and Health Bill** has progressed through multiple drafting stages and is expected to proceed to Parliament in 2026/27. Looking ahead, the Government will advance Unemployment Insurance legislation through amendments to the **National Insurance Act** and related laws, the development of a national productivity-measurement framework, and the creation of an Occupational Safety and Health risk-management toolkit.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE

In 2025/26 the Government advanced Jamaica's diplomatic, multilateral, and trade agenda with a clear focus on resilience, strategic partnerships, and post-disaster recovery.

Jamaica's leadership on the regional stage was particularly evident during its tenure as Chair of the CARICOM Conference of Heads of Government from July to December 2025. We are proud to report that during this period, intra-regional airlift expanded; trade cooperation deepened; and concrete progress was made on food and nutrition security initiatives, youth development and cybersecurity.

Regional security cooperation was also advanced through sharing of best practices and engagement on transnational organised crime, alongside strengthened CARICOM-Africa relations.

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In the wake of Hurricane Melissa, through its Missions and partnerships worldwide, Jamaica secured invaluable delivery of essential goods, technical expertise, and humanitarian support from bilateral and multilateral partners, non-governmental organisations, and the Jamaican Diaspora.

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Jamaica also signed the **UN Cybercrime Convention**, ratified the **Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Agreement**, advanced work on a deep seabed mining legislative framework, and commenced preparations to strengthen compliance with United Nations Security Council resolutions on counterterrorism and non-proliferation.

Looking ahead to 2026/27, the Government's priorities include deepening bilateral engagement with traditional and non-traditional partners; advancing UN80 multilateral reform efforts and global action against transnational crime; and finalising an updated Foreign Trade Policy and Action Plan to boost exports, attract investment, and support Jamaica's economic recovery and growth.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SKILLS, YOUTH AND INFORMATION

Honourable Members, the 2024/2025 academic year confirmed that Jamaica's education system has regained its stride. PEP and CXC results surpassed previous cohorts and regional averages, restoring — and in some areas exceeding — pre-pandemic performance. This achievement belongs to our teachers, principals, parents, and students.

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Despite severe infrastructural damage from Hurricane Melissa, the sector demonstrated exceptional resilience. All schools in affected parishes resumed teaching and learning within 90 days, an unprecedented national accomplishment that underscores strong leadership and the Government's commitment that no child will be left behind.

Reconstruction efforts are advancing at scale, and all Priority 1 institutions will be fully repaired within this calendar year.

The Government is also accelerating modernisation. Ten technical high schools will receive state-of-the-art TVET labs in partnership with HEART/NSTA Trust; 86 schools will have upgraded science laboratories; and by late 2026, ground will be broken for the Bernard Lodge and Minard STEAM schools — ushering in a new era of science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics education.

Institutional reform is also advancing. The Government will establish a **Department of Family and Children's Services** and reform the Youth and Adolescence Policy Division to strengthen governance and evidence-based policy making.

Legislative priorities include completing consultations on the **Jamaica Teaching Council Bill** and updating school governance regulations under the **Education Act**. Studies have shown that institutions with strong school governance are better run and deliver more impressive educational outcomes. These new regulations will introduce best practices of school governance to our institutions. Implementation of the Education Transformation Commission recommendations also continues with 33% already implemented.

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Under the information portfolio, the Government will introduce a modern communication apparatus to ensure Jamaicans have access to accurate, unbiased public information — protecting truth, strengthening trust, safeguarding democratic values, and reinforcing our shared national consciousness.

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MINISTRY OF WATER, ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE

Honourable Members, despite the devastation caused by Hurricane Melissa — resulting in losses exceeding J\$10 billion — Jamaica’s water sector demonstrated resilience and rapid recovery. By December 2025, water services had been restored to more than 90% of customers and we are now at 95%.

Emergency response capacity was strengthened through the procurement of twelve (12) additional water trucks, adding one hundred and forty-six thousand (146,000) litres of emergency supply per cycle.

To ease the impact of drought conditions, J\$243 million was allocated to Members of Parliament for trucked water support. The Rural Water Supply Limited expanded access to potable water for more than 8,700 additional residents — a figure projected to reach approximately 14,000 by March 2026. Additionally, the J\$28 billion Western Resilience Water Project, which was launched in June 2025 remains on track, with engineering and design work now complete. This project, scheduled to enter the full construction phase in June 2026, will

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improve water supply and build resilience between Trelawny and Westmoreland for over 150,000 Jamaicans.

Climate resilience and environmental management were also strengthened. The Water Resources Authority installed real-time flood gauges in Content, Manchester, and developed a climate-linked food insecurity mapping tool to support early warning and planning.

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Under the **National Tree Planting Initiative Phase Two**, more than 200,000 trees were planted, and 16 new Forest Management Areas were declared.

The Forestry Department further enhanced recovery and biodiversity protection through deployment of the region's first tree spade. The use of its bulldozer component played a critical role in clearing roads.

On the policy and legislative front, priorities in 2026/27 include passing a modern **Forest Act**, amending the **Wildlife Protection Act**, and advancing comprehensive Climate Change legislation, as well as a Beach Access and Management Policy.

The Government will also pursue US\$20 million from the international Loss and Damage Fund; to climate-proof water systems; complete rural water projects in Hampshire-Riversdale, St. Catherine and Stepney, St. Ann, benefitting four thousand six hundred (4,600) residents; and implement major e-mobility initiatives in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme, the Global Environment Facility, and the German Agency for International Cooperation.

MINISTRY OF ENERGY, TRANSPORT AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Honourable Members, notwithstanding the extensive damage inflicted on Jamaica's electricity grid by Hurricane Melissa, through decisive action and the steadfast support of the Government, the JPS successfully restored power to over 90% of customers by December 2025.

Beyond emergency recovery, advanced major reforms in energy efficiency, transport modernisation, and telecommunications are underway. Deep retrofitting works — including solar PV systems, efficient lighting, and upgraded air-conditioning — were completed at the University Hospital of the West Indies, with similar upgrades underway across public facilities to cut costs and strengthen grid resilience.

“Beyond emergency recovery, advanced major reforms in energy efficiency, transport modernisation, and telecommunications are underway.”

Public transport modernisation continued with the acquisition of 200 of 300 CNG buses, completion of Phase One of the Rural School Bus Programme, and the launch of Phase Two, supported by new bus procurement and designated school stops equipped with improved safety and monitoring systems.

Strategic infrastructure upgrades progressed, including J\$5 billion in airport improvements at Sangster International and Norman Manley International, and the deployment of 200 Ports Security Corps officers to reinforce border protection.

A Letter of Intent was also signed with Trans Americas Fiber System to develop a new subsea fibre-optic cable, expanding bandwidth, improving resilience, and reducing long-term connectivity costs.

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Legislative progress included the **Petroleum (Downstream) Bill**, **Civil Aviation (Amendment) Bill**, amendments enabling electronic vehicle certification, and the implementation of **Electricity (Wheeling) Regulations**.

For 2026/27, priorities include negotiating a new all-island electricity licence, advancing a **Ride-Hailing Policy**, procuring 150 additional school buses, and finalising the **National Emergency Telecommunications Plan**.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Honourable Members, in 2025/26 the Government advanced major recovery, infrastructure, and legislative reforms, while safeguarding continuity of healthcare in the aftermath of Hurricane Melissa.

Following the activation of the Health Emergency Operations Centre, in partnership with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Government implemented a structured three-phase Relief, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction Programme. This ensured the rapid restoration of essential health services, supported shelters, and enabled timely field assessments across affected areas.

Rehabilitation of primary-care infrastructure remains a central priority, alongside the delivery of major capital projects. The **Western Child and Adolescent Hospital**, which will provide 220 beds, four operating theatres and diagnostic equipment advanced to 77% completion. Significant upgrades continued under the **Health Systems Strengthening Programme**. These include the **J\$5.5-billion Spanish Town Hospital redevelopment**, now 24% complete; the **J\$930-million Old Harbour Health Centre**, 74% complete; the **J\$660-million Greater Portmore Health Centre upgrade** and the **J\$704-million St. Jago Park Health Centre expansion**, both now 60% complete. Rehabilitation of **Cornwall Regional Hospital** is now 85% complete.

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Legislative reform progressed steadily, with advancement of the **Tobacco Control Bill** and the **Food and Drugs (Amendment) Bill**, alongside amendments to the **Nurses and Midwives Act** and the **Pharmacy Act** to formally recognise and regulate Advanced Practice Registered Nurses, strengthening workforce flexibility and service delivery.

Looking ahead to 2026/27, priorities include the rehabilitation of 101 health centres and the Savanna-Mar hospital; and modernising 125 primary-care facilities. Technical Assessments will also be undertaken to inform the reconstruction of the Noel Holmes, Falmouth and Black River Hospitals. Additionally, preparatory works will commence for modernisation and redevelopment of the **Kingston Public Hospital** and a new **Type C hospital at Bernard Lodge** — positioning the health system for resilience, equity, and future demand.

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MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND MINING

Honourable Members, in 2025/26 the Government strengthened sectoral resilience amid severe climate shocks. Up to September, domestic crop production was on track for a record 930,000 tonnes, while bauxite output rose by 10% to 4.3 million tonnes. Hurricane Melissa, however, caused major damage, prompting an intensive recovery and modernisation drive.

Through the J\$3-billion Hurricane Melissa Disaster Recovery Programme, support to impact over 70,000 farmers and fishers is ongoing. Key actions included restoring 4,600 hectares of farmland; distributing 140 million gallons of water; implementing

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a \$40-million lease moratorium; waiving fishing licence fees for 1,008 fishers; preparing 1,625 hectares of land for over 2,000 farmers; and providing fertiliser, seeds, planting materials, livestock support, and beach rehabilitation. A further J\$180 million restored coastal infrastructure and supported conch and lobster fishers.

A major milestone was last week's opening of the **Essex Valley Cold Storage and Agro-Processing Facility** in St. Elizabeth — expanding storage, processing, and marketing capacity, cutting post-harvest losses, and boosting resilience in Jamaica's agricultural “breadbasket.”

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Water security and minerals development also advanced. The J\$1.5-billion **Parnassus Irrigation System** delivered 13.6 km of new pipelines serving 315 hectares, while limestone exports tripled to 750,000 tonnes and extensive land rehabilitation and community infrastructure upgrades supported over 8,000 residents.

Legislative progress included passage of the **Prædial Larceny (Amendment) Act** and advancement of the **Geological Survey Act**.

For 2026/27, priorities include advancing the work to establish a national food reserve, as well as the Minerals Institute, greenhouse clusters, new Agro-Parks, rehabilitation of six fishing beaches and 70 farm roads, youth start-up incentives, quarry-material depots, and national landslide-hazard mapping.

MINISTRY OF TOURISM

Honourable Members, tourism remained a cornerstone of economic resilience in 2025/26, rebounding strongly before Hurricane Melissa disrupted late-year momentum. Despite this, the sector demonstrated exceptional recovery, welcoming 3.7 million visitors which generated US\$3.8 billion in earnings.

The Tourism Recovery Task Force led a rapid national response, enabling the full reopening of the sector by December 15, 2025. Major properties in Ocho Rios, Negril, and Montego Bay resumed operations quickly, signalling to global markets that Jamaica remained open.

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A major policy breakthrough came with Cabinet's approval of the Destination Assurance Framework and Strategy — the world's first codified destination-assurance policy — designed to guarantee safe, seamless, high-quality visitor experiences and strengthen public-order standards islandwide.

Legislative work advanced on a new **Tourist Board Act**, the modernised **Travel Agencies Act**, and amendments to the **Bath of the Apostle and Milk River Bath Acts** to support public-private partnerships.

For 2026/27, the Government will prioritise the **Local First Initiative**, deepening domestic sourcing and MSME linkages. Market diversification will accelerate toward Latin America, the Middle East, and India, with a goal of raising Latin American market share from 2% to 10% by 2027 and advancing Jamaica toward 8 million visitors and US\$10 billion in earnings by 2030.

MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY, INVESTMENT AND COMMERCE

Honourable Members, in 2025/26 the Government strengthened Jamaica's investment climate, supported MSMEs, and advanced major reforms, even as the nation recovers from Hurricane Melissa.

Significant investments moved forward, including Excelerate Energy's US\$1.055-billion acquisition of New Fortress Energy's LNG and power platform. Special Economic Zones remained a powerful catalyst, with the

Jamaica Special Economic Zone Authority facilitating nearly US\$1 billion to date, including US\$34 million in 2025/26. Manufacturers benefited from J\$82 billion in tax relief under the Productive Incentive Relief Programme, while 52 MSMEs received J\$18 million in grants.

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The Government implemented emergency price-gouging protections and executed a coordinated MSME recovery programme — including generator loans, rapid assessments, and, the reconstruction of 51 business kiosks in Border, St. Elizabeth — to restore commerce and safeguard livelihoods.

Major strides in digital transformation improved the ease of doing business. The Companies Office of Jamaica digitised annual returns and beneficial-ownership filings, cutting processing times from weeks to minutes. The Jamaica Intellectual Property Office launched Jamaica's first fully digital IP-registration platform.

Legislative reforms are advanced for amendments to the **JAMPRO Act**, progress on the **Jamaica Consumer and Competition Authority Bill**, and amendments to the **Dangerous**

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Drug (Cannabis Licensing) (Interim) Regulations, 2026 to provide for ease of entry for traditional small-scale farmers. In 2026/27, the Government will modernise the **Insolvency, Partnership, and Companies Acts**, implement the revised MSME Policy, and support transformative SEZ investments — reinforcing Jamaica's competitiveness and economic resilience.

MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Honourable Members, in 2025/26 the Government strengthened disaster response, social protection, and emergency-services infrastructure at the community level.

Ahead of and following Hurricane Melissa, the Ministry, its agencies, and all Municipal Corporations led national preparedness, shelter management, and coordinated mobilisation across the Government, the private sector, NGOs, and community groups. The National Solid Waste Management Authority executed island-wide clean-up and debris-removal operations, while the Social Development Commission activated its National Community Coordination Network — deploying officers across all parishes, especially the most affected areas, and supporting damage assessments and temporary accommodation surveys.

“Ahead of and following Hurricane Melissa, the Ministry, its agencies, and all Municipal Corporations led national preparedness, shelter management, and coordinated mobilisation across Government, the private sector, NGOs, and community groups.”

Social-care infrastructure was expanded. The Board of Supervision upgraded several infirmaries, installed a therapeutic park in St. Catherine, built new matrons' quarters in Hanover, and completed major repairs at the St. Thomas female ward.

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A new Drop-In Centre and Night Shelter in Portland now accommodates 28 homeless persons, and eight indigent houses were delivered to vulnerable households.

Emergency-response capability improved with the renovation of four fire stations, costing J\$77 million.

Key legislative advances included the passage of the **Counties and Parishes (Amendment) Act**, granting Portmore parish status; readiness of the **NSWMA Validation Bill** for tabling; and continued consultations on the **Human Services Bill** to modernise social-care delivery.

For 2026/27, priorities include strengthening solid-waste systems, rebuilding climate-resilient municipal facilities, and upgrading shelters and social-care services to ensure safer, more resilient communities.

MINISTRY OF CULTURE, GENDER, ENTERTAINMENT AND SPORT

Honourable Members, in 2025/26 the Government advanced Jamaica's creative economy, strengthened gender equality, protected cultural heritage, and supported national sporting excellence.

A Joint Select Committee is reviewing the **National Policy for Culture, Entertainment and the Creative Economy (2025–2035)**, which will guide long-term sector growth and inform a new Culture, Entertainment and Creative Economy Act. To safeguard integrity in sport, amendments to the **Anti-Doping in Sport Act (2014)** and updated JADCO rules will ensure full alignment with the 2027 World Anti-Doping Code.

BUILDING FORWARD:
Enhancing Resilience, Expanding Opportunity

The Government's mission to end domestic violence remains urgent. A full review of the **Domestic Violence Act** is underway, supported by expanded shelters, intervention centres, and 24-hour hotlines. This year, a gender-based violence mobile app will be launched to provide discreet access to emergency help, legal information, and support services.

“The Government's mission to end domestic violence remains urgent. A full review of the Domestic Violence Act is underway, supported by expanded shelters, intervention centres, and 24-hour hotlines.”

Athlete welfare is being strengthened through improvements to the Jamaica Athletes Insurance Plan, guided by an actuarial study to increase efficiency and extend coverage to coaches. Major investment in sporting infrastructure continues with the National Stadium Redevelopment Programme progressing through concept, detailed, and technical design phases ahead of construction in 2027.

Jamaica's global cultural standing was further affirmed with Port Royal's Archaeological Ensemble inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, joining the Blue and John Crow Mountains and underscoring the nation's outstanding heritage.

Our reputation as the hottest team on ice has been burnished by the recent success of the bobsleigh team which won Jamaica's first gold medal at an international sledding competition at the North American Cup in November. Jamaica's athletes are currently competing in bobsleigh and alpine skiing at the Winter Olympic Games in Italy and we wish them great success.

CONCLUSION

Honourable Members, this is Jamaica's moment to Build Forward — **Enhancing Resilience, Expanding Opportunity**. Tested by adversity, strengthened by preparation, and guided by ambition, we move ahead with confidence in our people, our future, and our destiny.

We place our trust in the Lord who says, *“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand”*. **(Isaiah 41:10, NIV)**

Let us therefore act with unity, discipline, and resolve, determined not only to recover, but to rise — shaping a Jamaica worthy of the aspirations of this generation and the generations to come.



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