

# PM Holness Urges Young People to Get the Facts on NIDS

**PRIME MINISTER** the Most Hon. Andrew Holness says the Government remains committed to ensuring consultation is done on the National Identification System (NIDS) prior to implementation.

Speaking at the OPM Live Youth Forum at the Karl Hendricks auditorium at Jamaica College in Kingston on November 29, Prime Minister Holness said he, like other Jamaicans, find common ground wanting the best for Jamaica and for the country moving forward.

Responding to questions from a wide cross-section of young people, Prime Minister Holness urged them to read the Bill for themselves.

He pointed out that a robust programme of consultations will be done



**Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (centre), Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Senator the Hon. Kamina Johnson Smith (4th right) and State Minister in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information, Hon. Floyd Green (2nd right), with a group of young persons who attended the OPM Live Youth Forum at Jamaica College on November 29.**

prior to Parliament approving the regulations to the NIDS Act.

He said the discussions on creating a national identification registry started from as early as 1970.

“There are 1.8 million Jamaicans who want an ID, and they give their fingerprints willingly, answering personal questions providing personal information and freely giving of their bio-

metrics... the Government has that now. What’s new?” said Prime Minister Holness.

The Prime Minister urged young people across Jamaica to get the facts on the NIDS and engage in the programme of consultation which will be ongoing.

The NIDS was approved by both Houses of Parliament last month. On December 5, the NIDS Secretariat will host a Town Hall meeting at Emancipation Park in Kingston.

A website, [www.nidsfacts.com](http://www.nidsfacts.com), has also been established where accurate information on the NIDS can be accessed.

## HAJ to Provide More Than 2,000 Housing Solutions

THE HOUSING Agency of Jamaica Limited (HAJ) will be rolling out more than 2,000 housing solutions for middle to low income persons over a three-year period.

The solutions will include housing units as well as serviced lots across a number of parishes.

Speaking at a recently held JIS ‘Think Tank’, Managing Director of the HAJ, Gary Howell, said the need for affordable options for aspiring homeowners is growing steadily and the agency is determined to play its part in responding to the existing needs.

“We are now in the process of finalising some outstanding developments in a few areas, and we expect to hand over some units in Whitehall, Negril, in a matter of weeks. We have had our challenges over the years, but we have worked hard to overcome a number of them to get things done,” said Mr. Howell.

Public Relations and Marketing Manager at the HAJ, Richard Jones,



**Managing Director of the Housing Agency of Jamaica (HAJ), Gary Howell**

informed that in the current 2017/18 period, a total of 115 solutions will be delivered in Green Pond, St. James and Runaway Bay, St. Ann.

He added that over the 2018/19 period, the agency expects to complete 160 units cumulatively in Reid’s Pen, St. Catherine and Belair in St. Ann.

“Further on the horizon are 530 serviced lots and 300 housing units in Grange Pen, St. James, 500 units in St. Catherine and an additional 100 housing units and serviced lots in Westmoreland,” Mr. Jones noted.

## Schools Being Retrofitted to Improve Disabled Access

WORK IS under way to retrofit all primary and secondary schools across the island with lifts and ramps to improve access by persons with disabilities.

The initiative is being undertaken at a cost of \$50 million by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information in collaboration with the Digicel Foundation.

“It is in the budget for the next five years,” said portfolio Minister, Senator the Hon. Ruel Reid.

“The allocation will make sure that within the next five years, every single public education institution will have either lifts or ramps, so that our children with physical disabilities will have access to these institutions,” he added.

He was speaking during the launch of the Abilities



**Education, Youth and Information Minister, Senator the Hon. Ruel Reid, speaking during the launch of the Abilities Foundation’s Beauty Services Unit on November 28 at the entity’s Constant Spring Road offices.**

Foundation Beauty Services Unit on November 28 at the entity’s Constant Spring Road address in Kingston.

Senator Reid reiterated the Government’s commitment to supporting State-owned and aided special education schools and units across the island, in keeping with its

mandate to strengthen services to children with special needs.

Senator Reid said emphasis is also being placed on integrating the special needs community into the Government’s thrust to develop a national information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure.

## Roadway Between Eastwood Park and Manor Park to be Widened

THE NATIONAL Works Agency (NWA) will be undertaking major road upgrading works between Eastwood Park Road and Manor Park in St. Andrew.

The 3.5 kilometres of roadway will be widened to accommodate four lanes of traffic, new management solutions and improved pedestrian facilities.

Manager, Communication and Customer Service at NWA, Stephen Shaw, told JIS News that the project is aimed at reducing traffic congestion, which is a major problem for commuters along Constant Spring Road and motorists travelling to Kingston from the parishes of St. Mary and Portland.

“The Constant Spring Road is one of the major roads in the Corporate Area and it is really oversaturated right now. The number of motor vehicles that we see on a daily basis is about 30,000. It is way over capacity, and so we want to add capacity to the road,” he explained.

Mr. Shaw was speaking to JIS News at a stake-

holders meeting held at the Karram-Speid Auditorium, Merl Grove High School, located on Constant Spring Road on November 29.

**The Constant Spring Road is one of the major roads in the Corporate Area and it is really oversaturated right now.**

The project will include improvements where Constant Spring Road intersects with Red Hills Road, West Kings House Road, Dunrobin Avenue, Shortwood Road, West Avenue and Oaklands, Immaculate Conception and Constant Spring Tax Office and Olivier Road.

There will be new signalled intersections where Constant Spring Road intersects with Mannings Hill Road, Constant Spring Terrace and Hillman Road, Clifton Boulevard, Manor Centre, Manor Park circu-

lation, Stilwell Road and Long Lane.

Central Avenue will become a one-way corridor, and a temporary bridge will be created within the Manor Park circulation.

## PM Says More Opportunities Being Created in Tourism

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness says the Government continues to take concrete steps to expand the tourism product and to create more opportunities that will improve the livelihood of Jamaicans.

Mr. Holness, who was giving the keynote address at the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Global Conference on Jobs and Inclusive Growth at the Montego Bay Convention Centre on November 28, pointed to “heritage, health, wellness tourism, and ecotourism” as some of the areas where the country can benefit.

He also noted that preserving the Cockpit Country Protected Area allows Jamaica to create new economic opportunities while sustaining the environment.



**Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness**

“We recently declared the boundaries of the Cockpit Country Protected Area, which is recognised nationally and internationally for its lush forests, rich biodiversity, freshwater resources, and historical and cultural significance,” he told the conference.

Meanwhile, Mr. Holness said the Government is taking steps to make the changes to the infrastructure and the activities offered to

ensure that visitors “enjoy” their stay, while also ensuring “respect” for the environment.

“Tourism must be developed in a sustainable way, so as to preserve the resources of destinations. Its development must be properly planned and managed, as the resources on which tourism depends must be available for future generations,” he emphasised.

Mr. Holness argued that tourism is fundamentally a people-based activity, and that careful planning of human resources, with private enterprises and employee representatives, is needed to ensure that the sector can fulfil its employment-creation potential and has a sufficient supply of suitably skilled labour to meet future growth.

## Teen Hub Opens in Half-Way Tree Transport Centre



**Minister of Health, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton (centre) and State Minister in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information, Hon. Floyd Green (right), cut the ribbon to open ‘Teen Hub’ in the Half-Way Tree Transport Centre on November 28. Others (from left) are St. Andrew Technical High School student, Jerome Reynolds; Acting Director, Health Services, Planning and Integration in the Ministry of Health, Dr. Simone Spence; and Caribbean Regional Director, AIDS Healthcare Foundation, Dr. Kevin Harvey.**