

# \$1.5M Income Tax Threshold for All PAYE Workers

**T**HE INCOME tax threshold for all Pay As You Earn (PAYE) workers will be increased from \$592,800 to \$1.5 million, to be implemented in two phases.

Approximately 251,000 PAYE workers will benefit from the increased threshold.

Effective July 1, 2016, the first phase of the personal income tax threshold will move to \$1,000,272.

The second phase will result in a personal income tax threshold of \$1.5 million, effective April 1, 2017.

This was announced by Minister of Finance and the Public Service, Hon. Audley Shaw, as he opened the 2016/17 Budget Debate in the House of Representatives on May 12. His presentation was themed: 'Partnership for Economic Growth'.



Minister of Finance and the Public Service, Hon. Audley Shaw, opening the 2016/17 Budget Debate in the House on May 12.

"Right now there are 426,000 persons on the PAYE roll, but 125,000 are off it because they are below \$592,800. In making this a threshold for every-

**Effective July 1, 2016, the first phase of the personal income tax threshold will move to \$1,000,272.**

body, it's no longer 118,000 people who will benefit, it will now be 251,000 people. This is 133,000 more persons who will benefit," the Minister pointed out.

He noted that the cost to the Budget for the fiscal year 2016/17 is estimated at \$12.5 billion.

## \$28.6 Billion for Social Protection Programmes

AN ALLOCATION of \$28.6 billion has been provided in the budget for the maintenance of the country's social programmes.

This is an increase from the \$27.1 billion provided in the last financial year, 2015/16.

"We have safeguarded spending on critical social programmes which (will) largely benefit this segment of the population,"

Minister of Finance and the Public Service, Hon. Audley Shaw said.

He made the comment during his Budget presentation in the House of Representatives on May 12.

Poor relief, youth development, children's homes, places of safety, drugs and medical supplies for the public health system are among the areas that will benefit from the allocation.

The Minister made his presentation under the theme: 'Partnership for Economic Growth'.

## Young Letter Writer Gets Tablet From Prime Minister



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (right) gives words of encouragement to grade six student at Brown's Hall Primary in St. Catherine, Omade Williams (centre), after gifting him with a tablet at the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) on May 11. Omade's grandmother, Veronica Gordon, is at left. The Prime Minister donated devices to Omade and his younger brother, Joel Folkes, following a recent meeting with Omade, who had delivered a letter to OPM in which he had written about himself and his ideas on policies to help Jamaican youth. The Prime Minister urged him to utilise the tablet for schoolwork and assignments.

## 15 Per Cent Salary Increase for Early Childhood Teachers

EARLY CHILDHOOD education teachers are to benefit from a further 15 per cent increase in salary this year.

State Minister of Education, Youth and Information, Hon. Floyd Green, who made the announcement on May 11,

said the pay rise was approved by Cabinet in April.

He noted that the teachers have benefitted from increases of similar amounts over the last two years.

Mr. Green was addressing the launch of

Sagicor Foundation's 2016 Adopt-A-School Programme at the Courtleigh Hotel and Suites in New Kingston.

He said the salary increase to the early childhood teachers is among measures being implemented to strengthen the sector.

"From the Ministry's perspective, we have been trying to increase our monitoring and... the resources that we provide to improve the sector," he said.

He noted that a Four-Year-Old Assessment tool has been developed to evaluate children in institutions across the island.

The tool, which was rolled out on May 9, aims to assess the cognitive development of the students for the early detection and treatment of those with learning disorders.



Minister of State in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information, Hon. Floyd Green, addresses the launch of Sagicor Foundation's 2016 Adopt-A-School Programme on May 10 at the Courtleigh Hotel and Suites in New Kingston.

## NHT to Spend \$23.6 Billion This Year

THE NATIONAL Housing Trust (NHT) is expected to spend \$23.6 billion on housing and other capital projects this year.

This was announced by Minister of Finance and

the Public Service, Hon. Audley Shaw, as he opened the Budget presentation in the House of Representatives on May 12, under the theme: 'Partnership for Economic Growth'.

He said the Trust will provide a mix of houses and residential lots in 42 developments across 11 parishes and is projecting to write new mortgages totalling approximately \$16 billion.

The Finance Minister informed that 9,000 solutions will be completed this year, under the NHT's medium-term housing programme.

The programme aims to boost the housing stock

through a mix of NHT-directed schemes and joint financing projects with private developers.

Meanwhile, Minister Shaw that the Port Authority of Jamaica is to spend \$10 billion on development projects.

Among the projects are: the upgrading of the Ocho Rios Cruise Terminal and Reynolds Pier in St. Ann, and the Montego Bay

Port at a cost of approximately \$5.3 billion; and \$1.9 million to finance the construction of two new Business Processing Outsourcing (BPO) facilities in Montego Bay and Portmore.

## Agro Economic Zone to be Established in Clarendon

THE GOVERNMENT is to establish the country's first Agro Economic Zone in Spring Plain, Clarendon, to process and market produce.

The facility will involve public/private partnership.

Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. J.C. Hutchinson, said the property, which includes a large warehouse, has been leased by an investor, and when it is fully operational, farmers will have a market for their crops.

"We are going to have grading, packaging and processing of all crops," the Minister said at the end of a tour of the Ebony Park and Spring Plain Agro Parks on May 10.



Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. J.C. Hutchinson (3<sup>rd</sup> left), in discussion with (from left): Senior Director, Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA), Percival Shaw; Director, Agro-Investment Corporation (AIC), Charles Reid, and Principal Director for Technical Services at RADA, Peter Thompson. They were at a warehouse in Spring Plain, Clarendon, on May 10.

He said the complex will have a drying facility and an abattoir. He added that fruits and vegetables will be taken to the facility and

made into purée and then marketed.

The Minister said that the investor will be manufacturing potato chips, and

urged farmers to get into production by September, so that by next year, they can sell their produce to the factory.



The Head Office of the National Housing Trust (NHT) located at 4 Park Boulevard in New Kingston.



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