

Gov't Launches Economic Growth Council

THE GOVERNMENT has officially launched its Economic Growth Council (EGC), which will be chaired by businessman, Michael Lee-Chin.

The Council is set up to advise the Government on a framework of proposed initiatives that are expected to yield economic growth.

It will comprise no more than 12 members, from the private and public sectors, and will make quarterly reports on its progress.

Upon adoption of the growth initiatives by the Government, the EGC will monitor and report on their progress.

Speaking at the launch on April 27, Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness said the Council is not "another layer of bureaucracy." He said that it is meant to simplify, clarify and expedite economic growth policies.

The Prime Minister added that the Council will establish policy initiatives, bring investments and ensure they are planned so that they interconnect.

The Council forms part of the Government's drive to bolster economic growth and create jobs for Jamaicans.



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (right) greets Chairman, Economic Growth Council, Michael Lee-Chin, at the official launch of the Council, on April 27, at the Office of the Prime Minister in Kingston.

and create jobs for Jamaicans.

It will develop the initiatives for which we will be held to account and raise public awareness about economic growth, he said.

For his part, Mr. Lee-Chin pledged that the Council will work tirelessly to achieve a gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate of five per cent over the next four years.

Gov't to Spend \$20B on Water Projects in St. Catherine

THE GOVERNMENT is to spend almost J\$20 billion (US\$160 million) to undertake two water improvement projects in St. Catherine this year.

These are the Soapberry wastewater treatment plant, which is to be expanded and improved at a cost of J\$13.5 billion (US\$110 million), and the new Rio Cobre water treatment plant, to be built at a cost of approximately J\$6.1 billion (US\$50 million).

This was disclosed by Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang, during a tour of the multibillion-dollar National Water Commission groundwater recharge system in Innswood, St. Catherine, on April 27.

Speaking with JIS News, Dr. Chang said the Soapberry project is being undertaken to boost the facility's technology, thereby enabling it to recycle the approximately 20 million gallons of wastewater currently being discharged from the plant into the sea.

"We hope to take off all the wastewater in the metropolitan region (incorporating) the Corporate Area and St. Catherine, and then recycle that for irrigation and other purposes," the Minister said.

The Rio Cobre water treatment plant, to be established at Content, St. Catherine, is intended to provide approximately 15 million gallons of potable water per day.



Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang (2nd right), is shown details of the proposed Rio Cobre water treatment plant to be built in Content, St. Catherine, by the National Water Commission's (NWC) Chief Engineer, Garth Jackson (2nd left), during a visit to the project site on April 27. Looking on (from left) are: Engineering Manager, Rural Water Supply Limited (RWSL), Peter Clarke; and NWC President, Mark Barnett.

Country to Take Full Advantage of CARICOM Benefits

THE GOVERNMENT will be appointing a Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Review Commission, aimed at positioning the country to take full advantage of benefits under the organisation.

Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness made the announcement on April 27 at the unveiling ceremony for new equipment installed at International Biscuits Limited (IBL) in St. Andrew.

"I think the time has come for Jamaica to fully assess the opportunities and challenges of CARICOM and to assert ourselves in such a way that Jamaica benefits," he said.

The Prime Minister implored the country's entrepreneurs and members of the business community in general to think of



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (left) presents Machine Operator at International Biscuits Limited (IBL), Ian Thompson, with an award of appreciation for his gallantry in risking his life to protect the assets of the company when he discovered a fire at the facility. The presentation was made on April 27 during the unveiling ceremony for new factory equipment at the IBL facility in St. Andrew.

CARICOM "as our market, and we are going to stake our claim in our market."

He pledged that the Government will become even more "assertive in how we ensure that our entrepreneurs are able to access the common markets of CARICOM."

Mr. Holness advised business persons, and entrepreneurs in particular "to take action" in seizing those marketing opportunities within CARICOM, and not to be hampered by the excuse that Jamaican companies are unable to compete due to lack of efficiency.

Youth Ministry to Launch National Campaign in May

THE MINISTRY of Education, Youth and Information is to launch a national campaign 'Our Children Jamaica' in May, to underscore the Government's commitment to the protection of children.

Minister of State in the Ministry, Hon. Floyd Green, made the disclosure at a JIS 'Think Tank' on April 27.

"There is no doubt that for the Government, children are our number one priority. So for Child's Month (May), we will be outlining a number of programmes and initiatives which will aim to coalesce our partners such as the National Child Month Committee (NMC), the Child Development Agency (CDA) and the Office of the Children Registry (OCR), around



State Minister in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information, Hon. Floyd Green, addressing a JIS 'Think Tank' on April 27.

that central concept that our children, health, education, parenting and protection are important," he said.

Meanwhile, Chief Executive Officer of the CDA, Rosalee Gage-Grey, said

"There is no doubt that for the Government, children are our number one priority."

the main focus of the agency will be the over 50 residential childcare facilities.

"During the Month, we will launch 'CDA Cares' initiative, which is a voluntary corps, where we will solicit the general public to apply, register and get certified as volunteers to provide their time and talent in these residential care facilities," she said.

Child Month 2016 will be observed under the theme: 'Healthy Children Build a Stronger Nation'.



Read Across Jamaica Day to be Celebrated on May 3



Governor-General, His Excellency the Most Hon. Sir Patrick Allen (left), presents President of the Jamaica Teachers' Association (JTA), Norman Allen, with the Proclamation declaring May 3 as Read Across Jamaica Day 2016 during a ceremony held at King's House on April 28. The annual event is an initiative of the JTA and forms part of activities for Education Week held from May 1 to 5.



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