

Jamaica Achieves All Targets in IMF Review

JAMAICA IS assured of an additional US\$180 million from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) if needed, having met all quantitative targets and structural benchmarks in the second review.

The review was conducted under its Precautionary Stand-by Arrangement (PSBA) with the multilateral institution, for the period up to June 30, 2017.

Head of the IMF's Mission to Jamaica, which conducted the review over the past two weeks, Dr. Uma Ramakrishnan, says the provision, subject to the IMF Executive Board's approval at its meeting scheduled for October, will bring the total amount of funds which Jamaica can access to approximately US\$790 million.

She was speaking at a joint Government of Jamaica/IMF press conference at the Office of the Prime Minister on September 14.

Dr. Ramakrishnan noted that Jamaica's economic programme continues to deliver strong results which have been fuelling significant business and consumer



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (centre) having an exchange with journalists during a press conference held at the Office of the Prime Minister on September 14. Others (from left) are: International Monetary Fund (IMF) Resident Representative in Jamaica, Dr. Constant Lonkeng Nguouana; Head of the IMF Mission to Jamaica which conducted the review, Dr. Uma Ramakrishnan; Finance and the Public Service Minister, Hon. Audley Shaw; and Bank of Jamaica Governor, Brian Wynter.

confidence and increased job creation.

She stated that growth for the 2017/18 fiscal year is projected to be approximately 1.6 per cent.

"In the medium term, we do expect growth to be about 2.5 to three per cent as Jamaica reaps the dividends

from higher investment and higher productivity from all of the reforms that are currently ongoing," she added.

In his remarks, Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness said Jamaica, with support from the IMF and other multilateral partners, has demonstrated "incredible

and unbroken resolve" in its economic reform agenda.

"We have many successes of which we can be proud; however, much remains to be done. Now is the time to recommit ourselves to the task at hand... of ensuring that we secure for future generations a Jamaica that is economically independent and can, one day, be a net contributor to the international community," he said.

Zones Will be Carefully Assessed to Determine Intervention Needs – Sweeney

COMMUNITIES THAT are declared Zones of Special Operations (ZOSOs) will be carefully assessed to determine the needs and the extent of services to be provided for residents.

Deputy Chairman of the Zones of Special Operations (ZOSO) Social Intervention Committee, Omar Sweeney, said the support will enable persons to acquire critical documents such as birth certificate and national identification (ID), health and other services. Infrastructure needs, including roads and sanitation will also be addressed.

This, he stated, is in keeping with the clear, hold and build strategy, aimed at containing crime while safeguarding the rights of citizens and promoting sustainable community development.

Mr. Sweeney told JIS NEWS that the assessments and eventual implementation of social interventions will be spearheaded by the Committee in collaboration with a wide cross-section of stakeholders, who will be mobilised at the



Deputy Chairman, Zones of Special Operations Social Intervention Committee and Managing Director, Jamaica Social Investment Fund, Omar Sweeney

national and community levels.

He said the collaboration is expected to better enable the Government to deliver the requisite services that meet the needs of persons in areas declared ZOSOs.

Mr. Sweeney expressed confidence that long-term positive outcomes such as community empowerment and development as well as reduced crime and violence, will materialise and redound to the benefit of the residents and country in general.

JA to Receive Over \$34B in Additional IDB Support

JAMAICA IS poised to benefit from over \$34 billion (US\$268 million) in additional loan support from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), which will serve to boost the Government's growth agenda.

Finance and the Public Service Minister, Hon. Audley Shaw, said the support, which is earmarked for allocation over the next 12 months, will primarily fund the public sector transformation and financial system reform programmes.

"We can't get growth unless we... (have) an efficient, transformative and responsive public sector that is going to help in getting things done expeditiously," he said.

The Minister was speaking at a recent IDB loan agreement signing



Finance and the Public Service Minister, Hon. Audley Shaw

for the provision of \$2.56 billion (US\$20 million) for the Government's Credit Enhancement Facility for Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, at the Ministry's offices in Kingston.

He said the provisions are indicative of the IDB's ongoing programme of support for Jamaica.

He noted that the country also benefitted from a commitment of approximately \$65 billion (US\$500 million) from the IDB under the US\$932.3 million four-year Extended Fund Facility with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which concluded last year and was replaced by a three-year US\$1.64 billion precautionary stand-by agreement.

"I am pleased that the IDB continues to have a programme of support that remains very strong. The Government welcomes the continued invaluable contribution of the IDB aimed at paving the way for more sustained and inclusive growth," he added.

Security Programme Oversight Committee Launched

THE GOVERNMENT is aiming to improve delivery on its policies and strategies to enhance the safety and security of citizens, with the launch of a 15-member Security Programme Oversight Committee (SECURIPOC).

The Committee, which comprises a wide cross-section of stakeholders in the public and private sectors, academia and civil society, was officially launched at a ceremony at the Oxford Road offices of the Ministry of National Security on September 14.

Portfolio Minister, Hon. Robert Montague, informed that the Committee has been set up to ensure that the policies, targets and objectives of the Ministry's various departments and agencies "are actually implemented".

"All the agencies have their targets and their work plans that are collated and submitted, and this committee's job is to ensure that all these targets within the national security architecture are met," he said.



Minister of National Security, Hon. Robert Montague (right), highlights a point to executives of the newly formed Security Programme Oversight Committee (SECURIPOC), Deputy Chair, Doreen Frankson (left), and Chairman, Peter Moses, at the Oxford Road offices of the Ministry of National Security on September 14.

As outlined in the Terms of Reference, SECURIPOC will monitor the compliance and progress of the departments and agencies of the Ministry of National Security in relation to implementation of their key performance indicators, and make recommendations, as necessary.

SECURIPOC will focus on implementation and gaps, and advise the

Minister on the recommended course of action to advance implementation efforts.

The Committee is expected to meet once every two months and the subcommittees will meet more often. The agencies will put forward quarterly work plans, and agency heads will be invited to meetings from time to time.

Labour Market Information System Facilitates Jobs for 2,000 Persons

SOME 2,000 persons have been successfully placed in employment through the Ministry of Labour and Social Security's Labour Market Information System (LMIS) since 2013, when the website was enhanced and redeployed.

Additionally, more than 3,700 vacancies were identified and 6,000 individuals referred for employment.

Through the LMIS, employers can post job openings and search for matching candidates, while jobseekers can post résumés and apply for jobs online.

The LMIS also provides a comprehensive database with indicators on the economy; the population of the labour



Minister of Labour and Social Security, Hon. Shahine Robinson

force; employment levels; educational levels of persons in the labour force; education and training, and the emergence and contraction of industries and sectors within the economy.

Portfolio Minister, Hon. Shahine Robinson, said the Ministry's Electronic Labour Exchange

Department has, over the years, formalised a series of partnerships which has resulted in not only improved awareness, but also increased access to the system for both employers and jobseekers.

"In a fulsome way, it is providing employers and all other labour market actors with the relevant information for making important decisions in respect of critical hiring; and career and educational programme decisions, in addition to addressing the mismatch between skills and jobs," she said at a ceremony hosted for Inter-American Development Bank Executive Vice-President, Julie Katzman, who visited the Ministry recently.

'Talk Di Truth' Public Education Campaign Launched



Minister of Health, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton (left), interacts with Campion College sixth formers at the launch of the National Council on Drug Abuse (NCDA) 'Talk Di Truth' ganja public education campaign for students on September 12 at the Terra Nova Hotel.