

# Gov't Committed to Protecting Human Rights – PM

**PRIME MINISTER** the Most Hon. Andrew Holness has reiterated the Government's commitment to protect the human rights of Jamaicans and to reduce the country's crime rate.

Mr. Holness noted that representatives from Amnesty International were in the island recently, and that he reassured them "we are not going to, in any way, change the course that we are on in terms of the maintenance of human rights".

He was speaking at the launch of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, held at the Office of the Prime Minister on November 24.

"Though crime is a challenge, our response will not be with more violence. Law and order, decency and respect for our citizens



**Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (left), greets sixth-form student, Ardenne High School, Joelle Notice (right), during the launch of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, at the Office of the Prime Minister in Kingston, on November 24. At centre is teacher, Ardenne High School, Caniggia Palmer.**

will overcome criminality in this country and the Government is committed to that path," the Prime Minister said.

Mr. Holness further noted that a comprehensive programme is being developed to address the issue of violence in the society.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister condemned acts of violence against children, adding that the Government remains resolute in protecting and promoting their rights.

Mr. Holness said children should not live in fear – fear for themselves, siblings, parents or caregivers. On July 12, this year, Jamaica became a Pathfinder country, joining the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children with a commitment to end the abuse, exploitation and all forms of violence against children.

"We are prepared to strengthen legislation to protect children from all forms of violence and exploitation by bringing all sectors together in a movement to end violence," the Prime Minister asserted.

## Moody's Upgrades Jamaica's Credit Rating

**MINISTER OF Finance and the Public Service, Hon. Audley Shaw** has welcomed Moody's Investors Service upgrade of Jamaica's credit rating.

The international rating agency has revised its outlook on the economy from positive to stable.

"I welcome this news which represents an endorsement of the continued progress made by Jamaica in sound economic management and reduction of its public debt," Mr. Shaw said in a release from the Ministry.

The Finance Minister said under the newly-approved Three-Year Stand-by Arrangement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Government remains firmly committed to fiscal consolidation aimed at further reducing its public debt burden, and to strengthening competitiveness and accelerating private sector-led growth through deep structural reforms.

"These actions will further strengthen Jamaica's credit rating in the inter-



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

national capital market," Mr. Shaw explained.

Moody's stated that the decrease in oil prices has also facilitated a reduction in inflation to historically low levels.

This, combined with fiscal consolidation, has reduced Jamaica's external vulnerability, narrowing the current account deficit and attracting Foreign Direct Investment inflows. The release further noted that the Government is resolute in its thrust to improve the overall economic fundamentals.

## Sixteen Outstanding Youth Leaders Selected for YACJ

SIXTEEN OUTSTANDING youth leaders have been selected for the Youth Advisory Council of Jamaica (YACJ), which has been formed to facilitate youth involvement in the policy development and programming actions of the Government.

Speaking at the installation ceremony of the leaders, at the Office of the Prime Minister on November 22, Prime Minister, the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, said young people must be given full and equal partnership in the decision-

making process of Government, so that the outlook of the future is more reflective of the world in which they reside.

"This is something that we believe in firmly. I strongly believe that the youth of Jamaica must be

at the centre of Jamaica's development plans if we are to secure the nation's prosperity," he said.

Mr. Holness emphasised that the installation of the leaders to the YACJ represents a key national development strategy.

"They are the change agents and need to play a direct role in shaping and influencing the policies that will affect them," the Prime Minister said.

The YACJ is being coordinated with the intent of facilitating dialogue between young people and all ministries, departments and agencies.

It is expected that for the 2016-2017 period, the Council will focus on achieving its objectives in relation to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information as well as its departments and agencies.



**Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (centre); Education, Youth and Information Minister, Senator the Hon. Ruel Reid (2<sup>nd</sup> right), and State Minister in the Education, Youth and Information Ministry, Hon. Floyd Green (3<sup>rd</sup> left), with the 16 members of the Youth Advisory Council of Jamaica (YACJ), at the installation ceremony, held at the Office of the Prime Minister on November 22. At right (2<sup>nd</sup> row), is State Minister in the Ministry of National Security, Senator the Hon. Parnell Charles Jr.**

## Students Receive Tablets



**Science, Energy and Technology Minister, Dr. the Hon. Andrew Wheatley (centre), with students who were successful in the 2016 sitting of the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate examinations and who were presented with tablets at the Ministry's New Kingston office on November 23. They are children of employees of the Ministry.**

## Gov't Implementing Policy to Ease Long Wait for Drugs

THE GOVERNMENT is implementing a policy to ease the long wait to fill prescriptions obtained from state run facilities.

The proposed arrangement will involve a public/private partnership in which a number of private pharmacies will be engaged through a pilot project, to supply medication to persons with prescriptions from Government hospitals and clinics.

"Designated pharmacies contracted to provide the service will give persons choices. You will have more distribution points, and that is important, because when someone is sick and wants a solution, they shouldn't have to



**Minister of Health, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton**

wait four and five hours in the sun to get drugs," the Minister said.

Dr. Tufton, was addressing the opening of a Drug Serv Pharmacy at the Kitson Town Health

**"Designated pharmacies contracted to provide the service will give persons choices."**

Centre, in St. Catherine, on November 23.

He added that due to the long wait to get drugs some persons do not treat their illnesses.

The Kitson Town Health Centre, which caters to some 5,000 persons annually, will be expanded early next year to offer dental, optical, screening and other services. The expansion is to cost some \$40 million.

## \$1B Upgrading of Appleton Attraction a Boost

**MINISTER OF Tourism, Hon. Edmund Bartlett,** says the nearly \$1 billion renovation work to be carried out at the Appleton Estate Rum attraction in Siloah, St. Elizabeth, will significantly boost tourist arrivals on the south coast.

He said the investment, which will include a first-class restaurant showcasing the finest in Jamaican cuisine, will enable the facility to become "the centrepiece" of the Ministry's gastro-tourism push in the region.

"This is a very lucrative market where tourists spend billions of dollars worldwide annually. We feel the south coast is a prime area for this kind of tourism and we are going to do everything to make it work," Mr. Bartlett added, noting that the area is also



**Minister of Tourism Hon. Edmund Bartlett**

an attractive option for adventure seekers.

Speaking in an interview with JIS News, the Tourism Minister said the investment by J. Wray & Nephew and its parent company, Gruppo Campari, could bring in excess of 200,000 visitors to the

attraction annually, creating employment and revenue opportunities for residents.

Mr. Bartlett said the investment is timely and coincides with other developments planned for the region, including the reintroduction of rail service.

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