



GOVERNMENT OF JAMAICA



Presented by:  
Hon. Desmond McKenzie, CD, MP, JP  
Minister of Local Government  
& Community Development

**SECTORAL  
PRESENTATION**  
2017-2018

**Transforming Local Government  
for National Prosperity**  
***Local Government 2.0***

**GORDON HOUSE | Wednesday, April 19, 2017**



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*M*r. Speaker...

- Acknowledgments: Family, Ministry, Constituency, etc.
- I want to thank the Most Honourable Prime Minister for giving me the opportunity of announcing to the country, Nomination Day and the date of Local Government Elections 2016. It was a special experience, Mr. Speaker, and it showed the high regard that is held by the Prime Minister, and Chairman of the Cabinet, for Local Government. The outcome on the night of Monday, November 28, is one that I will always remember, and one that I know that others will never forget. Last year, in this House, I argued for the unified leadership of central and local government, to deliver **prosperity** to Jamaica. I say thanks once again to the people of Jamaica, for giving us the opportunity to make it happen.
- Mr. Speaker, the role of the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development is widely misunderstood. Many persons, including even some within the organs of local government, believe that its functions barely go beyond the moving of Resolutions for the cleaning of drains.
- However, every aspect of life in the country requires the regulatory or project input of Local Government. Development approvals for hotels, general business and housing projects large and small require the input of Local Government.
- Mr. Speaker, **2,560 new construction applications were approved between April and December 2016, at an investment value of J\$39 billion. This also represents over 51,000 indirect jobs within the construction industry.** All major pillars of the economy depend on the efficient participation of local government.
- Local Government contributes to the employment objectives of the Administration through the construction of and repairs to Infirmaries, Drop-in Centres, and other infrastructure, minor road construction, repair and minor water supplies.

It contributes to employment and **prosperity** through the entrepreneurship initiatives of the Social Development Commission (SDC).

- This Ministry also contributes to national security through the enforcement of public order by the **Municipal Police**.
- These are just some of the reasons, Mr. Speaker, why the Economic Growth Council has assessed this Ministry as having the third most critical contribution to make, to Jamaica achieving at least 5% growth per annum, beginning in 2020. This is also why the Ministry has embarked on an aggressive drive to transform Local Government from the inside out, beginning with the people who work in and through the system...the Councillors and administrative staff in the Local Authorities.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT 2.0

- We initiated a programme of five (5), two-day **Regional Orientations for Councillors**, which started in January this year through to the end of February. Participants were exposed to the requirements for the effective implementation of their jobs through presentations from the Contractor-General himself, Mr. Dirk Harrison, the Ministry of Finance & the Public Service, Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF), Association of Local Government Authorities of Jamaica among others.
- I must say that the response of the Councillors was over-



Contractor General, Dirk Harrison, making his presentation at the first session of the Regional Sensitization for Elected Local Government Officials. The two-day session was held at the Knutsford Court Hotel on January 4th and 5th 2017.

whelmingly positive, Mr. Speaker. There is clear buy-in to our efforts to transform local government. Special meetings were held with Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and Chief Engineering Officers, Planners, Disaster Co-ordinators and Poor Relief Administrators since the start of this year and these will continue. The next series of Regional Orientations will involve the **administrative staff** of the Municipal Corporations.

- Mr. Speaker, **much has been said about placing local government in the Constitution, but little about empowerment by giving it institutional value.** That is why we are pursuing an initiative with the Management Institute for National Development (MIND) to make local government a full, two-year programme of study that anyone, including the elected and administrative practitioners in the system, can study and be certified in.
- Our efforts have now attracted international support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) which has formally indicated its readiness to assist. **This project is intended to develop local government to its full potential, and to create lasting institutional memory. Personnel from four Municipal Corporations - St. Thomas, Portmore, Kingston & St. Andrew and St. Catherine - will form the pilot cohort of the programme. We are fine-tuning this programme for optimum delivery, and I will provide greater detail in due course.**
- Mr. Speaker, we are not just improving Local Government, **we are creating Local Government 2.0...a transformational, idea-driven, forward-thinking, problem-solving Local Government.**
- As promised last year, we established a **Land Divestment Committee**, and commenced **Risk-Based Auditing and Training** as at August 2016. Eleven (11) of the fourteen (14) Municipal Corporations have been audited, Mr. Speaker, and the duties of the Auditors in the Local Authorities have been expanded to include risk-based activities. This will ensure that, through the quarterly reports they are required to submit, the Ministry can be more proactive in addressing all compliance matters.

- The **Land Divestment Committee** was established in keeping with the Policy Framework and Procedures Manual for the Divestment of Government Owned Lands, 2015. **The lands owned by the Municipal Corporations are critical to their revenue expansion.**
- It is estimated for example, Mr. Speaker, that the Bogue lands in Montego Bay can earn at least J\$40 million for the St. James Municipal Corporation through commercial lease arrangements. Municipal Corporations own more than 2,500 parcels of land island-wide, and that is not the total figure. The Local Authorities own lands that they do not even know about. We are working with them and other crucial entities such as the National Land Agency to establish a full accounting of all their lands.

## **NEW REGIME OF SERVICE FINANCING FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS**

- **Transforming local government is also about empowering elected representatives to be more responsive to the people in their Divisions.** For many years, Councillors have been able to do little more than comfort their constituents, in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. This is why tangible changes are being made starting this year, to give them the financial tools to be effective: **For the first time, funding will be dedicated to elected representatives to carry out meaningful change at the Divisional level.**

I wish to announce that:

- **J\$400 million will be made available for Indigent Housing, Social Assistance, Education and Funeral Grants.**
- **J\$115 million will be devoted to a special fund to assist Councillors to respond decisively to victims of fire in their Divisions, and there will also be allocations to Councillors to assist with the establishment of official offices in their Divisions.**

- **We will also provide all Councillors and the Mayor of Portmore with a tablet to enhance the execution of their duties.**
- **Let me break it down, Mr. Speaker. Each Councillor will be able to access J\$500,000 per year, to provide needy constituents with Housing Assistance Grants.**
- **J\$90 million will be made available to care for those who live in indigent houses across Jamaica.**
- **An additional J\$1.7 million will be made available to each Local Authority to assist with Educational Grants.**
- **An additional J\$1.5 million will be made available to each Local Authority for the provision of Funeral Grants.**
- **There are homes that take in and care for homeless persons, Mr. Speaker. We are going to provide financial assistance to these homes, in amounts relative to their size and the number of people they serve.**
- **The processing of applications for all these benefits will be managed by the Poor Relief Departments of the Municipal Corporations, to ensure that all verification and compliance requirements are adhered to.**
- **Mr. Speaker, this is a new day in Local Government.** I have been in the system for 39 years, and I know the challenges elected and administrative officials face. In meeting with them since my appointment as Minister, I have heard the cry across the political divide, for something new and lasting to happen in Local Government.
- **It is happening now, Mr. Speaker.** The Councillors are seeing the change. The staff of the Local Authorities are seeing the change. There are Members of Parliament who served in Local Government, such as the Member from South-Western St. Andrew, the Minister of Science, Energy and Technology and the Member from

North Western Clarendon. These changes will make the MP's lives easier, as you work with your Councillors to address peoples' needs. **Mr. Speaker, we promised change, we are delivering change, and change will continue.**

- We are determined over time to transform the physical spaces in which the elected and administrative officials work, so they can become true places of service to the public, as well as modern symbols of civic pride. In this regard, work will begin shortly on a new **Portmore Municipal Council Building**. Cabinet has approved this project, at a cost of J\$90 million.
- I will be signing the performance agreement shortly with the Contractor, HDB Construction Company.
- Work on the **Westmoreland Municipal Corporation** building continues. I am disappointed that this project is not yet finished, but at this time, the works are estimated to be 80% complete, at a cost of J\$75 million. It is hoped, Mr. Speaker, that this project will be complete by the end of this month. We carried out retrofitting works at the Trelawny and St. Mary Municipal Buildings, Mr. Speaker, and we are considering the commencement of works at the Municipal Buildings in St. Thomas and in St. Ann. However, if we are restricted by the flow of funds, full attention will be given to the **St. Thomas** project.
- I mention the flow of funds, because of our determination to transform Local Government while being fiscally responsible. Mr. Speaker, I want this honourable House and all of Jamaica to know, that the vast majority of the projects we carried out in 2016/2017, and the ones we will implement in 2017/2018, were financed through the Equalization Fund. We have not been a financial millstone around the neck of central Government. Local Government in this Administration is responsible government.
- Mr. Speaker, the orderly development of the built environment, as well as economic growth and development, will be enhanced by the **Building Bill 2017** which is already laid in the House.

- I will be piloting this critical Bill at the end of the Sectoral Debate. This is a vital legislative tool for the Local Authorities to drive infrastructural expansion and safety, as they are empowered as **Local Building Authorities** in their respective jurisdictions. The Bill that I will pilot reflects the inputs of various sector interests, who we took the time to consult with before bringing it to the House.
- This is a time of profound change, Mr. Speaker. This Administration is making transformational interventions in the country and the society, and this Ministry is no different. I have advised the Local Authorities that this is the year that they will have to begin to earn their keep and to demonstrate the worth of their autonomy. This year, the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development will operate with J\$1.9 Billion less than it did in the last financial year. But we are undaunted, Mr. Speaker, because we are confident that the **collection of outstanding Property Taxes and Trade Licence fees will more than replace this amount. Moreover, I have advised the Local Authorities that our mission this year, is to retrieve J\$13 Billion in outstanding taxes, and we are on a concerted drive to make this happen.**

## **PROPERTY TAXES/TRADE LICENCES FEES**

- The Property Tax collections for the financial year just ended are unprecedented, Mr. Speaker.
- **The target of J\$7.26 billion was exceeded by J\$350 million, which means that a total of J\$7.61 billion was collected for Financial Year 2016/2017.**
- Mr. Speaker, there is a greater challenge with regard to **Trade Licence fees**, and we have been having discussions with Tax Administration Jamaica about this.
- We are literally going out to collect the taxes, Mr. Speaker, through the use of two Mobile Units which have already been proven effective. **For February and March, Mr. Speaker, J\$42.9 million was collected through these mobile units.** These amounts do not include cash deposits, as the Units are not yet retrofitted to

collect these. We are currently working to ensure that cash can be collected by the Units, as we have been told by many taxpayers, and by the leadership of the Local Authorities that this will make their efforts at compliance far easier.



One of the two Property Tax Mobile Units procured by the Ministry.

- I must say that the public response to the Mobile Units has been overwhelmingly positive, and we are considering the procurement of additional Mobile Units. Property owners are obliged to pay their Property Taxes, and the duty of the Government is not just to deliver the services that the taxes will provide, but to make tax collection as simple and as painless as possible. **Ease of revenue collection is a standard of the Ease of Doing Business in any country**, and this Ministry is determined to make the processes as seamless as possible.
- Continuous public education will also be a key feature of the tax compliance campaign, and we will be holding a series of **Town Hall Meetings** right across the island, to sensitize our people, and answer their questions.
- The first will be held in St. Elizabeth, which has the lowest levels of Property Tax collection, on a date to be announced. We will be moving next to Clarendon and then on to Manchester, Mr. Speaker.

## SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMME – INFIRMARIES, DROP-IN CENTRES, BOARD OF SUPERVISION

- Last year, I committed to the country in this Honourable House that infrastructure changes would take place at the **Manchester** and **Portland** Infirmaries, at a cost of J\$135 million. I can report that works valued at approximately J\$15 million have started at the Male Ward at the **Portland** Infirmary. In relation to the **Manchester** Infirmary, Mr. Speaker, works are being carried out on a medical station at the facility, at a cost of J\$15 million.



Continued work being done on the Medical Station at the Manchester Infirmary.

- The **Trelawny Infirmary** also benefited from infrastructural improvements to the tune of J\$5 million. These involved changes to the Male Ward, inclusive of roof repairs, electrical works and general repairs. These works created space in another building on the Infirmary compound, to house patients from the Cornwall Regional Hospital.

- We had hoped to implement improvements to the Infirmary in **St. Elizabeth**. However, it was necessary to deal with the pressing infrastructure needs at the **St. James Infirmary**, Mr. Speaker. In fact, it became necessary to use the funds initially devoted to St. Elizabeth for this purpose. The works at St. James involve the construction of a Male and Female Ward to house 50 residents, at a cost of J\$40 million.
- The Ministry will be spending J\$30 million of this amount, with the remainder coming from the St. James Municipal Corporation, which has been working hard to raise money for the project.
- **I want to assure the St. Elizabeth Municipal Corporation that the Infirmary works will be done this fiscal year. Additionally, work will be done at the Matrons' Quarters at the Westmoreland Infirmary, at a projected cost of J\$20 million.**
- It is worth noting, Mr. Speaker, that in addition to the improvement of the country's Infirmary infrastructure, **which now houses 1,420 residents (834 men, 586 women), each construction project generates employment for at least 300 people in the community.**
- **Drop-In Centres** are vital relief points for our homeless persons, Mr. Speaker. We committed to building one in **Hanover** last year, and that has started. We have been challenged in constructing the other Drop-In Centre in **St. Ann**, as a suitable location has not yet been secured.
- We are working on this, and for this year, **two new Drop-In Centres will be built in St. Mary and in St. Elizabeth, at a cost of J\$24 million.**
- Mr. Speaker, all these initiatives form part of the Ministry's **Social Protection** responsibility, and this is traditionally discharged by the **Board of Supervision for the Relief of the Poor in Jamaica**. We have undertaken a comprehensive review of the effectiveness of this Agency, in the context of the Poor Relief Act, 1886

under which it operates, its duties in relation to those performed by the Local Authorities, and also, in the context of the ***Public Sector Master Rationalisation Plan for Restructuring of Ministries, Departments and Agencies***.

- While more detail will be provided in due course, Mr. Speaker, I wish to announce our intention to wind up the operations of the Board of Supervision, and to integrate its functions and personnel into the central Ministry, as we seek to create a more efficient public sector.

## MARKET INFRASTRUCTURE

- Last year, I indicated that works would take place at the Port Maria, Clarks Town and Buff Bay Markets. I can report, Mr. Speaker, that Phase One of the **Clarks Town Market** in Trelawny is almost complete. This phase involves earthworks, perimeter fencing, sanitary conveniences, asphaltic paving and the construction of parking bays for the Transportation Centre at the facility.
- The works were implemented at a cost of J\$6 million, and the project continues. This year, works will be carried out at the Market, to the tune of J\$20 million.
- We had expected to commence works at the **Port Maria Market** in St. Mary last year, Mr. Speaker. This did not materialize, as the bidders for the project did not meet the required standard, and so it had to be retendered, with a revised scope of works. We expect to move forward with the project this year.



Minister Desmond McKenzie speaking with a vendor at the Buff Bay Market while His Worship, Mayor Paul Thompson looks on.

- We also had to revise the scope of works for the **Buff Bay Market** in Portland, which we intended to commence in the last fiscal year. We intend to proceed this year, after meeting with stakeholders on the ground and obtaining their feedback.
- Additionally, emphasis will be placed on works at **Linstead Market** in St. Catherine, **Black River Market** in St. Elizabeth, and **Charles Gordon Market** in St. James, at a combined cost of **J\$55 million**.

## ROADS, DRAINS, BURIAL SPACES

- We are responsible for repairing and rehabilitating **parochial roads**, Mr. Speaker. We financed *repairs* to 100 kilometers of road, and *rehabilitation* works to 12 kilometres of roadway. Additionally, over J\$400 million was spent on drain cleaning and repair, to mitigate against flooding. However, we recognize the great need for more extensive repairs to the road network, and I will be announcing in due course, a comprehensive programme to address this.
- I also want to acknowledge the shortage of **burial spaces** in parts of the country, including St. Catherine. **We are working with the St. Catherine Municipal Corporation, Mr. Speaker, to develop a modern multi-purpose civic facility, at a 25-acre site at Church Pen.** I want to recognize the work of the Municipal Corporation, which has already spent approximately J\$75 million to develop an access road to the facility, to develop a Chapel and to install perimeter fencing. It is estimated, Mr. Speaker, **that the interment ratio is 50,000 grave spaces to every 5 acres of land**, and the intention is to develop the property, five acres at a time. It is expected that approximately J\$30 million will be spent this year on the project.

## STREETLIGHTS PROGRAMME

- An efficient network of **streetlights** is a critical part of the national security infrastructure of the country. I advised the country last year that this Administration is unhappy about the state of this vital service. This Ministry pays the Jamaica Public Service Company from Property Tax inflows, and, over the last financial year, turned over one billion and ninety-four million dollars (J\$1,094,543,154) to the Company.

- The bill for this period was J\$2.88 billion. The reality, Mr. Speaker, is that between the addition of GCT to payments, and balances brought forward from previous financial years, we still have an outstanding debt of J\$5.4 billion.
- As I had promised in this House last year, we have been having a series of discussions with JPSCo, and have come to a number of agreements, inclusive of:
  1. A payment plan that will liquidate the debt,
  2. Improved communication with and accountability to the Local Authorities by JPSCo., and
  3. A commitment to the Schedule for the implementation of the Smart LED Streetlight System. The Schedule is specified in the Electricity License 2016, and the system will significantly decrease the national bill for streetlights, while improving the quality of public lighting across the country.
- **We will also be assisting the Local Authorities to undertake a comprehensive night audit of all streetlights.** This will end the question of the exact number of working streetlights across the country, and provide employment for people at the same time.
- I will have more to say to the country about these and connected matters in very short order, Mr. Speaker.

## **NATIONAL SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY**

- Earnest efforts have started to resolve the critical shortages in the Agency's garbage collection fleet. As is known, Mr. Speaker, 17 Compactor units were ordered in the 2015/16 financial year. Six units were delivered in February this year and have been cleared.



One of the six Compactor Units handed over to the NSWMA in April of this year.

- Another three are expected this month, while the remaining eight units are expected to be here by July this year.
- I must say again, profound thanks to the Government of Japan, for donating two tipper trucks, which were commissioned into service in January.



The two Tipper Trucks donated to the NSWMA by the Government of Japan.

- An additional 11 compactor units were procured from Kingston Industrial Agency and are also expected to arrive in the island in July. This purchase was financed from the 2016/2017 budget.

- This year, Mr. Speaker, **the NSWMA will procure 11 new units. The Agency will also receive 2 compactor units from the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF) this financial year, through the World Bank/JSIF Integrated Community Development Project.**
- This addition of 30 collection units to the NSWMA's fleet will increase its capacity to collect more residential waste, and reduce the operational pressure on existing units by 50%. This year, the NSWMA is expected to collect 720,000 tonnes of solid waste island-wide. The Agency will be able to significantly improve garbage collection.
- Mr. Speaker, I have stated that amendments have been made to the Regulations to the NSWMA Act, to more effectively deal with littering. Cabinet has accepted the revised Regulations, and made specific recommendations for even greater effectiveness. I will further advise the country at the end of this exercise.
- I must acknowledge the staff of the NSWMA. They have risen to the challenges of service with tremendous enthusiasm and commitment. I am also proud of the leadership of the Agency, for continuing to emphasize compliance and improved governance.
- Mr. Speaker, the Agency's drive to deliver long outstanding financial information, has resulted in the drafts of audited financial statements from 2007/2008 to 2012/2013 being completed and submitted for review.
- An audit of the use of fuel and related matters at the Agency has been completed, Mr. Speaker, and the report is now in the hands of the police. **We are ensuring that the NSWMA operates in an efficient and legitimate way.**
- Mr. Speaker, the country is aware of the Administration's plans to divest the operations of Disposal Sites from the NSWMA, and ultimately return the Agency to a regulatory role.

- An Enterprise Team was created to develop a **three-phase, Integrated Solid Waste Management system, and propose the most efficient path to privatising the NSWMA's operations.** Special emphasis was placed on optimising waste management, including recycling, waste-to-energy, and sanitary landfills.
- The Team first met in November 2016, and reviewed the draft Terms of Reference for the prefeasibility study Consultant, which was prepared by the Development Bank of Jamaica (DBJ). The DBJ also engaged the World Bank for financial and technical assistance on behalf of the Ministry, and obtained a Grant of US\$98,300 to facilitate the pre-feasibility study.
- Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, **the pre-feasibility phase, (Phase 1) is now in progress.** This includes the development of a Solid Waste Management System Analysis, a Financial Analysis and Tariff Study, a Legal Analysis and an Implementation Plan. The Consultant submitted initial findings to the Enterprise Team for review in March.
- Since then, a draft report on institutional strategies for various solid waste management activities, was submitted earlier this month to the Ministry and related stakeholders for review.
- I will keep the country advised about the implementation of this important project, Mr. Speaker.

## **OFFICE OF DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

- The Agency had a relatively quiet year, Mr. Speaker, which was interrupted most recently, by the noxious fumes incident at the Cornwall Regional Hospital. Before that, the Agency paid full attention to the threat of Hurricane Matthew in October.
- As I had indicated to the House last year, there is to be a review of the hurricane preparation and response, to include the rationalization of Shelter Management and Operations, which will involve the Local Authorities and the Social Development

Commission. The Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM) continues to be a vital partner in the response network to disasters in the Caribbean, and was significantly involved in assisting our brethren in Haiti last year, when Matthew devastated the country.

- I want to thank the men and women of the Agency for their continued commitment to service, and to encourage them as they proceed to implement the major tasks for this year. These include the first phase of the **Improvement in Emergency Communication for Jamaica Project**, which is jointly funded by the Governments of Jamaica and Japan.
- I must say thanks to the Japanese Government for providing a Grant of 1.399 billion Yen (US \$12.6 million). The project agreement was signed by the Minister of Finance and myself earlier this month (April 6), along with His Excellency the Ambassador of Japan to Jamaica and representatives of the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA).



(from left) Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie, Minister of Finance and the Public Service, Hon. Audley Shaw and Japan's Ambassador to Jamaica, His Excellency Masanori Nakano holding the signed copies of the grant agreement for the provision of J\$1.6 billion (¥1.39 billion/US\$12.58 million) by the Government of Japan to fund the implementation of Jamaica's 'Improvement of Emergency Communication System Project. Japan's International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Resident Representative in Jamaica, Kenji Tobita looks on.

- This 23-month project will among other things, develop a national emergency communication system, to ensure real-time information flow between critical Agencies of government and volunteers;
- Allow emergency response Agencies and responders to communicate through a common wireless platform;
- Develop a National Early Warning System, and establish a nationwide digital radio communication system.
- As the House is aware, Mr. Speaker, the **Disaster Risk Management Act** provides for a Disaster Fund. **I wish to advise that the value of the Fund is now J\$350 million,** and we will continue working with the Ministry of Finance to increase it.

## JAMAICA FIRE BRIGADE

- Mr. Speaker, the Jamaica Fire Brigade continues to protect residential and business assets across Jamaica, while pursuing a dedicated programme of educating our citizens about fire prevention. This sensitization effort is vital, as the Brigade received 10, 957 Fire Calls in calendar year 2016, and 3,059 for the first two months of this year alone.
- In our continuous efforts to improve capacity, J\$58.8 million was spent on fire-fighting equipment in the last fiscal year.



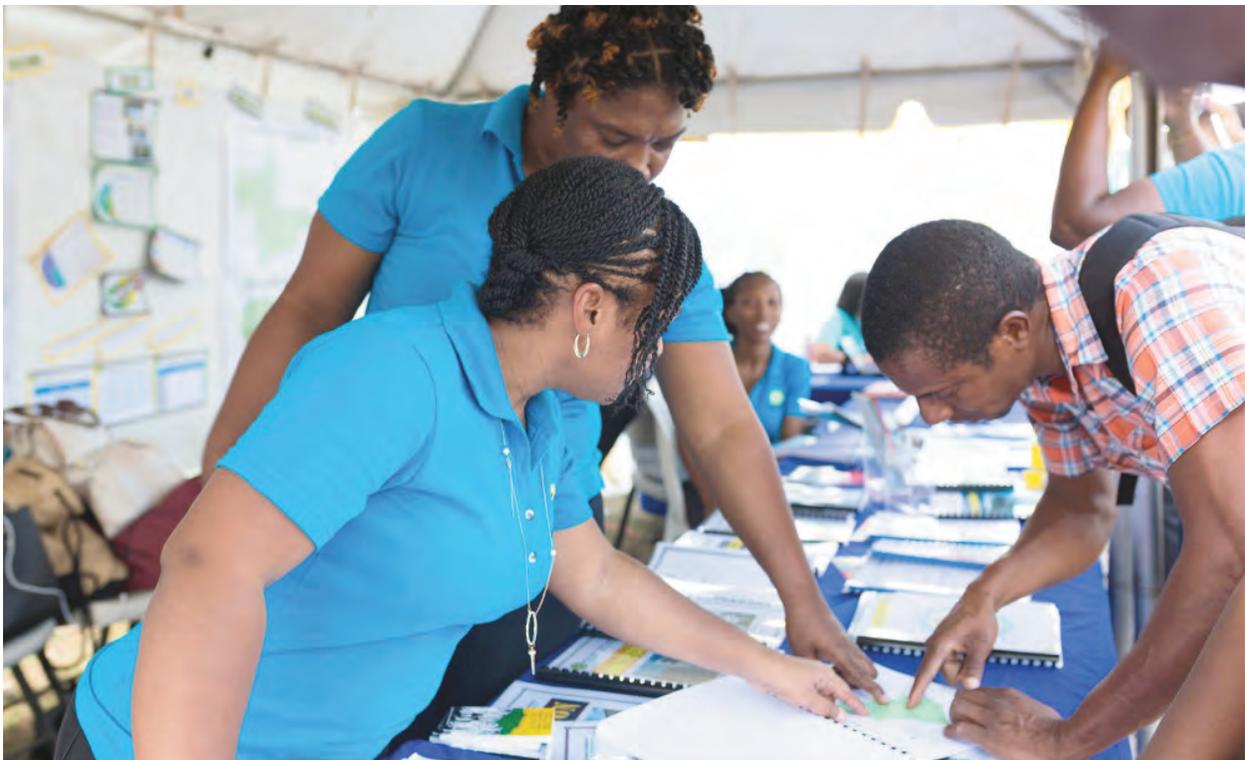
Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie, inspecting one of the two fire trucks that will be retrofitted to suit local requirements for operation (Savanna-La-Mar, Westmoreland).

- This year will reflect a substantially higher investment of J\$173 million, which will ensure the procurement of 4 pumper trucks and 2 water tankers. We will also be expanding the programme of repairs to the network of fire hydrants islandwide.
- Mr. Speaker, we will also be retrofitting the two fire trucks the Government officially received from the Government of Japan at the end of 2014, which were assigned to Westmoreland.
- The trucks have not been put to their intended use, as their technical specifications are incompatible with local conditions. We will ensure this year, that the generosity of the Government and people of Japan is not put to waste.
- Mr. Speaker, let me frankly state that we have to make up for lost time, to get the construction of the Fire Stations in **Montego Bay** and **Port Maria** up and running. I had announced our intention of doing so last year.
- While the financing agreements for these works under the **Jamaica Disaster Vulnerability Reduction Project (DVRP)** were signed in July last year, the works were delayed as the design phase had not been completed.
- This year, Mr. Speaker, the construction of the Montego Bay Fire Station will begin, and the designs for the Port Maria and Yallahs Fire Stations will be completed. Works will also be done at the **Spanish Town Fire Station**, with refurbishing to take place at the Fire Stations in **Santa Cruz** and **Westmoreland**.
- These will complement the works that are currently taking place at the **Junction Fire Station** in St. Elizabeth.
- We will also be doing work to, among other things, replace the perimeter fencing at the **Negril Fire Station** in Westmoreland, with a concrete wall.
- I committed this to the men and women at the Station recently, as we handed over a specially retrofitted ambulance to the Station. **We will do everything possible to make our firefighters comfortable Mr. Speaker.**

- I must publicly acknowledge the role of **JSIF**, which will be providing J\$250 million this year, and an overall **J\$1 Billion over the next two financial years, to strengthen the Jamaica Fire Brigade.**

## **SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

- This Agency continues to perform well, Mr. Speaker, and its work over the past financial year gives us confidence that its targets for 2017/18 will be met. The Agency continues to aggressively drive economic expansion at the community level, through the Local Economic Development Support Programme (LEDSP).
- Over the just concluded financial year, the SDC increased the number of Jamaicans who entered into entrepreneurship.
- **320** local businesses were created, and these generated a value of **J\$657.4 million (\$657,402,095)**. In this same period, **1,849 jobs were created**. (828 full-time, 788 part-time, 233 seasonal jobs)



SDC Officers responding to queries from an attendee at the Agency's Geographic Information System (GIS) launch, held in Clarendon on Friday, January 27, 2017.

- This is in addition to the approximately 3,000 jobs that the SDC routinely creates for people around the country through its Business Fairs, Expos, community mapping and other activities. The SDC is now evaluating project proposals which, if all approved, carry a value of **J\$247 million** (\$247,288,524), and has already approved 18 projects valued at nearly **J\$41 million** (\$40,935, 853).
- Since receiving a programmes budget from this Administration, the SDC has renovated its parish offices in St. Ann, Portland, Kingston & St. Andrew and Clarendon, and work will shortly begin at the office in St. James. **This year, we are allocating an additional J\$50 million to facilitate community-driven programmes.**
- I want to specially recognise and encourage the leadership and all the staff of the Social Development Commission. The range of their services and programmes, especially the LEDSP, is a critical companion to **prosperity at the macro-economic level**. The SDC's role in stimulating entrepreneurship and job creation within communities cannot be overstated. This is how communities develop, crime is reduced and social order is enhanced, as people feel intimately connected to the ***prosperity*** that this Administration is driving at the macro-economic level.
- It means that people won't have to migrate from the countryside in droves to hunt for jobs in parish capitals, thus creating the social problems that are well known in urban areas of the country.
- It means that people are seeing how they can improve their skills, seeing their potential at last and creating as we speak, real and lasting incomes for themselves and their families. **That is progressive engagement. That is personal and community development. That is Prosperity.**
- Mr. Speaker, **COMMUNITY PARKS and COMMUNITY CENTRES** are important aspects of the **Community Development** emphasis of the Ministry, and the SDC also plays a vital maintenance role.

- Last year, I indicated that three Community Parks would be built in St. Andrew, St. Catherine and in Trelawny. Work has started on a Community Park in **Ulster Spring** in Trelawny, at a cost of J\$5 million.
- The project at Twickenham Park in St. Catherine should have commenced in the last fiscal year, but was delayed, Mr. Speaker. It will be implemented at a cost of \$6.9 million.
- J\$7 million is to be spent to develop a Community Park at Olympic Way in Kingston.
- We will complete these projects and implement more this year, Mr. Speaker. **Community Parks will be constructed in Duhaney Park in St. Andrew, in Clarendon, Hanover and St. Thomas at a cost of J\$34 million.**
- The **Community Centres** are also critical to social integration, and as I had announced on the birthday of National Hero Sir Alexander Bustamante, work has started at the Blenheim Community Centre in Hanover, as well as work on the road leading to Bustamante's birthplace.
- **Mr. Speaker, this parson has never christened his pickney first. But I wont christen them last either. Having started the works for Blenheim Community Centre, I am pleased to announce that this year, work will be done at the Tivoli Gardens Community Centre in my Constituency.**

## CONCLUSION

- The Ministry of Local Government and Community Development is on a path of transformation that goes far beyond the reform agenda. We are developing new ideas that are improving people's lives in a real sense. **That is what prosperity is all about.**
- **That is why we have spent J\$10 million to establish the first Water Shop in Pennants in Clarendon**, which will transform the lives of all the people in that area and in surrounding communities. That is why we will be continuing this year, with the **construction of Water Shops in Manchester and St. Elizabeth**, at a cost of J\$20 million, and buying three trucks to service the worst drought-affected parishes.
- **That is why we will be spending over \$700 million in Social Protection through the Local Authorities in this financial year.**
- That is why we are improving the capacity of our Local Authorities through education, to drive the development processes that will create traditional and new businesses, and new sources of economic growth, from hotels and places of amusement, to Business Process Outsourcing and Industrial Parks.
- That is why we are making Local Government a subject of formal study, to raise professionalism among all who serve in the system now, and to make Local Government attractive to men and women from all walks of life. This is not just improving Local Government, Mr. Speaker...this is Local Government 2.0!
- That is why, as we implement transformation at the national level, we have not lost sight of making economic growth and development happen at the community level. Through the work of the SDC, we are making prosperity happen.

- The SDC is driving the creation of thousands of jobs, and developing a new class of entrepreneurs within communities. **This Ministry is in the field, making prosperity not just a national call to action, but a personal experience for more and more Jamaicans in their local spaces.**
- Local Government is my life, Mr. Speaker. I have always been convinced of its vital importance to national life. Now, we are changing it from the top, the bottom, the inside and the outside. We are raising the bar of public service, and making local government more and more valuable to Jamaicans here and overseas. This is a challenging and exciting time, and I am certain that **this Ministry will deliver Prosperity to the Jamaican people through Local Government.**
- I hope that by 2026, when I come to the minimum required period of service as Minister of Local Government, our people will agree that ***Prosperity was promised...***
- ***Prosperity was delivered...***
- **And that they are still experiencing national prosperity...built by Local Government 2.0!**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

