

Ministry Paper 55/2014

Report on activities in furtherance of the proper management of the Pedro Cays

1.0 Purpose

The matter for Tabling is a report on activities in furtherance of the proper management of the Pedro Cays.

2.0 Background

2.1 The Pedro Bank is one of the largest offshore banks (8,040 km²) in the Caribbean. It is the most productive fishing area in Jamaica where a significant proportion of finfish for local consumption, and spiny lobsters and conch for export are harvested. Since the 1950s, fishers have used two (i.e., the North East and Middle Cays) of the four cays on the Pedro Bank as a base for their fishing operations. Fishers are authorized to operate from these cays through a licence issued under the Morant and Pedro Cays Act which is administered by the Fisheries Division. The largest of these cays, the Southwest Cay is protected from human habitation and no fishers are allowed to operate from it. Further protection has been afforded to the Southwest Cay with the establishment in May 2012 of the Southwest Cay Special Fishery Conservation Area which surrounds that Cay. This marine protected area prohibits fishing within an approximate 1 kilometre radius around the Southwest Cay.

2.2 Among other things, the remoteness, small size, geology, lack of adequate infrastructure and lack of resources have contributed to several longstanding problems on the Pedro Cays. Among these problems are inadequate human excreta and solid waste management which is made worse by unlicensed fishers operating illegally from the Cays. Reports suggest that the illegal fishers number up to three times that of the licensed fishers in some cases.

2.3 Within two (2) weeks of the Fisheries Management and Development Fund Board's decision to tackle the longstanding problems on the Pedro Cays, public attention was drawn to the harsh living conditions on the Cays especially the poor solid and human waste management situation through media reports in August – September 2012. In order to address the deplorable living conditions as well as the problems facing the fragile Pedro Cays ecosystem, the Ministry

of Agriculture and Fisheries embarked on several initiatives. These initiatives include: (a) the implementation of a solid waste removal strategy which involved the immediate removal of the pile-up of solid waste on both Cays in January 2013; (b) stakeholder consultations to consider suitable solid waste and human excreta management strategies; (c) increased fisheries enforcement through deployment of two officers from the Fisheries Division to be based on the Middle Cay for eight days on a two weeks rotational basis; (d) increased vigilance by the Jamaica DefenseForce Coast Guard, Marine Police and Fisheries Division's Officers to remove unlicensed fishers; and (e) the commissioning of a Socioeconomic Census and Carrying Capacity Study to determine among other things, the number of persons that can be allowed to operate from the Pedro Cays without irreversibly compromising their fragile ecosystem.

2.4 This Ministry Paper outlines the progress made in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries' initiatives aimed at ensuring the proper management of the Pedro Cays for the 2013 – 2014 financial year.

I. Allocation and Expenditure to Date

As at April 2014, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries through the budget of the Fisheries Division and the Fisheries Management and Development Fund (FMDF) has allocated a total of **\$34,535,897.07** towards the management of the Pedro Cays. Of the total allocation, **\$16,367,552.11** has been spent to date with \$14,139,741 expended during the 2013 -2014 financial year. Appendix 1 provides a detail breakdown of the total allocation and expenditures as at April 2014.

II. Solid Waste Management

A total of \$16,609,680 million has been earmarked for solid waste management on the Pedro Cays. Of this total, \$4,666,524 was spent for the removal of solid waste from the Pedro Cays during the period under review.

III. Human Excreta Management

A series of technical meetings have been held with key stakeholders (e.g., Ministry of Health, Scientific Research Council (SRC) and National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA)) to determine the best system for human excreta management. Critical factors that will ultimately

determine the best system for human waste disposal include the physical characteristics of the Cays, the number of persons that will use the system and the cost of the system. The choice and installation of suitable sanitary conveniences will be guided by the results of the recently concluded carrying capacity study of the Pedro Cays which will among other things determine the optimal number of fishers that can sustainably operate from the Pedro Cays.

IV. Monitoring and Enforcement

Fisheries monitoring and enforcement activities have increased significantly as a result of the posting of two (2) officers from the Fisheries Division on the Middle Cay. Increased vigilance by the joint enforcement team (JDF Coast Guard, Marine Police and Jamaica Environment Trust (JET) and Fisheries Division personnel) during the period has met with some success. As a result, a mark decrease in the number of unlicensed fishers operating from the Pedro Cays has been reported and several fishers have been apprehended fishing illegally in the Southwest Cay Special Fishery Conservation Area.

V. Socioeconomic Census and Carrying Capacity Study

The final report of the socioeconomic census and carrying capacity study was submitted by the University of the West Indies (UWI) in February 2014. The results of this study will among other things, determine the total number of persons (i.e., fishers, research scientists, enforcement personnel (JDF, Coast Guard; Marine Police and Officers from the Fisheries Division)) that may be allowed to operate from the Pedro Cays. The final report has been circulated to all stakeholders and will form the basis of further discussions in finalizing and implementing a comprehensive management plan for the Pedro Cays. Despite several attempts, the report is yet to be properly discussed with Pedro Cays fishers. This gap will be addressed within the coming weeks by a multi-agency team (including representatives from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Local Government, University of the West Indies, National Environment and Planning Agency, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries) that will visit the Pedro Cays to present the results of the study and engage in fruitful discussions on the way forward.

VI. Establishment of a Comprehensive Management Regime for the Pedro Cays

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries is currently preparing a report to Cabinet which will outline the status of the Pedro Cays and highlight the management recommendations coming out of the recently concluded Socioeconomic Census and Carrying Capacity Study. The Cabinet Report will among other things seek guidance from Cabinet as to the way forward in achieving sustainable management of the Pedro Cays. Cabinet's guidance will be sought especially in light of the highly complex and multidisciplinary nature of the problems that cuts across the portfolio responsibly of several Ministries.

Roger Clarke
Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries
16 April 2014

Appendix 1

Table showing total allocation and expenditure for the proper management of the Pedro Cays as at April 2014

Item	Allocation	Funding Source	Implementing Entity	Expenditure	Remarks
Immediate Solid Waste Removal	\$2,445,000.00	F MDF	NSWMA	\$2,445,000.00	Expenditure to remove pile up of solid waste in Jan 2013
Annual estimate for Solid Waste Removal	\$16,609,680.00	F MDF	NSWMA	\$4,666,524.00	Expenditure during April 2013 to March 2104
Estimate to construct toilet facilities	\$6,000,000.00	F MDF	FD	-	Carrying Capacity Study and MOH's advice will guide number and design of toilets
Posting of FD Officers on Cays	\$3,000,000.00	FD	FD	\$3,000,000.00	2 officers posted on two weeks rotation basis for 7 days at a time.
Enforcement Equipment for Pedro Cays	\$524,217.07	F MDF	FD	\$524,217.00	Expenditure during April 2013 to March 2104
Carrying Capacity Study	\$5,949,000.00	F MDF	UWI	\$5,949,000	Final report completed February 2014
Total	\$34,535,897.07			\$16,594,741.07	
Total F MDF	\$31,527,897.07			\$13,594,741.07	
Total FD	\$3,000,000.00			\$3,000,000.00	

F MDF - Fisheries Management and Development Fund;
 FD - Fisheries Division; MOH – Ministry of Health;
 NSWMA - National Solid Waste Management Authority;
 UWI - University of the West Indies

