



Throne Speech 2017

Ceremonial Opening of Parliament

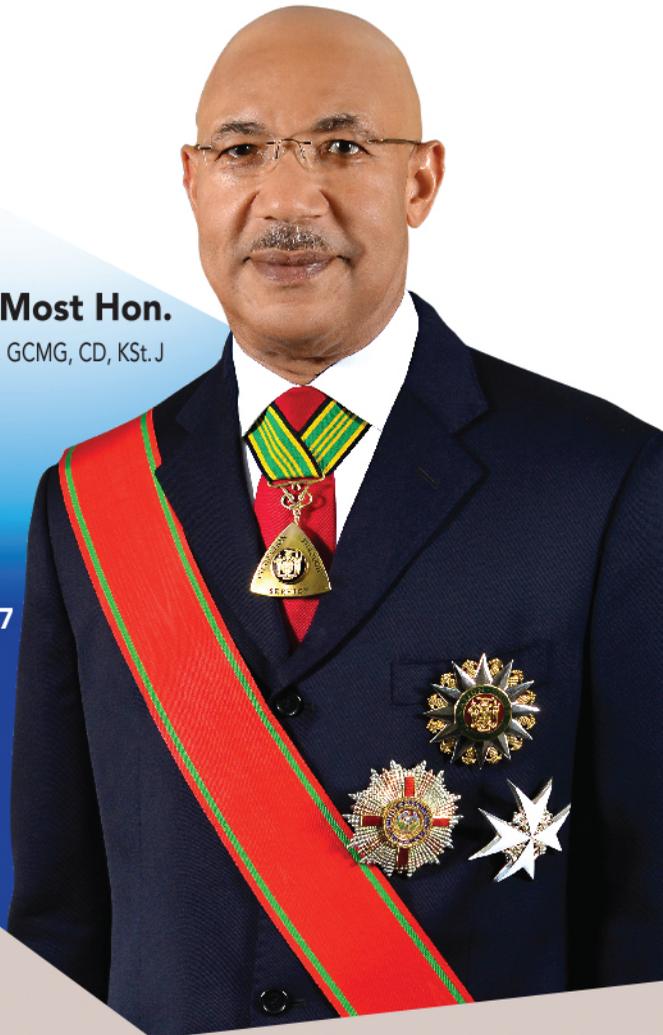
A Firm Foundation for Prosperity

Delivered by:

**His Excellency the Most Hon.
Sir Patrick Allen**, ON, GCMG, CD, KSt.J
Governor-General

HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT
GORDON HOUSE
Kingston, Jamaica

Thursday February 9, 2017





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Honourable Members,

Jamaica is on a new path. This parliamentary year is filled with the potential for great progress and prosperity. With the new Administration demonstrating its willingness to take the prudent and thoughtful decisions for the benefit of all Jamaicans and building on true partnerships of the last year, our country has a firm foundation for prosperity.

One year after the 2016 elections, the Government has settled and both the Administration and the Opposition have recognised the importance of maintaining our progressive democratic ideals through robust debate and conscious cooperation on issues that matter to the vast majority of the people of Jamaica. Jamaicans should take heart at the progress we have made over the years and should be confident of further strides in deepening our democratic traditions for our shared prosperity.

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Our collective fate is tied to the outcomes of the unified actions of our people to focus on the challenges that face us as a nation.

The new Administration is focused on bringing growth, creating jobs and securing Jamaica.

Honourable Members, there is a need in Jamaica to rebuild our communities that have been divided by crime and lawlessness. We must, as a nation, assert the rule of law and jealously guard its promotion. The state must constantly take into consideration that its actions represent what is in the best interest of the people. Our society must evolve to a place of caring and sharing across all divides. We must bring back our communities and our young people must be heard; their thoughts and opinions helping to guide our direction.

A FIRM FOUNDATION FOR PROSPERITY

We must focus on the great challenges that face us as a nation; the risks to our women and children, illicit actions by some of our citizens and the need to deal with corruption and public inefficiency, frontally.

The partnerships we seek must percolate through all communities and motivate all citizens to unite in an effort to solve the vast challenges that face our great nation.

Our mandate is to ensure that the Jamaica we seek is mani-fested in our everyday actions.

It is this ethos that must guide us as we all seek the betterment of our country for the benefit of our children, grand-children and future generations. Our success cannot be viewed as mere self-interest, but we must take into consideration the wider concerns of the community.

Honourable Members, in this fiscal year there will be a special focus on:

- Crime reduction through greater investments in law enforcement activities
- The rule of law to secure our communities
- Justice Reform
- The reform of laws which protect our women and children
- Public Sector Transformation and Modernisation
- Tax Reform
- Privatisation of Government shares in state run entities
- Development and implementation of a National Identification System
- Development of an Integrated Transport System
- The National Standard Curriculum
- Expansion of the School Feeding Programme
- Occupational Safety and Health
- Strategic review of the National Housing Trust

Ministry of National Security

One of the Government's most urgent priorities is the reduction of crime as a national imperative, therefore making the nation safe and secure. The expected economic growth and job creation can only be achieved if there is drastic reduction in crime and there is peace and order in the society. The security

of our country must be comprehensively and strategically addressed. The Government is therefore firmly focused on fulfilling its **Five-Pillar Security Strategy**. These are:

- **Effective policing** to restore trust in the JCF for a lawful and well-ordered society, where more of our Jamaicans feel safe and our borders are well protected
- **Rehabilitate, redeem and redirect inmates** of our correctional facilities in ways that enhance national security
- **Social development interventions** to reduce illiteracy, social fallout, and to equip people with tools to resolve conflicts
- **Situational prevention of crime** by planning new communities with security features and upgrading older ones
- Working for **swift and sure justice** for a fair justice system that all our citizens can trust and be proud of.

The Administration will also strengthen the institutional capacity of the security forces to be more proactive and also effectively respond to criminal actions and emerging threats by focusing on the following:

- Supporting the modernisation and transformation of the JCF into an intelligence-led police service that ensures citizen security with stronger systems of administration, management and accountability, especially through procurement of technical expertise in cyber defence.
- Increasing the number of Security Force personnel. This will involve, at minimum, maintaining adequate rates of recruitment in the JCF and JDF.
- Strengthening the mobility of the Security Forces by providing the required resources – including increasing the JCF fleet by 100 vehicles – and significantly improved fleet management, by introducing more cost-effective approaches such as the introduction of LPG-powered vehicles.

FIVE-PILLAR SECURITY STRATEGY

- **Effective policing**
- **Rehabilitate, redeem and redirect inmates**
- **Social development interventions**
- **Situational prevention of crime**
- **Swift and sure justice**

The Government will continue to focus on building community resilience in collaboration with the Citizen Security and Justice Programme (CSJP).

The **Correctional Services** is re-purposed to shift the Government's focus more comprehensively on rehabilitation of persons in the care of the State, rather than merely incarceration. This affirms the need to rehabilitate, redeem and redirect inmates of our correctional facilities in ways that enhance national security.

Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation

Honourable Members, this year will see significant progress in the transformation of the public sector. The appointment of the **Public Sector Transformation Oversight Committee** (PSTOC) as well as the continued work of the **Economic Programme Oversight Committee** (EPOC) and the new **Economic Growth Council** (EGC), have laid the foundation to make the necessary structural changes to cement our positive economic trajectory.

The **Public Sector Transformation and Modernisation Programme** will this year manifest great progress with the intention of merging several Government entities to boost efficiency and ensure that the resources of the state give optimum returns.

The previous pillars of:

1. Trade and Investment Facilitation
2. Managing Public Sector Costs
3. Government Efficiency and Service Delivery

The Government of Jamaica has identified Inclusive Sustainable Economic Growth and Job Creation as a Strategic Priority for the Medium Term.

Continue to guide the Administration's approach to modernisation and will fuel the continued restructuring of the public sector into a modern and efficient ecosystem that provides the foundation for the private sector to flourish.

The Government of Jamaica has identified **Inclusive Sustainable Economic Growth and Job Creation** as a Strategic Priority for the Medium Term. Under the new Ministry of Economic

Growth and Job Creation, several multi-pronged initiatives as part of a comprehensive strategic plan will be pursued along with **Government-wide coordination; statistics and research** through the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) and the Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN).

Housing

Honourable Members, you will recall in July, the Government of Jamaica directed that a strategic review of the National Housing Trust be undertaken. A Commission was established to lead the review comprising leaders from both the public and private sectors and our trade unions.

To date, several stakeholder groups have been engaged in a series of discussions. The final report will be presented by March this year.

This will form part of the strategic **National Housing Policy and Implementation Plan** to provide the enabling framework within which the Government can realise its goal of access to affordable, safe and legal housing solutions for all Jamaicans by 2030. It will therefore assist in satisfying the demand for housing in a coordinated and economical manner and to respond to the diverse needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable persons within the society.

Water

This legislative year, the Government will tackle the challenge of Non-Revenue Water (NRW) which includes leaks, overflows at tanks, estimated meter readings, under registration of customer meters, over estimation of source production, theft, bypasses and illegal connections. During this fiscal year it is envisioned that the country will begin to see a reduction of 20 million litres of water lost per day across the Corporate Area.

Ports

While Jamaica offers its candidacy for a Council seat at the International Maritime Organization (IMO), Jamaica is well placed to reap the benefits of an expanded global maritime sector. The Port Authority of Jamaica recently embarked on

the implementation of a **Port Community System** which will automate and optimise business processes within the island's seaport communities. It will promote more efficient and effective trading practices, while reducing the cost of doing business in Jamaica.

Works

The National Works Agency (NWA) will continue the implementation of the corporate area corridor improvements through its **Major Infrastructure Development Programme** (MIDP). Corridors currently being undertaken are the Mandela Highway and Barbican Road which will advance significantly in the upcoming fiscal period.

For the new fiscal year the NWA will begin several projects to coordinate sustained growth through enhanced traffic movement along major thoroughfares, including the Constant Spring Road to Manor Park improvement project and Hagley Park Road improvement which will widen the existing roadway to four lanes. **Honourable Members**, I am pleased to report that work will begin on the Southern Coastal Highway Improvement programme, under which the road from Harbour View in Kingston to Port Antonio in Portland will be widened and improved. This project will also extend the east-west toll road from May Pen in Clarendon to Williamsfield in Manchester.

Climate Change and the Environment

The Climate Change Division has the specific mandate for implementing the **Climate Change Policy Framework**. Efforts will continue this year with the **Caribbean Community Climate Change Coastal Adaptation Project** funded by the German Development Bank. It will implement four (4) project concepts in both adaptation and mitigation. The targeted areas include Government and non-government organisations such as the Urban Development Corporation (UDC), the University of the West Indies (UWI), **Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation** (C-CAM) and the **Westmoreland Local Sustainable Development Programme** (LSDP). Recognising the need to

ensure public access to quality beaches, the Government will collaborate with key stakeholders in advancing the development of a beach access policy. In addition the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA) will be enhancing its monitoring of air quality across Jamaica. The Government will also strengthen its capacity to enforce environmental regulations.

Land and Physical Planning

As part of the public sector modernisation drive, the Government will move to merge the operations of the National Land Agency and the Land Administration Programme. This is expected to result in greater efficiencies and to harmonise the land management portfolio in Jamaica thereby creating a one-stop setting. This will empower more Jamaica to secure titles for land – improving their economic wellbeing.

Investment

The **Business Process Outsourcing** (BPO), market has broadened in the last few years whereby greater value added or knowledge-based outsourcing that shifts jobs from traditional outbound call centres, to more complex technical support will become the trend. Business Process Management will intensify during the upcoming year through collaborative efforts. This flagship strategy will result in increased job creation and facilitate growth of the economy.

Privatisation

The Government will, this year, move to divest its interest and shareholding in two entities, the Norman Manley International Airport (NMIA) and the Jamaica Public Service Company (JPS).

In 2016, the Government appointed an enterprise team to examine the operations of the airport. Given the significant state funds and resources required for the optimal operation of NMIA, the recommendation for divestment was made. The Government will therefore move to divest NMIA this year in keeping with its public sector transformation agenda.

Additionally, the Government will this year begin the process of privatising its remaining shareholding in the Jamaica Public Service Company (JPS). The Government will take steps to ensure that there is broad retail and institutional participation and Jamaica owners in the divestment process. An enterprise team will be appointed to lead the process.

Ministry of Finance Planning and the Public Service

The new **Public Employees Pensions Administration System (PEPAS)** "Go-Live" project will be implemented this year. This will:

- Allow the Government to better prepare forecasts and budgets and control the use of public funds
- Allow retiring public servants to get timely processing of their applications for pension benefits
- Modernise the pension system

The **Jamaica Customs Agency** will continue to drive economic growth through trade facilitation, revenue collection and border protection. In addition, the Agency will deploy another modern scanning equipment at the Port of Kingston to provide more easily discernable images to allow for the detection of contraband and attempts at smuggling high valued cargo.

The Ministry will continue to drive efficiency through the use of technology. The integration of the **Port Community System (PCS)** with the **ASYCUDA World System** will be done this year to coordinate the systems among the Port Authority, Shipping Association and the Jamaica Customs Agency.

The **Electronic Government Procurement (eGP)** expansion will continue. The eGP system is a single web-based portal to the Government Purchasing and Tendering Authorities and suppliers which automates activities performed by all parties through integration on a single electronic network.

Ministry of Transport and Mining

With a growing population, particularly in urban areas, improved transportation is critical. In keeping with the Government's

overarching development agenda of economic growth and job creation, it is imperative to provide a safe, efficient and competitive transport system.

As such, the Administration plans to rehabilitate the railway network, and increase mobility for the country to compete more effectively in a continually changing global market. The finalised MOU, paving the way for the resumption of passenger and cargo rail service in Jamaica, was signed on December 9, 2016. The rail service will return on a phased basis with partner Herzog International leading the rehabilitation of the rail network. The trains will roll out in three phases in the first instance.

In keeping with the Government's overarching development agenda of economic growth and job creation, it is imperative to provide a safe, efficient and competitive transport system.

Phase 1 - Montego Bay to Appleton

Phase 2 - Spanish Town to Ewarton

Phase 3 - Spanish Town to Clarendon

In addition to the rail service, the **Airports Authority of Jamaica** has devised and commenced further upgrades of the **Ian Fleming International Airport (IFIA)**. The expanded airport facilities will be able to accommodate particular design aircraft types that should foster an increase in commercial passenger movement and general aviation traffic.

The bauxite mining sector is positioned to get a major boost from the reopening and expansion of the Alumina Plant in Nain, St. Elizabeth, which has been closed since 2009.

The Ministry has been commissioned to define and declare the official boundary of the Cockpit Country. This declared boundary is to comprise a **Core, a Transition Zone and an Outer Boundary** in order to afford legal protection to the watershed, the natural resources and the ecosystems within the geological/geomor-

phological region through the establishment of a national park, while accommodating the economic opportunities the area provides through the delineation of sections reserved for bauxite mining and limestone quarrying. Following extensive collaboration with a number of agencies a consensus was reached on the boundary.

Ministry of Education Youth and Information

To continue the transformation of the education sector, the Administration will this year implement the full roll out of the **National Standard Curriculum** (NSC). The NSC has already been introduced to grades 1, 4, 7 and 9. This year will see the full implementation in all the grades (grades 1-9). This new curriculum is geared at building competence and skills through inclusive and differentiated learning.

The Ministry will also be increasing its expenditure on upgrading and refurbishing facilities at the primary and secondary levels as well as continue its drive to eliminate the shift system. At the same time, the Ministry will continue to provide more quality places at the early childhood level.

In support of the Government's policy to ensure that all students at the secondary level exit with at least five subjects, as well as to ensure that the most vulnerable are not disadvantaged, the Ministry will be providing direct support to students on PATH, (who have met the criteria), for five subjects or more. Approximately 9,000 students on PATH sit external examinations annually.

The **School Feeding Programme** is being re-organised to ensure that more students benefit from a free meal for five days per week. All financial resources allocated by the Government for the **School Feeding Programme** will be utilised to provide free lunches for 70% or 137,000 children of the early childhood cohort (3 – 8 years), including approximately 10,000 PATH beneficiaries. Complementary to this move, the Ministry will provide support for the payment of cooks especially at the primary level to ensure that trained and certified persons are preparing nutritious meals for the students.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

For this fiscal year, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will undertake a strategic review of its structure and operations to strengthen its capacity to more effectively engage its international partners and governments including the European Union which is Jamaica's largest international donor partner.

This year Jamaica will stage the Jamaica 55 Diaspora Conference in Kingston, continuing the country's robust engagement with the Diaspora.

The Foreign Trade policy will be completed. This, as the expansion of trade is fundamental to the investment and growth strategy for the country in general.

It is intended that the Ministry will complete the **National Consular Policy** to improve the quality of consular services to Jamaican and foreign nationals. Aligned to that policy will be a repositioning of its network of Honorary Consuls, with an emphasis on expanding trade and investment.

This year Jamaica will stage the **Jamaica 55 Diaspora Conference in Kingston**, continuing the country's robust engagement with the Diaspora, while working towards the adoption of a **National Diaspora Policy**.

Ministry of Science, Energy & Technology

The Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology (MSET) will continue to promote eco-efficiency and the green economy by encouraging energy efficiency and conservation in Government agencies, developing the capacity of local companies to meet international environmental standards and promoting green jobs and industries.

In partnership with the Petroleum Corporation of Jamaica the Ministry will launch an expanded energy efficiency and conservation project aimed at consolidating the implementation of the **National Energy Policy 2009 – 2030**, and specifically the objective of making the public sector a model for responsible

energy use in Jamaica. This investment project builds on the current public sector energy efficiency and conservation programme. There will also be the retrofitting of Health, Education and Public Agencies (HEPA) Government Facilities, which includes implementation of energy efficiency and conservation measures in 73 facilities.

Ministry of Labour and Social Security

The Government recognises that a safe and healthy labour force is instrumental in achieving the elements outlined in the **Government's National Growth Agenda Strategy** in the short, medium and long term. It is against this background that the Government reiterates its commitment to ensuring that the **Occupational Safety and Health Bill** is tabled this year. The Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Bill will be geared at securing the safety and health of all Jamaican workers.

Jamaica signed the instrument of ratification of **International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention C189** (also known as the Domestic Workers Convention). The Government has now ratified the Domestic Workers' Convention. This is attributable to the Government's commitment to empowering women economically and the Decent Work Agenda.

Continued growth of opportunities under the **Overseas Employment Programme** will remain a major priority for the Ministry in the new fiscal year. For the period April 2016 to February 2017 approximately 15,000 Jamaicans were placed in jobs in the United States and Canada. This represents an increase of almost 10%.

The Government's flagship social intervention programme the **Programme for Advancement through Health and Education**, (PATH), will increase the benefits paid to approximately 380,000 beneficiaries. This as part of the Government's commitment to expanding social protection that will empower Jamaicans to achieve their fullest potential.

A revision of the **National Policy for Senior Citizens** will be done. It is estimated that persons over the age of 60 will constitute nearly 16 per cent of the population by 2030. The revised

Policy will ensure that our seniors are protected and that they continue to contribute to nation building.

Ministry of Tourism

Tourism is one of the main drivers of economic growth in Jamaica. In recognising the role of tourism as a growth pillar and tool for development, Jamaica will this year adopt the United Nations ***International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development***.

The Government is committed to the long term sustainable development of Tourism as it is expected to earn approximately US\$2.835b, with total visitor arrivals of 4.188m this year.

The **Spruce Up Jamaica** project, the Ministry of Tourism's flagship umbrella programme, was re-launched on January 24, 2017.

Spruce Up Jamaica encapsulates various initiatives primarily geared at changing attitudes and creating integration among industries and programmes that impact the tourism sector.

The development of the **Centre for Hospitality and Tourism Innovation** will aid the Ministry's push to strengthen the island's and specifically the tourism industry's human capital.

Justice is a critical pillar of development. In Jamaica, the rule of law is paramount.

This institution will cater to and produce supervisors, managers and hospitality professionals in areas such as Culinary Management, Spa Management and Hospitality Management.

Two artisan villages, one in Falmouth and the other in Ocho Rios are slated for commencement during the new fiscal year. This one-stop shop facility will feature shops where craft and other indigenous products are manufactured and sold.

Ministry of Justice

Justice is a critical pillar of development. In Jamaica, the rule of law is paramount. The action items under the **Justice Reform Implementation Plan** (JRIP) will be done this year as part of strategic initiatives to improve the justice system.

There will be an extension of the **Justice Undertakings for Social Transformation (JUST)** Programme until 2020. The programme aims to improve service delivery and management capacity of justice sector institutions. The ultimate outcome of the Programme is a modernised justice sector with increased equitable access to justice and legal services.

The Ministry's **Restorative Justice Programme** is funded by donor partners, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and the Department for International Development (DFID), and is being administered through the **Citizens Security and Justice Programme (CSJP)**.

The efficient operation of the Commercial Division of the Supreme Court has already contributed to the improvement of Jamaica's ranking in the **Doing Business Survey**. Continued improvement in this area will make Jamaica a more attractive place to do business as overseas investors and nationals alike will have more confidence in the justice sector's ability to resolve business disputes, matters involving breach of contracts and non-performance of other obligations.

Ministry of Health

The Government is firmly focused on expanding access, improving quality of care, promoting a healthy lifestyle and ultimately quality of life. As such, **the Government will expand its customer service programme** focusing on improved access to health care and the quality patients experience within the public healthcare system. The Health Ministry will engage the University Hospital of the West Indies (UHWI) to reduce the waiting list of patients requiring minor surgeries across the public health sector; partnering with selected private pharmacies through the National Health Fund to provide pharmaceuticals to public patients.

The realisation of a **Child and Adolescent Hospital in Western Jamaica** should happen this year. The hospital will offer modern, state of the art services and facilities.

Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport

Honourable Members, this year we celebrate 55 years as an independent nation, therefore all 36 Jamaica National Heritage Trust (JNHT) sites, owned and leased, are being further revitalised in the new financial year with the view of introducing tours and extending tour packages.

The Administration rejects gender-based violence which is detrimental to economic growth and productivity. Utilising the **National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender-based Violence 2017-2027** as a platform, the Bureau of Gender Affairs will lead the process of ensuring adequate prevention, protection, and redress for the most vulnerable in the society.

Additionally, **two shelters for victims of domestic violence will be established**. Potential locations have already been identified – one rural and one urban - and inspection reports have also been completed.

Sport

A feasibility study will be conducted to offer direction in the **improvement in the marketing and development of Jamaica as an international training hub across a variety of sporting disciplines**. Jamaica's climate, infrastructure and other features make the country well placed to attract this kind of business. The Government, through the **Sports Development Foundation**, will invest in the establishment of a number of multi-purpose mini stadia/sport facilities that will support this initiative. Planned refurbishment of the National Stadium and a number of planned Legacy Projects arising from **Jamaica 55** are also critical components.

Ministry of Local Government and Community Development

The Ministry is committed to implementing programmes to protect the most vulnerable. The Ministry will:

- i) Continue to improve the conditions of the infirmaries island-wide, including the construction of new wards

and/or the renovation of existing facilities and the introduction of modern amenities such as solar panels and water harvesting; and,

- ii) Re-introduce the indigent housing programme to provide housing solutions for the most vulnerable.

Water Shops

The Ministry is moving to construct and manage “Water Shops” in designated areas. This special programme, which is now in the pilot phase in Pennants, Clarendon, will give residents access to clean, reasonably priced water in their communities, while reducing transportation and associated costs.

It is intended that this model will be replicated around the island.

Local Economic Development Support Programme (LEDSP)

The Ministry will be seeking to give strategic support to the **Local Economic Development Support Programme (LEDSP)**, which has already created local economic development initiatives valued at nearly \$700 million, and community projects valued at nearly \$400 million.

Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries

Building on the 12.8% growth and the continued reduction in the food import bill, the Government will continue to consolidate the role of the agricultural sector in driving economic growth and prosperity.

Renewed focus will be placed on irrigation expansion. The newly completed \$203M irrigation system in the Ebony Park/Spring Garden agro-parks comprising approximately 3000 acres will enable the full utilisation of all the lands in these 2 agro-parks.

The newly established MSME Division will drive the coordination of services to the MSME sector including the rationalisation of Government Micro Credit organisations and the implementation of the updated MSME and Entrepreneurship Policy in order to

release the full potential of the MSMEs to further contribute to economic growth.

In order to increase our ease of doing business, the Companies Office will, by March 31, put the requisite system in place to enable electronic registration of businesses.

Legislative Agenda

Over the past year, your Government has engaged in a robust legislative agenda. Indeed its plans and policies on building a partnership for growth and prosperity, have laid a firm foundation for the prosperity which Jamaica seeks.

Honourable Members, for this 2017 fiscal and legislative year, the following initiatives will be rigorously pursued.

The Government will implement a full legislative review that leads to the tabling in this **Honourable House** of:

- i. A new **Police Service Act** to replace the Jamaica Constabulary Force Act that supports the modernisation and transformation of the Jamaica Constabulary Force into a modern intelligence-led police service that ensures citizen security, with stronger systems of administration, management and internal discipline.
- ii. Legislation to establish the **Major Organised Crime and Anti-Corruption Agency** as an independent national law enforcement agency focused on terrorism, major organised crime and serious corruption.

In an effort to further protect the human rights of our people, the **Sexual Harassment Bill** will be brought to this **House**. The Bill will seek to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace and institutions (including educational, hospitals, correctional centres and others).

The Government will also bring the **DNA regulations** which are complementary to the DNA Act.

The **Child Care and Protection Act** will be amended.

The **Micro Credit Act** will be introduced to encourage increased participation of data providers in the credit reporting system. In that regard, the **Credit Reporting Act** will be reviewed.

The Government will establish a Financial Inclusion Council to implement the umbrella **Financial Inclusion Strategy** for the period 2016-2020.

The Government will take steps to further strengthen depositor protection and investor compensation across financial institutions, including credit unions by tabling legislation dealing with Deposit Insurance. In addition amendments will be made to the **Cooperative Societies Act**. This will pave the way for the establishment of compensation schemes for non-Deposit Taking Institutions, DTIs.

This year, the **Data Protection Act** will be brought to this **Honourable House**. The Act will provide for the protection of the privacy of personal data and regulate the collection, processing, storage, use and disclosure of personal data.

In keeping with the commitment to ensure a more comprehensive identification system for all Jamaicans, the **National Identification and Registration Bill** will be tabled. This seeks to ensure a comprehensive and secure structure to collect and store personal identification information and to protect the identification of Jamaican nationals and persons resident in Jamaica.

The Education (Jamaica Teaching Council) Bill. The Government will this year establish a teacher registration and licensing system and professional standards for teachers. The Government will also enhance the regulation and coordination in the tertiary sector by establishing a national oversight body for tertiary education to be known as the **Jamaica Tertiary Education Commission or J-TEC**. This will also be contained in the Education Bill.

Amendments will also be made to the **HEART Trust Act and the National Youth Service Act** to facilitate merging the entities in keeping with the public sector transformation programme.

The Ministry of Tourism has made advances in the development of the **Tourism Workers Pension Scheme legislation**. This Bill will facilitate access to retirement incomes for all workers. The scheme will be designed to take into account the seasonality of employment in the tourism sector and will include self-employed persons within the sector.

Jamaica stands a friend to all in the pursuit of its international relations. In keeping with international obligations, Jamaica will ensure relevant laws are introduced and harmonised to ensure its commitments under relevant international conventions. In this regard, among other actions, the Government will amend the **Terrorism Prevention Act** and will bring legislation to implement Jamaica obligations under the Geneva Convention and protocols dealing with international and non-international armed conflict.

Conclusion

Honourable Members,

The partnerships necessary for the sustained growth of Jamaica must continue. The great challenges that face our nation cannot be addressed by individual action but our collective efforts. All here must continue to work to secure the best interest of our homeland as we all as citizens, have a vested interest in its prosperity, security and progress.

As a people we must reject those things that divide us and continue to build a great nation on a firm foundation for prosperity.

Together we must:

- Reject the abuse of our children.
- Reject the abuse of our women.
- Shun the culture of indiscipline, corruption and dishonesty.

We are a great people... There is no challenge that we cannot overcome and no dream we cannot achieve.

A FIRM FOUNDATION FOR PROSPERITY

We are a great people who have time and time again demonstrated to the world our great talents and strengths.

There is no challenge that we cannot overcome and no dream we cannot achieve.

Through unified action we can achieve shared prosperity.

As members of this ***Honourable House*** and leaders of our growing democracy, your task must be to lead a transformation of Jamaica that focuses on the positive growth and development of our people; protecting the rights of the most vulnerable while at the same time ensuring the growth and prosperity of the entire nation.



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