

# ACHIEVEMENTS 2023

1

2

3

# BUILDING JAMAICA

## WHAT'S INSIDE

- Increased Access to Water – 4
- Tourism Driven Economic Resurgence – 7
- Driving MSME Growth, Fostering Export – 13
- Agriculture Rebounding Stronger – 20



## Comprehensive Roadworks

Significant work was undertaken to buildout Jamaica's road network:

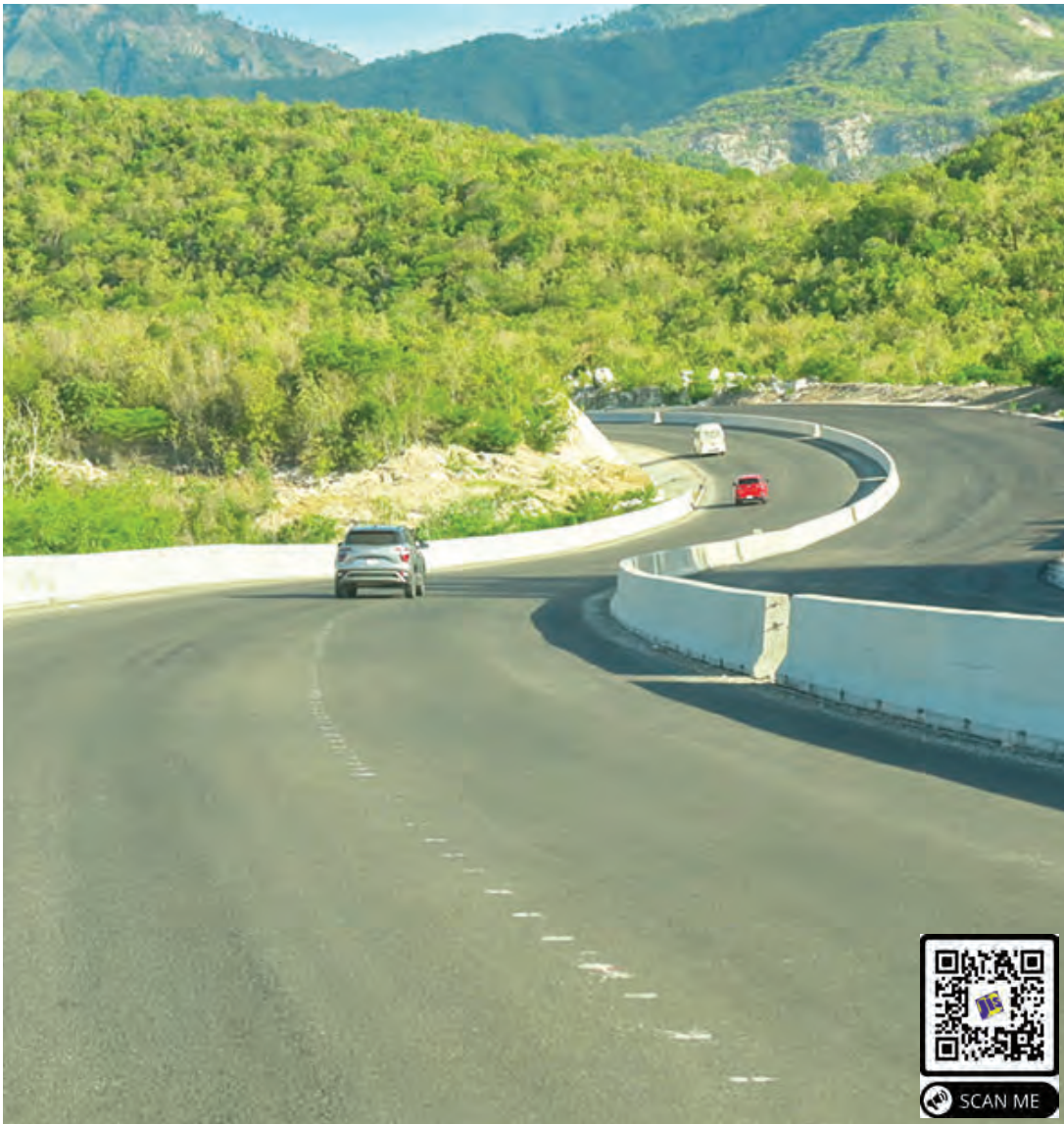
- The National Works Agency (NWA) completed rehabilitation of the Martha Brae to Holland road in Trelawny at a cost of \$15 million.
- Ground was officially broken for rehabilitation of the Jackson Town to Ulster Spring main road in southern

Trelawny at a cost of over \$400 million.

### SCHIP

- The May Pen to Williamsfield leg of the Southern Coastal Highway Improvement Project (SCHIP) was officially opened.
- Work has commenced on the US\$274.5 million Montego Bay Perimeter Road Project.

- A new alignment through Mezgar Garden in St. Thomas was opened to replace the previous alignment through the hills of Grants Pen in the parish under the Southern Coastal Highway Improvement Project (SCHIP).
- Four-lane roadways from Bull Bay to Albion in St. Thomas were opened to the motoring public under the SCHIP.
- Streetlights and traffic lights were also installed along some corridors of the major project.



Motorists in St. Thomas are now enjoying a new alignment which replaces the hills of Grants Pen in the parish under the Southern Coastal Highway Improvement Project.



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (centre) and his wife, the Most Hon. Juliet Holness, are flanked by several Ministers of Government, representatives of China Harbour Engineering Company (CHEC), agency representatives and other interests during the official opening of the May Pen to Williamsfield leg of the Southern Coastal Highway Improvement Project. The highway was opened on Thursday, September 14.



A section of the Martha Brae to Holland Road in Trelawny.

### Cover Photos

1. Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness breaks ground for phase 3 of the Port Royal Pipeline Replacement Project.
2. Prime Minister Holness seated, operates a back hoe during the ground breaking ceremony for phase 3 of the Port Royal Pipeline Replacement Project.
3. Prime Minister Holness is surrounded by new home owners in the Shrewsbury Housing Development Phase 2 in Petersfield, Westmoreland.



# Strong Economic Resurgence Continues

Jamaica's strong post-COVID-19 economic resurgence continued with significant out-turns:

- 4.2 per cent growth between January and March and 2.3 per cent for April to June.
- Estimated 2.9 per cent growth between January and June.
- 4.5 per cent record low unemployment rate.
- Decrease in the number of unemployed persons by 27,500 or 30.7 percentage points to 62,200 in July.
- Reduction in youth (14-24) unemployment by 9,000, or 26 per cent, to 25,600.
- Increase in the number of employed persons by 47,000 to 1,315,100.

- Increase in the labour force complement by 19,600 or 1.4 per cent to 1,377,300.
- 30.6 per cent increase in export earnings between January and July, totalling just over US\$1.22 billion.
- Decline in inflation for October to 5.1 per cent, which placed the rate within the Bank of Jamaica (BOJ) 4-6 per cent target range.
- Net International Reserves (NIR) totalling approximately US\$4.61 billion.

## Global Credit Rating

- Moody's Investor Service revised its economic outlook for Jamaica from 'Stable' to 'Positive', while Standard and Poor's Global Ratings and Fitch Ratings maintained a 'Stable' rating.



Householders purchasing produce.

## Bilateral/Multilateral Funding Support

- Approximately US\$1.7 billion approved for Jamaica under the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Precautionary and Liquidity Line (PLL) and Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF).

## Local Funding Support

- The Development Bank of Jamaica (DBJ) allocated \$100 million for first-year implementation of the Growth and Expansion of MSMEs

through Innovation and Capacity-building Grant Pilot Programme.

## Budget

- Jamaica's first trillion-dollar Budget was tabled in February.



A customer conducting a transaction using the new Polymer Bank Notes. The series was officially released into circulation in June. The suite comprises the upgraded \$50, \$100, \$500, \$1,000, and \$5,000 notes, and the newly introduced \$2,000 bill.



Minister of Finance and the Public Service, Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke (3rd right), and Minister of Education and Youth, Hon. Fayval Williams (3rd left), peruse the Citizens' Guide to the 2023/24 Budget, during the launch of the Finance Ministry's Secondary Schools Tour at Wolmer's High School for Girls in Kingston. Also perusing the document are (from left) Principal, Wolmer's Boys', Mr. Dwight Pennycooke; Head Boy, J'Vaughn Hyman; Head Girl, Wolmer's Girls', Dominique Brown, and Principal, Ms. Colleen Montague. Copies of the Guide were presented to students of the 10 schools visited during the tour from April 18-28.



## Increased Access to Water

Extensive work was undertaken to boost the provision of and access to potable water:

### Water Tanks and Pumps Rehabilitation Programme

- Installation of \$20 million 50,000 gallon glass-fused-to-steel bolted tank in Dalvey, St. Thomas, to serve more than 4,500 residents.
- Commissioning of a \$17-million 50,000-gallon storage tank to serve some 600 households spanning seven communities in St. Ann.
- The glass-fused-to-steel bolted tank, was installed in Liberty District, to serve that community as well as Roadside, New Banks, Tanglewood, Lewis, Coolshade Housing Scheme and Hartland.
- A 50,000 gallon storage tank, valued \$22 million, was commissioned in York Town, Clarendon.
- Commissioning of the \$31 million Macka Hill Pipeline Replacement Project in St. Mary.
- \$25 million upgrading project for Mitchel Town and its environs in St. Mary.
- New 20,000 gallon tank and various rainwater harvesting mechanisms installed at Albert Town High School in Trelawny at a cost of \$4.5 million.

### Pipeline Replacement Project

- The \$450 million Waltham Park Road Pipeline Replacement Project, which serves 20,000 persons, was completed.
- An Instrumentation and Meters Laboratory opened at the National Water Commission.
- More than 1,400 persons in St. Catherine West Central

are benefiting from a \$95 million investment in the Connors/Ginger Ridge Water Scheme.

- The Cedar Hill Tank and Somerton Water Supply project in St. James was commissioned into service.
- 30 new pickup trucks were added to the NWC fleet to boost service delivery to customers across more than 450,000 accounts.

### Environment

- Commissioning of a rainwater harvesting system at the Forestry Department's Constant Spring Road Nursery, and upgraded irrigation systems at the entity's Mount Airy Nursery in St. Andrew.
- Another phase of the \$41 million Treasure Beach Drainage Improvement Project in St. Elizabeth was completed.



Minister Without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Senator the Hon. Matthew Samuda, commissions into service the Mitchell Town Pipeline Replacement and Tank Rehabilitation Project in Clarendon in April.



Senator Matthew Samuda, plants a sapling at Jamaica House as part of the launch of the urban tree-planting thrust.



Minister Samuda turns on the water valve at a fire hydrant in Sterling Castle Heights, St. Andrew West Rural, following improvement works by the National Water Commission (NWC). Observing is Minister of State in the Ministry of National Security and Member of Parliament for the constituency, Hon. Juliet Cuthbert-Flynn (right), while resident of Sterling Castle Heights, Suzanne Thompson, cools down during the proceedings.



## Thousands of New Homeowners

**H**omeownership remains a top priority of the Government as thousands more Jamaicans received housing units, serviced lots, land titles and other benefits through programmes and initiatives.

### New Social Housing Programme

- 180 homes have been handed over under the Government's New Social Housing Programme (NSHP).

### New Houses/Service lots Handed Over

- The National Housing Trust (NHT) handed over keys and documents for 1,134 housing solutions in four developments.
- Keys were handed over for 348 additional units in other developments previously completed.

### Breaking of Ground

- 144 housing units at a cost of \$2.8 billion comprising 130 duplexes and 14 mixed-use units at Royal Estates, Tivoli Gardens, Kingston, under the Community Renewal Project.
- 60 two-bedroom/one-bath housing units at a cost of \$907 million in Sheffield Palms, Retreat, Westmoreland (Partnership with Sheffield Palms Limited under the Guaranteed Purchase Programme).

### Upgrading of NHT Schemes

- 16 schemes were upgraded – Chippenham (Bamboo) in St. Ann; Charlemont, Hamilton Gardens Phase 1, Hellshire Park Phase 2, Portsmouth, and Southborough in St. Catherine; Croft's Hill and New Town (Hayes) in Clarendon; Farm Heights in St. James; Fleet Street Apartments and Mountain View Apartments in Kingston; Frontier, Stockholm, and Iterboreale in St.



Prime Minister Andrew Holness (2nd left) embraces Shaniel Francis (left) after presenting her with the keys to her new three-bedroom house under the New Social Housing Programme (NSHP) at Casabanna in Clifton, St. Catherine, on December 19. Sharing the moment are Member of Parliament St. Catherine East Central, Hon. Alando Terrelonge (right) and Member of Parliament, St. Catherine South Eastern, Robert Miller.

Mary; and Red Hills Pen Housing Scheme in St. Thomas.

### Easier Access to Financing

- The External Financing Mortgage Programme (EFMP) was

introduced, enabling contributors earning \$30,000.99 or more weekly, as well as those who require additional financing, to access their NHT loan at one of 10 partner mortgage institutions.

- Improvements were made to the Housing Micro-finance Loan Programme, allowing contributors to access financing from approved credit unions towards a wide range of housing-related expenses.

The qualifying wage ceiling increased by 103 per cent to \$86,000 weekly or less, up from \$42,000 weekly or less.

The facility's maximum loan limit also increased to \$1.95 million, up from \$1.5 million.

A total of 12 credit unions signed on to the programme.

### Increase in Loan Ceiling

- An additional \$1 million was available to contributors, representing a 15 per cent increase in the general loan ceiling from \$6.5 million up to \$7.5 million.
- House Lot, Home Improvement, Ten Plus (10+) and Fifteen Plus (15+) loans moved from \$2.5 million to \$3.5 million.

- The NHT made up to \$8.5 million available to a single applicant (subject to affordability) when purchasing a unit on the Open Market costing \$12 million or less.

### National Land Agency (NLA)

- More than 254 residents of Manchester and St. Catherine received certificates of title for property they have occupied for several years under the Systematic Land Registration Programme.



Little Latoya Grant (foreground) jumps for joy as Prime Minister Andrew Holness prepares to cut the ribbon to hand over a new three-bedroom house to her family in Buff Bay, Portland in September. Latoya's father Leroy Grant (left), looks on.



Prime Minister Holness (left) looks on as Calbert Jones (right) enters his new three-bedroom house, which was provided under the New Social Housing Programme.



# Connecting Jamaica

The Government continued its thrust to bridge the digital gap and connect Jamaicans, particularly in rural areas, through the establishment of free, secured Wi-Fi hotspots in communities across the island.

## Broadband Access

- Four parish courts, six police stations, all municipal corporations and 524 educational institutions across the island were connected to the Internet under the national broadband initiative.

## Tablets/Laptops in Schools

- 10,000 laptops were procured for high schools at a cost of \$600 million to facilitate e-testing for external examinations.
- An additional 3,000 teachers received vouchers towards acquiring laptops to assist with the teaching-learning process, bringing the number to more than 19,000.

The cost of this programme is approximately \$2.44 billion.

- 90 projectors were procured and distributed to 65 schools.
- 59 interactive boards were procured and distributed to 57 schools.

## Boosting Public Transportation

- The Jamaica Urban Transit Company (JUTC) procured 50 new buses, boosting the daily runout to 315. The number consisted of 45 diesel and five electric buses.
- Three charging stations for electric buses were installed.
- Operation Streamline was launched to rid the streets of rogue taxi drivers and ensure the safety of the public.

## Supporting Business and Innovation

- \$834,939 million was allocated for research and development, which is \$47,207



Minister of Science, Energy, Telecommunications and Transport Hon. Daryl Vaz assists Mona High School student, Oneil Christie, to board one of the JUTC's wheelchair accessible busses at the Half-Way-Tree Transportation Centre on September 11. Observing (from left) are: Managing Director of the JUTC, Paul Abrahams, Minister of Education and Youth, Hon. Fayval Williams, and other officials of the bus company.

million or six per cent more than the 2022/ 2023 allocation.

- The Scientific Research Council (SRC) supported more than 39 small businesses in producing juices, flavoured water, sauces, jams, herbal products, and meat processing.
- Fifty-six (56) new products were developed for commercialization.

- More than 7,900 tests on water, food, and other samples (swabs, air assessments, cosmetics) were completed.

- Training workshops were facilitated by the SRC in agro-processing, meat processing, food safety standards, waste water management, basic science laboratory technology, and personal care development (soaps and lotions).

## Rural Electrification

- Work was advanced to provide reliable and safe electricity supply to underserved communities and those under The Rural Electrification Programme (REP).
- Pilot project launched to provide 10,000 solar lamps to households that do not have access to electricity.



Minister Vaz assists little Kierra Webster (3rd left) to use a computer at the opening of a Community Access Point (CAP) at the Windsor Castle Primary School in Portland in February.



A youngster from Allison, Manchester, uses his smartphone to access free internet service provided under the Government's Community Wi-Fi Programme.



Minister Daryl Vaz (right) examines a solar-powered lamp with Member of Parliament for St. James Central and Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Heroy Clarke, during a tour of communities in St. James that are to benefit under the Rural Electrification Programme (REP), on November 10. Looking on (from 2nd left) are Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Energy, Telecommunications and Transport, Hon. J.C. Hutchinson, and Managing Director, Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF), Omar Sweeney.





## Tourism – Major Driver of Economic Resurgence

Tourism remains one of the biggest drivers of Jamaica's post-COVID-19 economic resurgence and growth, underlining the island's status as one of the fastest recovering countries globally and the Caribbean's most rapidly growing tourist destinations.

### Visitor Arrivals

- Jamaica welcomed 4.15 million visitors, representing an increase of 24% over the previous year. This includes 2,886,064 stopover visitors, which marks a 16.4% rise. Additionally, there were 1,265,586 cruise arrivals recorded for the year, representing a 48.3% increase over 2022. This surge in visitors generated foreign exchange earnings of US\$4.27 billion, which represents an 18% increase over 2022.
- The \$1.3 billion Bengal Cove Villas development in Discovery Bay, St. Ann was officially opened.
- The new and improved roadway to the historic Bath Fountain Hotel in St. Thomas, was officially opened.
- \$1 billion in sales generated by small farmers utilising the TEF-facilitated Agri-Linkages Exchange (ALEX) platform.

- Ground was broken for the eight-storey Montego Bay Racquet Club Condominiums and Spa development.
- The Ministry, through TEF, handed over 50 new 650-gallon water tanks to farmers in Ulster Spring, Southern Trelawny.

### New Flights

- Jamaica welcomed Frontier Airlines' inaugural non-stop flight from Denver, Colorado and from Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport in Dallas, Texas; Southwest Airlines' inaugural flight from Kansas, Missouri; Norse Atlantic Airways inaugural flight from London-Gatwick Airport.

### Economic Boost for SMTEs

- As at July, the National Export-Import Bank of Jamaica (EXIM Bank) had approved and disbursed loans totalling \$1.93 billion to operators of small and medium-sized tourism enterprises (SMTEs).
- Over 600 patrons attended the two-day 'Christmas in July' trade show at the A.C. Hotel by Marriott Kingston, which showcased 175 exhibitors featuring locally made products.



Minister of Tourism, Hon. Edmund Bartlett (left), greets passengers arriving at the Norman Manley International Airport in Kingston in December.



The inaugural Flair Airlines flight from Toronto, Canada, is given the traditional welcome on arrival at the Norman Manley International Airport in Kingston in December.



Minister Bartlett engages with Red Cap Porters at the Norman Manley International Airport, during a recent visit.



Minister Bartlett looks examines a craft item during a tour of shops in Portland in June.



# Unwavering Commitment in Combating Crime and Violence

The Government's commitment was unwavering in tackling crime and violence through strategic investments in infrastructure, technology and equipment.

## Technology in Crime Fighting

- Digitisation of the police force continued with implementation of the electronic Station Records Management and Case Management Systems.
- JCF acquired equipment valued at \$30 million to strengthen cybersecurity capabilities.
- Computers valued at US\$700,000 were procured under the Security Strengthening Project (SSP), funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).
- Additional body-worn cameras were procured for the police, with more than 400 deployed. Ten of the 19 police divisions were outfitted with cameras.
- More than 750 Traffic Ticket Management System (TTMS)

handsets and 750 mobile handheld printers were handed over to the JCF.

## Vehicles Acquired

- 74 motorcycles were added to the Public Safety and Traffic Enforcement Branch (PSTEB). With this addition, PSTEB now boasts a fleet of 435 motorcycles.
- 25 new vehicles were acquired for the JCF.
- Japan provided \$428 million in grant aid to bolster the JCF's mobility.

## Police Facilities Built, Renovated

- Renovation and construction works conducted at 134 police facilities.
- Ten domestic violence centres, designed to assist with conflict resolution, were established at police stations islandwide.

## Crimes Down

- 2023 recorded the lowest number of serious crimes, murders, shootings, rape, robberies and break-ins

reported in approximately 22 years.

- Serious crimes in 2023 declined by 10 per cent relative to the previous year, with murders down by 7.8 per cent; and robberies and break-ins, 14 per cent.
- Of the 2970 major crime incident reported, 1453 were cleared through arrests.
- Over 517 persons were arrested for murder and over 600 murder cases were cleared; 385 persons were arrested for shooting and over 418 shooting cases were cleared; 994 persons were arrested for sexual offences, while 980 cases were cleared.
- 23 service dogs were added to the Canine Division.
- \$10.2 million was paid out in Crime Stop rewards.

## New Police Recruits

- Approximately 829 new constables of the JCF trained, 54 new correctional officers and 392 Jamaica National Service Corps (JNSC) new members graduated.



New Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) constables at the passing out parade at the National Police College of Jamaica in Twickenham Park, St. Catherine.



State Minister for National Security, Hon. Juliet Cuthbert Flynn, engages with a student at a summer camp organized by the Ministry.



National Security Minister, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang (left), looks on as Corporal Byron Martindale (2nd left) of the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) prints a ticket, during a demonstration of the e-ticketing system. Looking on are Constable Morata Murdock and Commissioner of Police, Major General Antony Anderson. Occasion was the handover of 3,000 sets of rugged handsets and printers at the Public Safety and Traffic Enforcement Branch (PSTEB) on Elleston Road in Kingston.



Prime Minister Andrew Holness looks at a specimen through a microscope at the JCF's technology exposition at the National Arena in Kingston. Observing (from left) are: Forensic Ballistics Expert, Assistant Superintendent of Police Miguel Bernard; Deputy Commissioner of Police, Fitz Bailey; Minister of National Security, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang; and Police Commissioner, Major General Antony Anderson.



## Strengthening Border Security

Government continued to strengthen measures to protect the country's borders, while undertaking programmes and initiatives to empower the population, particularly young people.

- JDF got an additional offshore patrol vessel- His Majesty's Jamaican Ship (HMJS) Norman Manley to boost maritime security and the blue economy.
- The JDF welcomed 392 new members, comprising 314 males and 78 females.
- Government allocated \$3.1 billion in the 2023/24 Estimates of Expenditure to facilitate the procurement of radar, marine offshore patrol vessels, cameras, software, hardware, and other equipment.
- The Passport, Immigration and Citizenship Agency (PICA) strengthened its digitisation efforts with its new e-passport introduced in April.
- The fully digitised entry process (C5 Electronic Entry Portal), which affords arriving airline passengers greater ease through Customs, became operational.
- A US\$2 million contract was signed with software solutions company Freshworks Limited to design and implement a passport customer relationship management (CRM) system.
- A new border security management system was acquired to better enable the entity to collect, process and analyse information on persons entering the country.
- 30 more immigration kiosks were installed.

### Rehabilitation of Inmates

- Renovated Block B at the Rio Cobre Juvenile Correctional Centre in Spanish Town was opened at a cost of \$34.3 million.

- 11 new motor vehicles were added to the Department of Correctional Services' (DCS) fleet, bringing the total to 107.

### WATCH TV FEATURES! DOWNLOAD the JIS Augmented Reality Mobile App

**Step 1:**  
Download any QR Code Reader app in your Google Play Store.

**Step 2:**  
Scan QR Code on front page of JIS Year In Review.

**Step 3:**  
Click the "Download Now" option for the JIS QR News Mobile app. Install.

**Step 4:**  
Open app, hover over and press play.

Hover over QR codes on each page to watch full Year in Review Feature on the JIS YouTube channel.

### Youth Initiatives

- Musical instruments and sports gear were donated to the Irwin High School in St. James and Grange Hill High in Westmoreland.
- Fifty-four tablet computers were handed over to several schools under the We Transform Youth Empowerment Programme (WTYEP), in partnership with e-Learning Jamaica Company Limited (e-LJAM).
- JDF hosted CodeSprint-Cyberthon, to empower young people to know more about cyber threats.



New offshore patrol vessel, His Majesty's Jamaican Ship (HMJS) Norman Manley, was commissioned into service on November 30.



A member of the Jamaica National Reserve (JNR) assists a wheelchair-bound resident, during a health fair at the Golden Grove All Age School in St. Ann in May.



Chief of Defence Staff, Rear Admiral Antonette Wemyss-Gorman, engages with soldiers during the Jamaica Defence Force's (JDF) inaugural CodeSprint Cyberthon at Up Park Camp, Kingston in October.



A service member from the First District, Jamaica Defence Force Coast Guard, fits a life vests on a student, during Girls' Day activities at Old Pera Primary School in St. Thomas.





## MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY



### What is the National Insurance Scheme?

The National Insurance Scheme (NIS) is a compulsory contributory funded social security scheme covering all employed persons in Jamaica. It is administered under the National Insurance Act and offers some financial protection to the worker and his or her family against loss of income arising from injury on the job, sickness, retirement and/or death of the bread winner.



### Who is Covered by the Scheme and What Happens to My Contributions?

All persons between the ages of 18 and 70 who earn an income are required to be registered with the NIS. The insurable population includes employed persons, self-employed persons and voluntary contributors. Contributions paid to the NIS are invested by the National Insurance Fund (NIF) in real estate, money and equity markets.



**Types of Benefits:** A number of benefits are administered by the NIS. In order to qualify for any of these benefits the relevant conditions are to be satisfied. These benefits are paid in the form of a pension or a grant. They are payable on a long or short-term basis.

#### Maternity Allowance

This benefit is payable to a Domestic Worker who has satisfied the qualifying conditions. The benefit is payable as a lump sum equal to eight weeks at the existing National Minimum Wage.

#### Special Child Benefit

This benefit is payable to the guardian of a child or children under the age of 18 whose mother is now deceased and the father's identity is unknown. The mother's contributions are used to determine qualification for this benefit.

#### Orphan Benefit

This benefit is payable to the guardian of a child or children under the age of 18 whose parents are deceased. The contribution of either parent is used to determine qualification for this benefit.

#### Employment Injury Benefit

This benefit is payable where an employee has sustained an injury caused by an accident, arising out of and in the course of insurable employment, or the development of any of the diseases prescribed by the National Insurance Act which can be attributed to the nature of the job. The cost of Medical treatment (subject to NIS rates) or a cash award may become applicable depending on the number of sick days granted by the medical doctor.

#### Employment Injury Disablement Pension

This benefit is payable where a disability assessment in excess of 10% has been diagnosed by the Medical Board of the NIS.

#### Employment Injury Death Benefit

This benefit is payable upon the death of an employee as a result of an accident arising out of and in course of insurable employment, or from any of the diseases prescribed by the National Insurance Act which can be attributed to the nature of the job.

#### Invalidity Benefit

This benefit is payable to a contributor who has satisfied the contribution requirement and has been diagnosed with a medical condition that renders him/her permanently incapable of working for a continuous period of at least twenty-six (26) weeks.

#### Retirement Pension

The contributor must attain the retirement age defined by the National Insurance Act and satisfy the contribution requirements. This benefit is payable during the life of the pensioner.

#### Spouse Allowance

This benefit is only payable to a pensioner whose spouse is not in receipt of a benefit from the NIS nor will become eligible for a benefit. It is not a separate pension, but is payable as an additional sum to a pensioner who has satisfied the requirement for this allowance.

#### Widow's/Widower's Benefit

This benefit is payable to the spouse of a deceased NIS contributor or pensioner. The payment of this benefit can be either for the short-term (one year or more) or long-term (for the life of the pensioner) depending on the qualifying conditions.

#### Special Anniversary

This benefit is payable to persons who were born before January 1, 1908 and were not eligible to contribute to the NIS on the basis of their age at the inception of the scheme in 1966.

#### Funeral Grant

This benefit is payable upon the death of (i) a NIS pensioner or his/her spouse; (ii) a NIS contributor who has satisfied the required contribution conditions or his/her spouse; (iii) an employee whose death was as a result of injuries sustained in insurable employment.

#### Grant

A grant is a one-time payment and is awarded when the contribution conditions for a pension are not satisfied. Grants are payable in the categories of retirement, widow's/widower's, special child, orphan and invalidity.

#### NI Gold

This is a health insurance plan which provides comprehensive medical coverage for all NIS pensioners. Once a pension is awarded the pensioner automatically qualifies for coverage under this plan. No premium is paid by the pensioner to access this benefit.

#### How can the Benefits be Accessed?

All applications are to be made on the prescribed National Insurance Scheme Application Form and submitted with the relevant supporting documents. All forms are available free of cost at the Ministry of Labour and Social Security offices island wide and on-line at [www.mlss.gov.jm](http://www.mlss.gov.jm).

Website: [www.mlss.gov.jm](http://www.mlss.gov.jm)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/mlssjamaica/](https://www.facebook.com/mlssjamaica/) | Twitter: [twitter.com/JamaicaMlss](https://twitter.com/JamaicaMlss)

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/mlssjamaica/](https://www.instagram.com/mlssjamaica/)



## Improved Benefits for the Most Vulnerable

The Ministry of Labour and Social Security continued to provide support to the most vulnerable in the society.

### Social Security Division

- Pension rate increased under the National Insurance Scheme, effective June 15. Full rate increased by 23 per cent, moving from \$3,400 to \$4,200 per week. The benefit for persons receiving three-quarter-rate pension was increased by 37 per cent, moving from \$2,500.50 to \$3,500 per week. Also, pensioners receiving half-rate pension saw a 76 per cent increase, moving from \$1,700 to \$3,000 per week.
- Effective April 1, the flat rate for the minimum weekly pension increased by 74 per cent, moving from \$1,700 to \$3,000.
- Twenty grade-10 students who are pursuing agricultural studies at secondary-level institutions in St. Catherine received a donation of \$600,000 from Jamaican workers at Gebbers Farms in Washington in the United States (US).
- Families on the Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH) received an additional sum of \$3,500 to help with back-to-school expenses for each child registered in a public school from grades one to 13.
- A total of \$6.03 billion was expended on PATH benefit payments as of December 2023, while some \$372 million was spent on Back to School expenses for 106,048 students.
- The Social Pension Programme disbursed payments totalling some \$306,958,800 to elderly citizens and has

approximately 14,657 participants registered in the Programme.

- The Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities (JCPD) launched the Accessibility Checklist, which is designed to identify architectural and communication barriers encountered by persons with disabilities in private and public facilities.
- The Child Development Centre opened its doors in September to 223 children with developmental disabilities, who are now receiving special intervention in Kingston and Portland. Additionally, 60 children with mild to severe disabling conditions transitioned into special or regular primary education.
- 458 clients from PATH households received entrepreneurship grants under the Steps to Work Programme totalling \$73.2 million.
- The Canada Fund for Local Initiatives approved a grant of more than Can\$24,000 to expand the strategic engagement of rural women with disabilities in sustainable farming techniques.
- The Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities provided Rehabilitative Grant support valued at \$21,926,180.75 to 382 persons with disabilities in Jamaica.

### Labour Division

- Almost 10,000 workers were dispatched to Canada under the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Programme (SAWP).
- Effective June 1, the national minimum wage was increased from \$9,000 to \$13,000 per 40-hour work week.
- The minimum wage for industrial security guards was increased from \$10,500 to \$14,000 per week.



Minister of Labour & Social Security, Hon. Pearnel Charles Jr (left) and State Minister Hon. Norman Dunn engage with seven-year-old valedictorian, Andrae Forrester, during the Early Stimulant Programme (ESP) graduation ceremony, held at the Apostolic Church of Jamaica Bethel Temple in Kingston on July 18.



Dr. Norman Dunn (right) greets a customer at the Ministry's Manchester Regional Office, during a tour of the facility on September 29. Looking on (from left) are Colette Roberts Ridsen, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry and Hon. Pearnel Charles Jr., Minister of Labour and Social Security,



Minister Charles Jr, presents a food package to 69-year-old Eli Powell, during a visit to his home on Henley Road, Kingston 11 on December 21. Mr. Powell, who is blind, is a beneficiary of the Programme for Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH), and the National Council for Senior Citizens (NCSC).



Minister Pearnel Charles Jr (5th left, back row), and State Minister, Dr. Hon. Norman Dunn (4th right, back row), with some of the 15 families, representing 35 students, who were presented with book vouchers, totalling \$500,000 to assist with back-to-school expenses. The families were victims of a fire in Gregory Park, St. Catherine in August. Offering support is Member of Parliament for the area, Hon. Alando Terrelonge (4th left, back row).





**Jamaica  
Customs  
Agency**  
*'Country Above Self'*

# JCA MOBILE APP

## JaCustomsCONNECT

JA Customs Connect is available in both the **Google Play Store** and the **Apple AppStore**

### FEATURES

#### • **Duty Estimator**

A feature that allows users to estimate the amount payable when importing items in Jamaica.

#### • **Tariff Search**

A feature that allows users to determine the commodity code, duties and taxes, applicable to a specific item.

#### • **Track & Trace**

A feature that facilitates the tracking of items within the Customs clearance process.

#### • **Declaration Search**

A feature that facilitates the retrieval of declarations and allows the sharing, tracking and payment of declarations and the download of the associated Customs Assessment Notice.

#### • **Declaration Payment**

A feature that enables the payment of duties and taxes owed on imported goods.

ANDROID APP ON  
**Google Play**



Download on the  
**App Store**





# Driving MSME Growth, Fostering Export

**G**overnment strengthened support to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to drive business growth and enhance export.

- 16 technology firms benefited from access to capacity-building, mentorship, export markets and strategic networking opportunities under the Technology Innovation District (TID) Accelerator Project.
- Over 40 MSME operators were trained in the fundamentals of public procurement, equipping them to effectively participate in public procurement tenders, a crucial aspect of business growth and expansion.
- Export assistance was provided to 50 companies enrolled in JAMPRO's Cohort 3 of Export Max.
- The Jamaica Business Gateway online platform was launched by JAMPRO to facilitate business-to-government transactions, fostering efficiency and transparency regarding investment and business procedures.
- A US\$72,000 project was undertaken to strengthen cultural and creative industries.

## Trade Missions

- 80 private sector companies benefitted from ministerial trade missions to Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago, Dominican Republic, Miami, Atlanta, Toronto, New York, Washington, New York, and London.

## MSME Business Roadshows

- The MSME Business Roadshow was launched, offering

over 1,000 businesses access to services provided by 20 State agencies and sponsors.

- 12 entities were granted \$300,000 each to support the growth of their businesses, and over 155 MSMEs had the opportunity to exhibit their products and services.

## Loan Products

- The Export-Import Bank of Jamaica launched its EX-IM Solar Energy Loan Product, to finance the acquisition and installation of solar equipment, offering borrowers a medium-term, non-revolving, secured product for a tenure up to seven years, at a 7.5 per cent interest rate.
- The EX-IM Bank on-lent \$1.95 billion to support MSMEs faced with financial difficulties.

## Promoting Consumer Rights

- The Consumer Affairs Commission (CAC) handled 895 complaints and achieved a 64.13% resolution rate, with over \$22 million secured in refunds and compensation.
- 44,525 individuals were reached through 256 outreach activities, providing consumer advice and information.
- The CAC conducted 21 comprehensive price surveys covering various sectors such as groceries, agriculture, petroleum products, hardware items, and school textbooks. The findings which were published in news outlets and on the CAC's website, helped consumers to make wise spending choices.



Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce, Senator the Hon. Aubyn Hill (left) looks at a sample of stewed tamarind from Mama's Ole Time Products, while the company's principals Roger and Nadine Adams, highlights the ingredients. Occasion was a tour of booths during the Things Jamaica 60th anniversary Christmas trade show held recently at the JBDC's office on South Camp Road in Kingston.



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (left), listens as Manufacturing Chief, Pepsi Cola Jamaica, Javon Salmon, explains some of the features of the conveyor belt during a tour of the company's new US\$30-million state-of-the-art production line at the firm's Spanish Town Road plant in Kingston.



The Jamaica Business Development Corporation (JBDC) team demonstrates the use of equipment during a tour the state-of-the-art Essential Oils Incubator in November.



## Boost in Logistics Services

- Jamaica welcomed its first Floating Dry Dock. The facility, named Jam-Dock 1, arrived in Kingston on August 24, marking a major step in positioning Jamaica as a global logistics hub.
- The dock, which is moored in the Kingston Harbour, will be used to repair mainly commercial vessels, including container ships, bulk carriers and tankers.
- The Jamaica Special Economic Zone Authority (JSEZA) opened its first Business Accelerator Centre at Kingston Wharves Limited, which enables businesses within the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to have greater and expedited access to government business services.

### Accreditation and Certification

- Jamaica National Agency for Accreditation (JANAAC) has accredited three local laboratories and two inspection

bodies to the ISO/IEC 17025:2017 and the ISO/IEC 17020:2012 international standards, respectively.

- The National Certification Body of Jamaica (NCBJ) obtained accreditation to the ISO 22000:2018 standard to strengthen Food Safety Management Systems.

### Standards

- The Bureau of Standards Jamaica published 43 standards, including 27 products and 16 services.

### Authorisation and Licences

- The Hazardous Substances Regulatory Authority granted over 100 authorisations (licences, permits and registrations) to facilities using ionising radiation sources in service delivery.
- The Cannabis Licensing Authority issued approximately 160 multiple category licences.



Jamaica's first floating dry dock arrived in August.



Patrons sample Jamaican-made coffee at the Jamaica Manufacturers and Exporters Association's (JMEA) Expo in May.



Manager for the Testing and Industrial Services Branch, Bureau of Standards Jamaica (BSJ), Richard Lawrence (left), and Civil Engineer, David Allen, do a sieve analysis for fine aggregate during the BSJ's 'Outta Road' Stakeholder Engagement for the Construction Sector at the Golf View Hotel in Manchester on July 30. The session included information on best practices that blockmakers, producers of aggregates and ready-mixed concrete should employ in their processes.



Senator Hill looks at Jamaican products sourced by Baltimore-based food distribution company, EMD Sales for distribution to supermarkets in the United States. Looking on is President of EMD Sales, Elda Devarie.



# Govt's Communication Strengthened

The Government's communication machinery was strengthened to reach Jamaicans across the length and breadth of the island, and to guard against misinformation and disinformation which can threaten democracy. Progress was also made on digital switchover.

## Communication Architecture and Synergies

- Regular post-Cabinet press briefings were held as part of the Government's responsive and innovative communication infrastructure, fostering transparency, public engagement and trust.
- Support increased for communications and public relations departments in government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), through increased engagement, training and providing

a collaborative environment for information sharing and strategic direction.

## Jamaica Information Service (JIS)

- New JIS website ([www.jis.gov.jm](http://www.jis.gov.jm)) and fact-checking platform ([www.factcheckja.com](http://www.factcheckja.com)) launched.
- Establishment of a dedicated social media department covering a myriad of platforms, such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, TikTok and LinkedIn, with an impressive outreach of more than 16 million online users between April and September.
- Renewal of the agency's ISO 9001:2015 certification in September 2023.
- Work began on establishment of St. Thomas regional office.

## Broadcasting Commission of Jamaica (BCJ)

- A Digital Media and Information Literacy (DMIL) Skills Framework was developed and submitted to OPM. This is in support of the Government's vision of making Jamaica a Digital Society,
- It consists of a Digital Competency Model; National Baseline/Benchmarking Data; and Implementation Methods and Mechanisms.
- Various broadcasters commenced testing for digital switchover.
- Work undertaken to establish a digital literacy skills framework to equip citizens, particularly children, to make better decisions when using the Internet.



Minister without portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Information, Hon. Robert Morgan, addresses the weekly post-Cabinet press briefing.

## Access To Information (ATI) Unit

- Upgrading of the ATI's website whereby all ATI requests can be submitted and tracked.

## Jamaica Archives and Records Department (JARD)

- Initiation of Records and Information Management

(RIM) systems in 58 public-sector entities under the GOJ RIM Programme.

- Eight entities that have successfully implemented the manual component of the new Government of Jamaica RIM programme presented with certificates of achievement and plaques.



Hon. Robert Morgan (left), in conversation with Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie (right), and Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Senator the Hon. Matthew Samuda.



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness in conversation with residents of Dalvey in St. Thomas during a tour of the parish on November 19 to assess flood damage.



# Jamaica Marches Forward on Road to Republic

Work was advanced in 2023 to further Jamaica's transition from a Constitutional Monarchy to a Republic. The process is spearheaded by the Ministry of Legal and Constitutional Affairs.

## Key Achievements

- Establishment of the Constitutional Reform Committee (CRC) on March 22, 2023. Members will provide expert guidance and oversight to Jamaica's transition from a

Constitutional Monarchy to a Republic.

- Executed over 70 public engagement sessions between April and December 2023 (Town Hall Meetings in Portland, Manchester, St. Elizabeth, Westmoreland, and St. James; presentations by stakeholders at CRC meetings; online consultation sessions; etc.).



Minister of Legal and Constitutional Affairs, Hon. Marlene Malahoo Forte, engages with a member of the public at a Constitutional Reform town hall in Montego Bay.



Prime Minister Holness (foreground), with members of the Constitutional Reform Committee, at the Office of the Prime Minister on March 22. From left are (2nd row) Sujae Boswell, Senator Donna Scott-Mottley, Minister of Legal and Constitutional Affairs, Hon. Marlene Malahoo Forte; Ambassador Rocky Meade; Attorney General, Dr. Derrick McKoy and Laleta Davis Mattis. In the back row (from left) are Dr. Nadeen Spence, Senator the Hon. Tom Tavares-Finson, Hugh Small, Dr. David Henry, Anthony Hylton and Professor Richard Albert.

- Completion of deliberations by the CRC on matters relating to the transition from a Constitutional Monarchy to a Republic and establishment of the Office of President (Phase 1).
  - Formation of the Public Engagement and Communication Committee, which facilitates the receipt and examination of questions, proposals and ideas from the Jamaican public and mobilises public interest in the work of the Committee.
  - Establishment of the Youth Strategic Engagement Committee to facilitate active and inclusive participation of young people in the constitutional reform process.
  - Creation of the State Affairs Committee, which is responsible for reviewing the existing powers exercised by the Monarch through the Governor-General, under the Constitution and any other relevant laws or by convention.
  - Launched Road to Republic National Public Education Campaign, aimed at educating Jamaicans on the
- Constitutional Reform Process, particularly the country's journey from a Constitutional Monarchy to a Republic.
  - Bail Act passed by House of Representatives on Tuesday, July 25.
  - Completion of deliberations by the CRC on matters relating to the transition from a Constitutional Monarchy to a Republic and establishment of the Office of President (Phase 1).
  - Design and implementation of a robust Legal Education Programme.
  - Establishment of a comprehensive human rights portfolio, active engagement of all stakeholders, maintaining a presence in international fora, and receiving commendations from stakeholders in carrying out the work.
  - Creation of a dedicated website for the Constitutional Reform (Road to Republic) Programme: [road-torepublic.mlca.gov.jm](http://road-torepublic.mlca.gov.jm). The Ministry's website was established in 2022 ([mlca.gov.jm](http://mlca.gov.jm)).



Legal Education Officer, Ministry of Legal and Constitutional Affairs, Ivan Godfrey (right), speaks to Cedar Grove Academy students about the voting process during the Ministry's Road to Republic School Tour, which was launched on November 23, at the St. Catherine based institution.



# Significant Skills Support and Digital Transformation

Notable developments in these areas were:

## HEART/NSTA Trust

- Tuition and administrative fees for programmes up to level four (associate degree) were waived on April 1.
  - Enrolment increased by 19 per cent.
  - Between January and November, 119,641 students were enrolled, with 46,403 gaining certification.
  - 11,362 adult learners were enrolled under the High School Diploma Equivalency (HSDE) programme, with 3,147 adults being certified.
  - 7,653 persons were placed in short and long-term employment.
  - 44 trainee start-ups were approved for funding in the amount of \$13 million.
  - 85 instructors were trained in emerging and labour market demand areas,
- including drone technology, optoelectronics, wall and floor tiling and forklift operation.
  - Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) scholarships were provided to 123 beneficiaries.
  - 300 taxi drivers trained in customer service, occupational health and safety, conflict resolution, compliance with the rules and regulations of the traffic control system, performing vehicle inspection and accident-emergency procedures.
  - HEART, in support of the Social Housing Programme, constructed and handed over seven homes to beneficiaries under the Tiny House Initiative.
  - Four Centres of Excellence and two STEAM Labs opened at HEART institutions, in response to the growing trend towards automation within all industries, including smart

manufacturing, cloud computing, artificial intelligence and the Internet of things.

## LIFT

- Launch of \$2-billion Learning and Investment for Transformation (LIFT) programme that will benefit 2,500 students over the next five years.
- The initiative targets fifth- and sixth-form graduates and provides sustainable avenues for education, employment and assimilation into society.

## Digitisation

- Digital Jamaica, a €9.5-million programme aimed at increasing access to and use of information and communications technologies (ICT) to support the country's transition to a digital economy and society was launched
- 10 post offices have been modified to serve as National Identification System (NIDS) enrolment centres.



Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with oversight for Skills and Digital Transformation, Senator Dr. the Hon. Dana Morris Dixon (left), examines a robotic device being held by Instructor, HEART/NSTA Trust, Dihanroy Mitchell, during the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union (BITU) Symposium on Digital Transformation and Upskilling of the Labour Force, at the Spanish Court Hotel in New Kingston on November 9.



Minister Without Portfolio with Responsibility for Skills and Digital Transformation, Senator Dr. the Hon. Dana Morris Dixon (left), speaks with members of Jamaica's team, which copped gold in the Robotics Olympics, which took place in Singapore from October 7 to 10. Minister Morris Dixon met with the members during a courtesy call at Jamaica House on October 31.



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (right), speaks with participants in the Jamaica National Service Corps (JNSC) Residential Camps, at the official launch of the programme at the AC Marriott Hotel in St. Andrew.





Ministry of National Security



Let's Protect Our Children.  
Enough is Enough !

Let's LIV GUD!



## Ensuring Access to Justice for All

Significant investment was made in refurbishing court facilities, training persons in alternative justice services, and providing support for victims of crime and violence.

### Renovation of Court Houses

- Clarendon Parish Court was renovated at a cost of \$24.3 million.
- St. Mary Parish Court (Gayle) was renovated at a cost of \$21.2 million.
- Refurbishing work undertaken at the Hanover Parish Court at a cost of \$20.8 million, and included roof repairs, bathroom upgrade and A/C installation.
- Supreme Court bathroom facilities was upgraded at a cost of \$12.4 million.
- The St. James Family Court was upgraded at a cost of \$9,013,100.
- The Kingston and St. Andrew (KSA) Civil Court (Sutton Street) received bathroom and plumbing infrastructure upgrade at a cost of \$6.3 million. Work was also undertaken at the KSA Parish Court (Criminal Division) at a cost of \$3.5 million.
- Work was undertaken at the Trelawny Parish Court (Duncans) at a cost of \$8.2 million, including asphalt paving, and supply and installation of chain link fencing and gate.

### Social Justice Division

- New Social Justice Division established.

### Victim Support

- For the period January to September, 4,508 new clients were referred to and served at the Victim Services

Branch (VSB) and 5,762 follow-up clients assisted.

- A child-friendly centre opened in Portland to provide counselling and other support services for youngsters who are victims of crime and other abuses. The facility was set up through \$6.7-million from the United States (US).
- A child-friendly space was established at the VSB office in Mandeville, Manchester, under the US-Jamaica Child Protection Compact Partnership.
- Jamaica received Can\$12-million from Canada, under the Social Justice (So-JUST) Project, to facilitate a more rights-based and gender-sensitive justice system.
- The Ministry revamped its website, which now showcases several interactive features designed to increase Jamaicans' engagement with and enhance their understanding of the justice system and the services provided.
- Justices of the Peace
- For the period January to September, 802 Justices of the Peace (JP) were commissioned and 5,474 were sensitised.
- Cabinet approved an annual subvention to JP associations.

### Expungement

- For the period January to September, 1,590 expungement applications were processed.

### Restorative Justice (RJ)

- From January to September, 27,534 persons were trained and sensitised; 258 RJ practices training sessions were conducted; and 1,994 case conferences were conducted with 7,550 clients benefitting.



Minister of Justice, Hon. Delroy Chuck (2nd left) engages with students from Lyssons Primary School in St. Thomas, during a Justice Fair in the parish in April. Sharing the moment are Custos of St. Thomas, Hon. Marcia Bennett (3rd left) and Chief Justice, the Hon. Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes (2nd right).



Minister Delroy Chuck (4th left) along with Chargé d'Affaires, United States Embassy, Amy Tachco (4th right), cuts the ribbon to officially open the child-friendly space at the Victim Services Branch office in Mandeville, Manchester, on August 18. Sharing the moment (from left) are Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Justice, Grace Ann Stewart McFarlane; Custos of Manchester, Hon. Garfield Green; Member of Parliament for Manchester Central, Rhoda Moy Crawford; Warnath Group Country Project Director, Aylair Livingston; Manager, Trafficking Secretariat, Ministry of Justice, Audrey Budhi; and Children's Advocate, Diahann Gordon Harrison.

### Child Diversion

- From January to September, 6,741 (2,663 males and 4,078

females) were sensitised. In addition, 504 (348 males and 156 females) referrals received, and 211 (182 males

and 29 females) clients completed the programme successfully.



# Agriculture

## Rebounding Stronger

The sector benefited from significant support, which spurred its resurgence from fallout sparked by natural disasters.

### Support for Farmers

- \$200 million provided to support drought-affected farmers. Of the sum, \$104 million was allocated for trucking water, \$48 million to purchase three trucks, while other sums for the provision of mulch, seeds, planting material and fertiliser, among other inputs.
- \$63-million support package for farmers in sections of South St. Elizabeth, South Manchester and parts of St. Ann which were affected by heavy midyear rains.
- A total of \$157 million was announced to support farmers affected by the Potential Tropical Cyclone 22.

### Investment

- The Ministry partnered with the Jamaica Organic Agriculture Movement (JOAM) on a \$50-million Soil Regeneration and Fertility Improvement Project.
- \$35 million in support for organic agriculture was also announced.
- A US\$14-million investment over the next five years to drive a minimum 50 per cent increase in the production of ginger, turmeric and pimento.
- The Blue Justice Caribbean Hub was launched in Jamaica to tackle transnational crime in the fisheries sector.
- A total of 50 goats, including the Boer, Nubian and Kiko breeds that have genetic superiority, were imported under the Small Ruminant Development Programme.



1



2



3



4

1. Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining Minister, Hon. Floyd Green, shows Prime Minister Holness the champion bull at the Denbigh Agricultural and Industrial Show in August.
2. Minister Floyd Green (left) looks at a display on the use of agrotechnology, during a tour of booths at the Kingston and St. Andrew Agricultural Show (Agrofest) on May 27 at the Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining Ministry's playground in Kingston. Looking on is Regional Manager, Eastern Region, Jamaica 4-H Clubs, Alain Cox.
3. Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining, Hon. Floyd Green (left), speaks with Dionne Blake, a farmer from Cornwall in St. Elizabeth, following the handover of a donkey and farming equipment.
4. Prime Minister Holness selects produce on display at the Denbigh Agricultural and Industrial Show.



SCAN ME



## Bolstered Capabilities

### Infrastructure Development

- Installation of new solar panels at the Beacon E pump station in St. Elizabeth by the National Irrigation Commission (NIC)
- A new pumping station, and ramp was commissioned in Clarks Town, Trelawny by the NIC.
- Rehabilitation of 350-metre farm road in Spring Garden, near Bamboo, St. Ann, at a cost of \$9 million
- New communal milking parlours opened for dairy farmers in Hillside, St. Thomas.
- \$24 million was provided to help build out a tunnel house for chickens at the College of Agriculture, Science and Education (CASE).

- Some \$20 million was also provided to construct goat houses, and work was done on the institution's piggery.

### Equipment

- Six new farm tractors, valued approximately \$49.7 million, were presented to Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA) to bolster agricultural activities in six high-producing parishes – St. Thomas, St. Ann, St. Elizabeth, Clarendon, Manchester, and St. Catherine.
- Farmers in Clarks Town, Trelawny benefit from new water truck.

### Building Capacity

- Local farmers benefited from improved access to RADA extension services with the launch of the entity's first ever mobile application (app)

- 15 farmers and four government officers participated in sustainable hydroponics production systems training, under the 'Addressing the Water-Energy-Food Nexus' (WEF) Project

- 172 farmers from St. Ann, the majority being women, graduated from a Farmer Field School training programme
- 24 per cent of lands in agro-parks were occupied by young farmers, surpassing the Ministry's target of 20 per cent.

- Scores of small ruminant farmers benefited from a parasite-control training session to bolster their activities and help Jamaica move closer to its food-security goals.



Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining, Hon. Floyd Green, shares a photo opportunity with Jamaica 4-H Clubs Champion Boy, Ishmael Smythe (right) and Champion Girl, Natoya Williams, during the Denbigh Agricultural, Industrial, and Food Show at the Denbigh Showground in Clarendon.



Pigs feed from a trough at the upgraded piggery at the College of Agriculture Science and Education (CASE) in Portland.



Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining, Hon. Floyd Green (right), and State Minister, Hon. Franklin Witter (centre), inspect solar panels comprising the new Plumwood Pumping Station PV Solar System Installation Project in New Forest, Manchester, along with Energy Engineer, National Irrigation Commission, Emile Myers.



Three of the six farm tractors that were handed over to the Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA) in January. The equipment valued approximately \$49.7 million.



## Upgrading of Health Facilities

- The Moneague Health Centre in St. Ann was refurbished at a cost of \$26 million to benefit 32,000 patients.
- Ground was broken for the construction of a new administrative building for the St. Ann Health Department at a cost of some \$400 million.
- The Mandeville Comprehensive Health Centre in Manchester was upgraded to offer improved services and retrofitted with additional safety features to be more resilient to natural disasters. Work was done under the US\$6.5-million Caribbean-wide Smart Health Project.
- The Cambridge Health Centre was renovated by the NHF at a cost of more than \$60 million. It will benefit some 4,000 residents of Cambridge and its environs.
- A new \$29 million energy-efficient boiler system was installed at the Savanna-la-Mar Public General Hospital in Westmoreland.
- a US\$5-million contract was signed for the implementation of an Electronic Health Records (EHR) System in the public health sector.
- The St. Elizabeth-based Black River Hospital was equipped with a \$37 million digital retrofit system.

### Tackling NCDs

- Thousands of persons across the island benefitted from free health checks under the 'Know Your Numbers' campaign.
- A 'Weekend of Wellness (WOW) was staged involving free health checks, invigorating workout sessions and nutritious food
- The Nutrition Facts Panel Media Campaign was



Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, cuts the ribbon to open the newly refurbished waiting area at the Mandeville Regional Hospital on December 14. Looking on (in the foreground) is Nurse Janett Bonner-Waugh. Others in the background (from left) are: Matron Sadie Allen; Head of the Ophthalmology Department, Dr. Gavin Henry; Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the hospital, Alwyn Miller; Senior Medical Officer, Dr. Everton McIntosh; and Regional Director for the Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA), Michael Bent.

launched to help consumers make healthier food choices.

- A Physical Activity and Pregnancy Guide was produced to reduce the risk of developing

gestational diabetes, pre-eclampsia, postpartum depression and Caesarean delivery.

### Promoting Mental Wellness

- Problem Management Plus (PM+) was launched, which trains community leaders to provide mental health support to persons at the community level. The inter-

vention was developed to assist people with mild depression, anxiety, and stress.

- A series of school wellness check-ins were conducted at high schools across the island. The sessions included stress-management technique displays, exercise sessions aimed at promoting mental wellness and strategies to reduce stigma.



Minister Tufton demonstrates his physical fitness during a Caribbean Wellness Day event on Friday, September 8, at the VMBS grounds on Knutsford Boulevard in New Kingston.



A senior citizen's blood pressure is checked during a 'Know Your Numbers' campaign event in Linstead, St. Catherine in December.



## Gov't Enhancing Quality of Health Care

The Government continued to deliver on its commitment to provide quality health care for Jamaicans, with billions expended to increase access to medications, improve health facilities, acquire much-needed equipment, combat non-communicable diseases among other initiatives.

### Increase In Drug Subsidy

- The subsidy for drugs was expanded for the over 350,000 active beneficiaries of the National Health Fund (NHF) Card, and the more than 21,000 beneficiaries of the Jamaica Drug for the Elderly Programme (JADEP).
- The NHF instituted the Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) test benefit to encourage more men to get tested, with provision of a \$1,600 subsidy for one PSA test per year.
- 61 contracts, valued at \$27 billion, were signed for the procurement of essential drugs under the 2023-2026 Pharmaceutical Awards Programme.
- Five new health conditions were added to its NHF Card Programme, representing an estimated \$450 million in additional subsidy and will see some 47,000 Jamaicans benefitting.

### Acquisition of Equipment, Vehicles

- A mammogram machine was installed at the University Hospital of the West Indies (UHWI) Mona at a cost of \$47 million.
- The renal unit of the Kingston Public Hospital (KPH) got 10 new hemodialysis machines, valued at over \$30 million from the Culture, Health, Arts, Sports and Education (CHASE) Fund.
- \$500 million was allocated to each of the four Regional



Health and Wellness Minister, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, exchanges high fives with Maliek Stephenson, a patient of the Mandeville Regional Hospital, during a visit to the facility in Manchester on December 21, where he brought gifts and smiles to the young patients.

- Health Authorities (RHAs) for infrastructure improvement and equipment replacement.
- Children got new C-Arm and laparoscopy machines donated by the CHASE Fund at a cost of \$46 million.
- 18 patient monitors valued at \$25 million to the UHWI by CHASE and Masonic Homes Limited.
- Two ambulances and a panel van were acquired at a cost of more than \$33 million to serve the parishes of St. Ann, St. Mary and Portland.
- Bustamante Hospital for



Two ambulances and a panel van, acquired at a cost of more than \$33 million, were handed over to the Northeast Regional Health Authority (NERHA) to serve the parishes of St. Ann, St. Mary and Portland.

panel van, at a total cost of \$62 million.

- The Linstead Public Hospital in St. Catherine and Princess Margaret Hospital in St. Thomas got two new ambulances valued at approximately \$33 million.

### Dengue Fight

- The vector control programme was enhanced, with additional funding of \$200 million to support drain-cleaning and other activities.
- Approximately 500 temporary vector control workers were engaged, and approximately 60 vehicles provided to facilitate intensified activities.

### New Limb, New Life

- A sum of \$50 million was made available under the 'A Prosthetic Partnership Programme to provide qualified persons with properly fitted prostheses, enabling them to return to normal life.



Minister Dr. Christopher Tufton (right) and Senior Medical Officer, Sir John Golding Rehabilitation Centre, Dr. Rory Dixon, observe as beneficiary Juliet Smith, tests an artificial leg at the Sir John Golding Rehabilitation Centre in St. Andrew on June 8.





KNOW YOUR  
**4 NUMBERS**

NEW YEAR

NEW YOU

**4 NUMBERS**  
YOU NEED TO KNOW  
**THIS YEAR!**



**BLOOD  
PRESSURE**

Should be below  
120/80 mmHg



**TOTAL BLOOD  
CHOLESTEROL**

Should be  
5 mmol/L or less



**FASTING BLOOD  
GLUCOSE**

Should be between  
3.9 mmol/L- 5.6 mmol/L



**BODY MASS  
INDEX**

Should be between  
18.5 -24.5 kg/m<sup>2</sup>



\*These targets may vary if you have an underlying health condition/illness

**TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR HEALTH TODAY!**

Screening is easy and it's for everyone. Just visit your nearest health centre. If you're unsure where to go or have questions, call us free at 888-ONE-LOVE or visit [ncdip.moh.gov.jm](http://ncdip.moh.gov.jm). We're here to help you on your way to a healthier life.



themohgovjm



## Improved Service Delivery and Benefits

Work continued to further enhance and consolidate public-sector efficiency, customer-service excellence and benefits to government officers.

### Service Excellence

- Implementation 'Driven by Service Excellence' Programme at Ministry of Finance and the Public Service.

### HRM Transformation

- 14 Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) went live on MyHR+, bringing the number using the integrated human resource and payroll platform to 70.

### ICT

- The Government Network (GovNet) was rolled out in the Kingston Metropolitan Area with approximately 230 subscribers.

- ICT Expansion Project successfully implemented at the Child Protection and Family Services Agency (CPFSA).

- Customer Relationship Management System Implemented at the Passport, Immigration and Citizenship Agency (PICA).

- The National Fisheries Licensing and Registration System has been developed and is being tested.

- A Modern Data Centre is now up and running following the procurement and commissioning of upgraded ICT equipment valued nearly \$500 million.

### Change Management

- 343 Public-Sector employees were trained in the Government of Jamaica eight-step Change Methodology. Another

34 were trained as Change Management Trainers.

- Change Agent Networks were established in nine MDAs to support Public Sector Transformation.

### Compensation Management

- A Job Evaluation Factor Plan was developed to evaluate jobs across the Public Sector.
- A new 16-band compensation structure was implemented as part of the compensation restructuring exercise.

### Paternity Leave

- Paternity leave with pay for fathers of newborns and leave for parents adopting and bringing a new child into the home, were effected.

### Public Sector Debate

- The Ministry of Finance and the Public Service won the



Customer Service Representative at the National Housing Trust (NHT), Betty-Ann Griffiths (left), interacts with a client.

2023 renewal, defeating the Jamaica Information Service (JIS) in the final.

Mathematics (STEM) Scholarship programme, being undertaken in partnership with The Mico University College, launched.

### STEM Scholarships

- The \$2.5 billion Science, Technology, Engineering and

## Legislation Passed to Advance Social and Economic Agenda

Several pieces of legislation were approved in 2023 by the Houses of Parliament to advance the country's social security and economic agenda.

### Legislation Passed

- Road Traffic (Reprieve and Nullification of Prescribed Notices) Act, 2023
- Representation of the People (Postponement of Elections to Municipal Corporations and City Municipalities) Act, 2023
- The Appropriation Act, 2023 No. 3
- The Childcare and Protection (Amendment) Act, 2023 No. 11
- The Companies (Amendment) Act, 2023 No. 4
- The Consumer Protection (Validation and Indemnity of Tribunal) Act, 2023

- The Constitution (Amendment of Sections 96(1) and 121(1)) Act, 2023 No. 10
- The Financial Administration and Audit (Amendment) Act, 2023
- The Electronic Transactions (Amendment) Act, 2023
- The National Compliance and Regulatory Authority Act, 2023 No. 8
- The Copyright (Amendment) Act, 2023
- The Bail Act, 2023
- Law Reform (Zones of Special Operations) (Special Security and Community Development Measures) (Amendment) Act, 2023
- The National Council on Drug Abuse (Repeal) Act, 2023
- The National Family Planning (Repeal) Act, 2023



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (centre) flanked by fellow parliamentarians ahead of the February 14 ceremonial opening of Parliament. The February 14 event returned to its full grandeur after years of COVID-19 restrictions.

- The Financial Administration and Audit (Amendment) (No.2) Act, 2023
- Amendments were made to the Copyright Act to enable greater access to books and other copyright works by blind, visually impaired or otherwise print-disabled and hearing-disabled persons in Jamaica.

- Amendments were made to the Special Economic Zones Act to benefit local and international stakeholders.
- The Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act

### Orders and Resolutions Approved

- Civil Service Establishment General Order, 2023

- Bauxite and Alumina Encouragement (Relevant Concession Period) Order, 2023
- Public Procurement (Registration and Classification of Suppliers) (Amendment) Regulations, 2023, Resolution

### Reports Approved

- Joint Select Committee on the Review of the Cyber-crimes Act adopted.



# School Plants

## Upgraded

### School Upgrades and Repairs

- \$440 million was allocated to fund critical repairs and maintenance activities in 125 schools across the seven regions.
- Eleven schools received \$3 million each to repair school furniture.
- A new classroom block valued at \$87.17 million was built to house the Special Education Unit at Albion Primary School in Knockpatrick, Manchester.
- Ground was broken for a \$253 million 11-classroom block at Bridgeport High School in Portmore.
- A \$46.2-million classroom block was built at Savanna-la-Mar Infant School in Westmoreland.
- A \$43-million facility for children with special needs was opened at the former Santa Cruz Basic School in St. Elizabeth.
- Also in St. Elizabeth, a new classroom block valued at \$235 million opened at the Black River High School.
- A retrofitted inclusive classroom for special needs students was established at Bethabara Infant School in Manchester.
- Ground was broken for new classrooms and amenities at the Exchange All-Age School in St. Ann at a cost of \$185 million.
- A new classroom block was constructed at the Grange Hill Primary school in Westmoreland, valued \$111.1 million.

### Tuition Support and Textbooks

- \$40 million for tuition payments, educational grants and school supplies for children in State care.

- \$299,999 in financial grant support for tertiary-level students facing challenges in financing their tuition.
- \$2 billion allocated to purchase textbooks for students at the primary and secondary levels.

### WATCH TV FEATURES! DOWNLOAD the JIS Augmented Reality Mobile App

**Step 1:**  
Download any QR Code Reader app in your Google Play Store.

**Step 2:**  
Scan QR Code on front page of JIS Year In Review.

**Step 3:**  
Click the "Download Now" option for the JIS QR News Mobile app. Install.

**Step 4:**  
Open app, hover over and press play.

Hover over QR codes on each page to watch full Year in Review Feature on the JIS YouTube channel.

### School Feeding

- More than 150,000 students benefited from the Traditional Cooked Lunch component of the School Feeding Programme.
- 21 schools were engaged in the School Gardens project at a cost of \$10 million, with an additional \$70 million allocated to schools at the infant and primary level for maintenance of canteen facilities.

### Special Education

- 530 students were placed in appropriate learning environments.
- 275 shadows were assigned to provide specialised support to students, in addition to the 213 newly trained shadows.

### Civics in Schools

- 584 schools offered Civics with a fully developed curriculum.



Minister of Education and Youth, Hon. Fayval Williams, has the attention of children from Rose Town, Kingston, as she reads to them just outside 'Di Cawna library' in the community on May 9.



Fourth and fifth form students of Holy Trinity High School in Kingston engaged in a class work using the new laptops provided by the Government.



## Progress in Education Transformation

The Government made good progress in the transformation of the education sector in keeping with the recommendations in the 2022 Jamaica Education Transformation Commission (JETC) report.

- \$4.6 billion in funding was committed by Cabinet for the transformation effort.
- Significant steps were made in finalising the Jamaica Teaching Council (JTC) Bill, which seeks to establish a governing body for the teaching profession, and a licensing and registration regime for all government-paid teachers.
- Progress made in improving the accounting system across all schools, which will improve governance and accountability with regard to financial management.
- Rollout of the Education Management Information System (EMIS) commenced, which will improve the tracking and monitoring of key performance indicators within the sector.
- The Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) expansion plan was advanced and advances made in eliminating the shift system in schools.

- A campaign, dubbed Transforming Education for National Development (TREND) was launched to promote the efforts to modernise and improve the education landscape.

### Curriculum Support and Development

- 43 mathematics coaches and 11 specialists were deployed to 151 schools.
- 27 intervention workshops were conducted at the pri-



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness looks on as six-year-old Ari from the Danny Williams School for the Deaf signs while using an assistive learning device to read, during a courtesy call at Jamaica House on May 30.



State Minister in the Ministry of Education and Youth, Hon. Marsha Smith (right), and Chief Executive Officer of the Child Protection and Family Services Agency (CPFSA), Laurette Adams (2nd right), plant a tree in memory of children who died due to violence. Occasion was a ceremony and march in Linstead, St. Catherine, to raise awareness of the abuse against children. The event took place on December 1.

mary and secondary levels under the Alternative Pathways to Secondary Education.

- 48 training sessions were held to support the Pathways' curriculum implementation in specific academic subjects.
- 21,701 students were enrolled in the Sixth-Form Pathways Programme for the 2023/24 academic year.
- 110 schools provided with

literacy support in the form of 130 coaching sessions, instructional leadership support to 418 school principals, and resource allocations to 422 schools. In total, 4,672 teachers and school leaders, along with 746 students were impacted.

- \$395 million was added to the recurrent expenditure of Caribbean Maritime University (CMU) to support the institution's expansion plans.



Students of Prospect Primary School playing with number/letter blocks while participating in the Mathematics Exposition held at the school, located in Clarendon, on March 30.



Minister of Education and Youth, Hon. Fayval Williams (2nd right), admires the graphic designs inside the smart room at the Homestead Primary and Infant School in St. Catherine, at the official opening of the facility on December 6. Others (from left) are Social Development Consultant with the Digicel Foundation, Miguel Williams; Principal of the school, Sophia Deer; and Regional Director at the Ministry, Sophia Forbes Hall.

### Technology in Education

- Microsoft 365 suite of programmes for teachers and students launched.
- 1,238 recorded lessons made available for instruction from the early childhood to tertiary levels.
- eBooks and additional resources distributed to secondary schools.
- Schools were equipped with software support in the form of the Aural, Read,

Respond, Oral, Write (ARROW) programme.

- Implementation of 1962 STEM/STEAM Pilot in partnership with 21st Century Education in 42 schools and six teacher-training institutions.
- The Education Management Information System (EMIS) was fully implemented to allow schools to manage administrative processes.
- 464 schools were provided with broadband connectivity.



# Major Local Government and Community Developments

Several major infrastructural engagements were undertaken by the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development:

## Fire Stations

- A new \$258 million fire station opened in Port Maria, St. Mary.
- \$70 million upgrading works commenced at the Annotto Bay Fire Station in the parish.
- Black River Fire Station in St. Elizabeth was renovated at a cost of \$70 million.
- The Ocho Rios Fire Station in St. Ann renamed the Ocho Rios Lorenzo Garnet Douse Memorial Building, in honour of the late fire-fighter who was based at the facility at the time of his demise.

## Infirmaries

- New \$45 million male ward to accommodate 40 residents was built at the St. James Infirmary.
- Newly built \$45 million male ward opened at the Portland Infirmary.
- Administrative building opened at St. Elizabeth Infirmary to improve support and healthcare service delivery.
- \$50 million allocated to undertake renovations at the St. Ann Infirmary.

## Rural Water Supply

- \$12 million water shop commissioned in Fairfield, St. Elizabeth.
- 16,000-gallon storage capacity water shop established in Mile Gully,

Manchester at a cost of \$14 million.

- 40,000-gallon water shop, valued \$21 million, opened in Somerset, Manchester.
- A 22,000-gallon water shop was commissioned in Commodore, Portland at a cost of approximately \$13.5 million.
- \$220 million upgraded water system in Watermount, St. Catherine, which now serves more than 7,000 residents, was commissioned.
- 50,000-gallon community catchment tank in Ashton, Westmoreland restored at a cost of \$10 million.
- \$12 million water shop was commissioned in Fairfield District, St. Elizabeth.

## Parks and Markets

- \$17 million rehabilitation of Savanna-la-Mar Market in Westmoreland commenced.
- \$100 million multiphase renovation project under way at Charles Gordon Market in St. James.
- Restoration of Jubilee Market in downtown Kingston, which was gutted by fire several years ago, 90 per cent complete.
- Residents of Pembroke Hall in St. Andrew received a \$16 million wellness park.
- \$10 million provided to the Portland Municipal Corporation to undertake clean-up activities at Musgrave Market which was destroyed by fire.



Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie (2nd left), officially commissions the Watermount water system in St. Catherine into operation in March. Others (from left) are Mayor of Spanish Town, Councillor Norman Scott, and Member of Parliament for St. Catherine West Central and Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton.



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (6th left); Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie (6th right); and Commissioner of the Jamaica Fire Brigade, Stewart Beckford (4th right), with stakeholders at January's opening of the Port Maria Fire Station in St. Mary.



## Safeguarding Jamaica's Vulnerable

- Nine (9) homes handed over to indigent persons.
- \$25 million Falmouth Homeless Shelter in Trelawny opened.
- The Ocho Rios Night Shelter in St. Ann opened to accommodate the homeless.
- \$20 million in back-to-school assistance was allocated for students registered under the Poor Relief Department.
- A drop-in centre and night shelter, adjacent to the Clarendon Infirmary, was opened.
- Phase-two development of the Desmond McKenzie Transitional Centre for the Homeless in downtown Kingston commenced to increase occupancy to 100.

### Summer Employment

- 4,000 youngsters were deployed to various Ministries,

Departments and Agencies for the summer.

### Disaster Preparedness and Relief

- The Local Government Ministry committed \$50 million for the national response to the meteorological drought that impacted Jamaica.
- \$60 million was spent to improve access to potable water for residents in several communities across the Jamaica severely impacted by drought.
- \$4 million was allocated to help address sewerage challenges in Falmouth, Trelawny.
- Comprehensive soil surveys were conducted in two parishes, the results of which will inform national action to promote sustainable land use and management practices for agriculture and infrastructure development.



Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie, converses with Inspector of Poor, Jeannette Samuels-Morris, during a tour of the Clarendon Drop-In Centre and Night Shelter, located at the Clarendon Infirmary, following the official opening.



Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie (left), and Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister, Senator Dr. the Hon. Dana Morris Dixon, interact with youngsters during the launch of the Youth Summer Employment Programme (YSEP) at the Marcus Garvey Technical High School in St. Ann in June.



Mayor of Kingston, Senator Councillor Delroy Williams (right), presents a cooked meal to one of several persons living on the streets of the Corporate Area who were catered to during the Mayor's Annual New Year's Feeding of the Homeless treat. The activity was held at St. William Grant Park, downtown Kingston.



## Another Historic Year For Sports

It was another record-breaking year for the country's sportsmen and women:

- Jamaica became the first Caribbean country to qualify for the knock-out phase of the FIFA Women's Football World Cup.
- They secured a 0-0 draw against Brazil during the 2023 edition, which was co-hosted by Australia and New Zealand, to finish second behind France in their group and advance to the Round of 16.

### Support for the Reggae Girlz

- An additional \$20 million was budgeted for the Reggae Girlz World Cup campaign, \$10 million of which was paid directly to members of the squad under the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport's Athlete Assistance Programme.

### Sunshine Girls Shone

- The Sunshine Girls copped Gold at the Central America and Caribbean (CAC) Games netball final in July, defeating Trinidad and Tobago 50-36.
- The team secured the Bronze Medal at the Netball World Cup in South Africa, where Jamaica defeated New Zealand 52-45 in the third place playoff.
- More than \$6 million in direct payments were made to team members and their coaches as a token of appreciation.

### BIG UP to the Reggae Girlz and Sunshine Girls

- The Ministry published two magazines – one each paying tribute to the teams. The magazines were presented to the members and published on the Ministry's website- [www.mcges.gov.jm](http://www.mcges.gov.jm).

### IAAF World Athletics Championships

- Shericka Jackson won the women's 200 metres at the meet in Budapest, Hungary, setting a 21.41-seconds championship record.
- Danielle Williams won the 100 metres hurdles final in a season's personal best 12.43 seconds.
- Antonio Watson copped the men's 400 metres gold Medal in 44.22 seconds.
- Jamaica placed fourth on the medals table with three gold, five silver and four bronze.

### Anti-Doping Forum

- Jamaica hosted a WADA Forum for Ministers of Sport in the Caribbean, which was attended by the Agency's President, Witold Bańka.
- The country secured a seat on WADA's Foundation Board, which is the organisation's highest decision-making body.

### Sports Model Study Tour

- Jamaica hosted delegations from Trinidad and Tobago

and South Africa, which conducted study tours of the country's sports programme.



Sports Minister Olivia Grange congratulates Sherika Jackson on winning the 200-metre finals at the World Championships.



Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, Hon. Oliva Grange (right) and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Senator the Hon. Kamina Johnson Smith, unveil the original FIFA Women's Football World Cup Trophy, during a brief ceremony at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel in New Kingston. The ceremony formed part of the Jamaica leg of the global FIFA Women's World Cup Trophy Tour in April.



Athletes compete in the Girls 13 to 19, 3000 metre race during the 2023 ISSA/GraceKennedy Boys and Girls Championships at the National Stadium on April 1.



## Celebrating Jamaica 61

- Jamaicans participated in daily and nightly activities from August 1-6, to mark the country's 61st year of Independence under the theme: 'Jamaica 61...Proud and Strong'.
- These activities included: the 'Augus Mawning' market, National Festival Queen Coronation, the popular 'Mello-go-Roun' showcase, 'Reel and Come Again' film night, Old Skool Party, and the Independence Day Grand Gala at the National Stadium.

### National Labour Day Project

- The planting of 10,000 trees along Highway 2000 was the National Labour Day project under the theme - 'Plant a Tree for Life: Promoting Climate Change Mitigation, Food Security and Road Safety'.
- Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness led the exercise, with the support of the Forestry Department and Jamaica Defence Force.

### Live Reggae Events Return

- Live events marking Reggae Month during February were staged islandwide.

- These included tributes to Dennis Brown and Bob Marley on February 6, the weekly JARIA (Jamaica Reggae Industry Association) Wednesdays, the Children of the Icons, the Emerging Artistes and the Reggae University Series.

### Insurance programme for creative practitioners

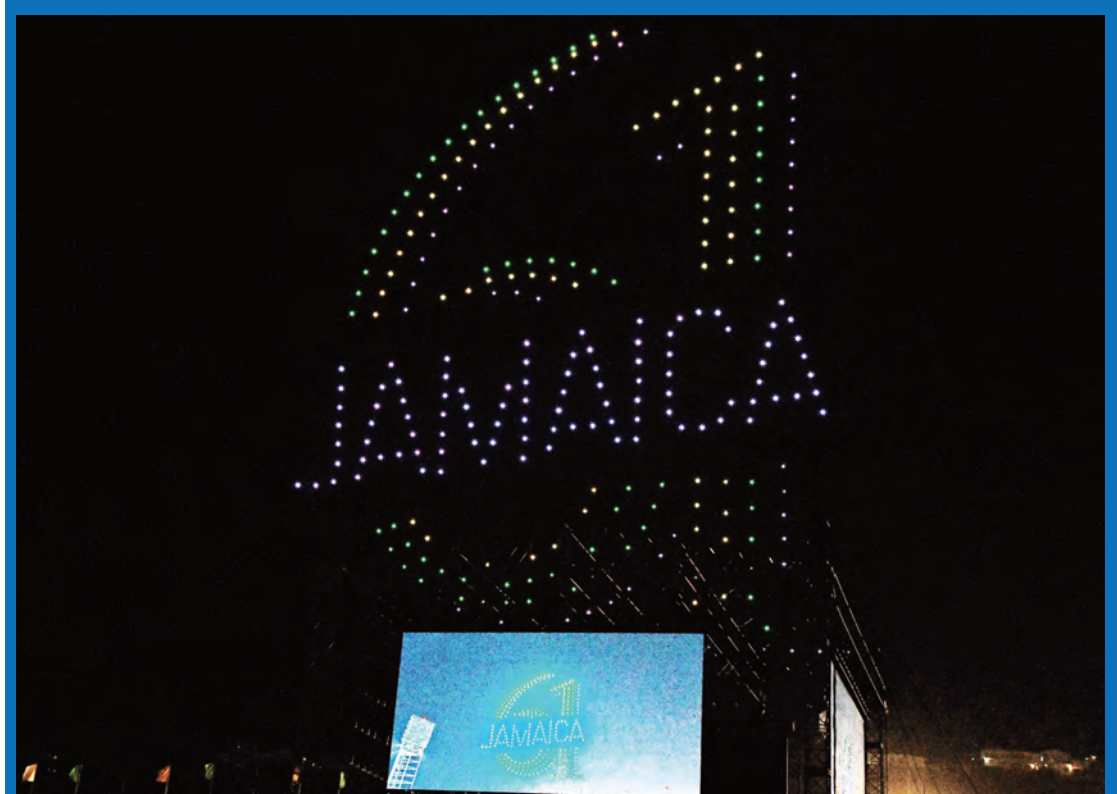
- The Ministry and the principals of Eckler Jamaica signed a contract to establish group health and life insurance schemes for entertainment, culture and creative industries practitioners in Jamaica.
- Jamaica nominated Port Royal to the UNESCO World Heritage List.

### Gender Affairs

- The Bureau of Gender Affairs (BGA) staged 'No Excuse for Abuse' community chats and walk-throughs in several areas under the agency's programme to end gender-based violence.
- A male Empowerment Unit, which will operate under the BGA, was opened.
- The Bureau hosted several International Men's Day activities, focusing on health and well-being.



The traditional maypole dance is performed at the Grand Gala.



Glittering drones lit up the skies during the Independence Day Grand Gala at the National Stadium.



Portmore Missionary Preparatory students perform an item titled 'Revival', during the Jamaica Cultural Development Commission (JCDC) Mello-Go-Roun' showcase in the Independence Village at the National Arena in Kingston.



# \$4.5 Billion Secured to Support National Development

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, through its 20 missions, delivered tangible benefits for Jamaica with more than \$4.5 billion secured in support of national development.

Focus was also placed on deepening international relations, improving trade relations, and protecting the interests of Jamaicans overseas.

## Donations and Grant Aid

- Jamaica received fertiliser from the Kingdom of Morocco, totalling 24,000 bags (1,200 tons), valued at more than US\$725,000; high-end tablets from the Republic of South Korea valued at more than US\$600,000, to benefit of 4,103 needy students across the island; and scanners from Mexico, to assist with digital archiving.



Minister Johnson Smith exchanges signed documents with Mexico's new Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Her Excellency Alicia Barcena, marking a new phase of cooperation between the countries.



State Minister, of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Hon. Alando Terrelonge, met with some of the newly elected members of the Global Jamaica Diaspora Council and the Global Jamaica Diaspora Youth Council, during a trip to London in June.

- The People's Republic of China donated office equipment and port security scanners valued at more than US\$18 million, alongside medical supplies and equipment.
- Funding of more than US\$1.6 million was provided to retrofit the Mandeville Comprehensive Health Centre by the United Kingdom (UK).
- More than 300 persons benefitted from training opportunities sponsored by China, through online programmes.
- Other training programmes were made available by India, Malaysia, Singapore, the Dominican Republic, Japan and Morocco and Cuba.
- Significant donations were made to the health and education sectors in particular, by the diaspora, facilitated by Jamaica's diplomatic and consular missions.

## Diplomatic Ties Strengthened

- Entry into diplomatic relations was formalised with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and the Principality of Liechtenstein, bringing to 174 the number of nations with which Jamaica has formal diplomatic relations.

## Agreements Signed

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Political Consultations was signed with Greece during the first ever visit of a Greek Foreign Minister in February.
- A Violence Prevention Partnership Agreement valued at more than €15 million was signed with the UK.
- Agreements were signed with Mexico to strengthen trade, investment and cooperation; Portugal on political



Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Senator the Hon. Johnson Smith (3rd left), leads Jamaica's delegation at the first Political Dialogue with the Dominican Republic, marking the beginning of a new era of cooperation and shared insights between the two countries.

consultations; the Republic of Korea on cooperation for grant aid; Barbados on deepening bilateral cooperation in trade, investment, tourism, the medical cannabis industry, education, culture, and sports; and the Dominican Republic through the Institute of Higher Education in Diplomatic and Consular Training (INESDyC).

## Regional Activities

Jamaica assumed the Chairmanship of CARICOM's Council for Foreign and Community Relations (COFCOR) and hosted the COFCOR Ministerial meeting and the 11th UK/Caribbean Forum, as well as a special and an informal meeting of the group in September and November.

Jamaica hosted the meeting of Haitian stakeholders in June. Jamaica serves as a member of the Organization of American States (OAS) Working Group on Haiti, and the ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti.

## Diaspora Affairs

- Regional diaspora conferences were held in the UK,

Africa (Nigeria), Canada and Europe (France).

- Ministerial engagements were held with the diaspora in The Bahamas, the UK, the USA, Australia, Cuba, Korea, Canada and the Dominican Republic.
- The Diaspora Registration Portal prototype was developed.

## Consular Services

- WhatsApp contact number +1 876 391-8105 developed for direct and prompt access assistance to Jamaicans during emergencies overseas.
- Assistance was provided to nine victims of human trafficking, as well as to 10 local fishermen and another 19 foreign fishers, who were rescued at sea.
- Consular support was provided to several Jamaicans experiencing difficulties travelling to and transiting certain countries.
- More than 21,678 Jamaicans in the diaspora were assisted in obtaining their Jamaican passports.



[jis@jis.gov.jm](mailto:jis@jis.gov.jm)



JISVoice



[www.jis.gov.jm](http://www.jis.gov.jm)



<https://www.facebook.com/jamaicainformationsservice>



[youtube.com/WatchJIS](https://youtube.com/WatchJIS)



<https://twitter.com/jisnews>



Jamaica Information Service

