

**“Building National Resilience through
Continuous Investment in Local Government”**



GOVERNMENT OF JAMAICA

2020/21

SECTORAL PRESENTATION

Building National Resilience through Continuous Investment in Local Government

Presented by:

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Minister of Local Government
& Community Development

GORDON HOUSE | Tuesday, July 21, 2020



CHAPTER ONE

- **Mr. Speaker...**
- I rise to make my contribution to this year’s Debate, with a renewed sense of gratitude and purpose. I am thankful to the Almighty **Mr. Speaker**, that Jamaica continues to pull through the clutches of COVID-19. I am thankful **Mr. Speaker**, to be a part of this Administration of focused and forward-thinking Ministers, led by the Most Honourable Prime Minister, Andrew Holness.
- This Prime Minister continues to demonstrate extraordinary leadership in these challenging times, and I sense a strong feeling of pride that Jamaicans here and overseas have, when they call his name. I thank him for his continued confidence in me, four years and four months into our stewardship.
- I am grateful to you **Mr. Speaker**, for your leadership of this House, and I also salute you as a kindred spirit of Local Government. I am thankful to my colleagues on both sides of this House, for the confidence they have in me and the respect they continue to show me.
- My gratitude to my political family in Western Kingston is unending **Mr. Speaker**. I am thankful for their continued confidence in me, from my Constituency Executive, to all the people of this special part of Kingston. I pledge to continue to do all in my power to improve the quality of life for the people of West Kingston, and build on the legacy of my mentor and predecessor, the Most Honourable Edward Seaga.
- **Mr. Speaker**, we lost a number of elected and administrative servants of the Local Government system over the past year. We are grateful for the service they gave, and wish God’s continued comfort to their families.
- I thank the Permanent Secretary, the leadership team and staff of my Ministry, and the staff in the Agencies.
- I salute the Mayors, Councillors, and all the staff in the Local Authorities.
- I also say thanks to my personal staff and my protective personnel, who have been with me in what would seem to be the endless late nights and early mornings.
- **Mr. Speaker**, my family has endured great sacrifices in supporting me throughout my political career. My children continue to be a source of pride and inspiration for me as I go about my duties. There are almost no words to describe my feelings for Marcia, my beloved wife of 43 years. She is the soft answer that turneth away wrath, but she is also my rock, my shield, my place of refuge. I give God thanks every day for her unconditional love, a love that is deeper and sweeter with time, and I look forward to many, many more years of togetherness.

STAGE FOR FIGHTING COVID-19

- **Mr. Speaker**, since 2016 we have worked diligently to create important changes in the administration of Local Government. We have strengthened our Agencies.
- We have invested heavily in developing their institutional capacity, and that of the Ministry and the Local Authorities.
- **Mr. Speaker, little did we know that these four years of capacity building, were the essential preparation for the onslaught of COVID-19, when it hit Jamaica on March 10 this year.**
- This Administration continues to be credited inside and outside of Jamaica, for the quality of its response to the pandemic in the 113 days since that time. **This rejuvenated system of Local Government has been critical to the Administration’s effectiveness.**

WHAT DID WE DO?

- On March 13, Jamaica was declared a Disaster Area by the Most Honourable Prime Minister, who is Chairman of the National Disaster Risk Management Council.
- The power to make that Declaration is clearly stated in the Disaster Risk Management Act, which falls within my area of responsibility as the Minister responsible for the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management.
- As is required by Section 26 of that Act, I wrote to the Most Honourable Prime Minister stating the threat posed to Jamaica by COVID-19.
- The measures he announced thereafter, are fully compliant with the law and the Constitution, despite speculation to the contrary from persons who I believe ought to know better.
- **Mr. Speaker**, the priorities were:
 - 1. Securing the health integrity of our vulnerable population in our Infirmaries, and those who interact with them;**
 - 2. Protecting our Indoor and Outdoor Poor, and;**
 - 3. Protecting the homeless.**
- We ensured that there were no admissions of new residents to Infirmaries and Golden Age Homes, and that there were no visits.
- Each Infirmary established an Isolation Area for potential cases. In addition, twenty spaces were created at the Clarendon Infirmary and 35 at the Vineyard Town Home, to accommodate Social Cases from Hospitals.

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Isolation Ward at the St. Ann Infirmary

- Special sanitary protocols were also established.
- These included the taking of all employees and service providers’ temperatures with infrared thermometers, by 30 specially trained personnel, the provision of protective clothing for employees who work with the residents, and special transportation services for Infirmary employees.
- **Between March 30 and April 3, a special sanitization and cleaning programme involving all Infirmaries and Golden Age Homes, was implemented over three days at a cost of \$41.5 million.**



Sanitization Exercise at the Vineyard Town Golden Age Home

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- We took care of our Outdoor Poor population, which number approximately 14,000. The Poor Relief Departments distributed food and hygiene care packages to meet their needs. Additionally, **Mr. Speaker**, students from **Outdoor Poor families were given a daily lunch allocation of \$300.**
- We assisted our **Homeless population**, through the network of Drop-In Centres island-wide. In the Corporate Area, a new, 100-bed Shelter was retrofitted on Church Street on April 2, to boost the capacity already offered by the Marie Atkins Night Shelter.
- We reached out to the homeless who congregate in known areas outside of the Drop-In Centres and sanitized these common areas. In this regard, the Ministry spent \$16 million to assist the Local Authorities.



Sanitization of Public Spaces

- **Mr. Speaker**, we also allocated \$140 million in care package support to all Councillors, to address the needs in their Divisions.
- Our homeless brothers and sisters were given meals as well as care packages, through a **special feeding programme that commenced on March 29 and is ongoing.**
- We offered meals twice a day, six days per week, from Sunday to Friday.

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Special Feeding Programme for the Homeless

- Ready-to-eat breakfast packages were distributed in the mornings, dinner was served in the afternoons, and care packages were distributed every Friday. **Mr. Speaker**, over 30-thousand meals have been distributed so far.
- We are now adding a new feature to this nutritional outreach. **A Soup Kitchen for the homeless will be established at Church Street in Kingston, from which 700 meals will be provided every single day of the week.**
- This facility is being set up in the Corporate Area, as it has the highest number of homeless people in the country. This Administration cherishes *partnership*, and I want to publicly thank the Grace Kennedy Group for helping us to make this project happen.
- We also allocated \$50 million for the trucking of water by the Local Authorities, to drought-stricken areas in their jurisdictions as defined by the Meteorological Service of Jamaica.
- **Mr. Speaker**, the role of the Local Government system is critical to the national fight against COVID-19. Our work has been vital to all the decisions made by Cabinet during this pandemic, and this demonstrates the high premium and value that this Administration places on Local Government.

THE BUILDING OF A BETTER LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM DEPENDS ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

- **Mr. Speaker**, some of the Local Authorities have been in the news recently, due to issues surrounding corruption and lack of accountability. This Administration will never support corruption. It is important that we highlight the issues but we cannot be selective when we talk about corruption. If the fight against corruption is to mean anything then there must be honesty when we speak.
- We recognize that there are gaps in the formal processes of accountability, and tangible efforts are being made to eliminate them. Letters of Accountability have been issued to the CEOs of all Municipal Corporations as Accounting Officers, consistent with the Local Government (Financing and Financial Management) Act.
- To further strengthen the accountability structures of the Municipal Corporations, we sought the support of the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service to establish an Audit Committee in each of them. This will satisfy the statutory requirement that each Local Authority should have this Committee, in keeping with the Financial Administration and Audit Act. The Local Authorities have also been instructed to complete all outstanding financial statements by August 31, 2020.
- Moreover **Mr. Speaker**, the Ministry is receiving technical assistance for the Local Authorities to implement accrual accounting based on the International Public Sector Accounting Standard (IPSAS). This is being done through a grant-funded project by the European Union under the Technical Cooperation Facility.

The main objectives are to:

1. Eliminate arrears in the Local Authorities' financial statements, and review the organizational structures of their Finance Divisions.
 2. Develop draft procedural manuals and other standard operational guidelines.
 3. Identify and value the land assets of the Local Authorities, as well as other assets they possess.
 4. Implement a new Enterprise Resource Planning accounting software.
- This one-year project is being implemented now and pilots have been established. I must say thanks to the European Union for helping us to make this critical aspect of governance a reality.

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- We are also relying on the power of partnership at the local level **Mr. Speaker**. The executive leadership of the Integrity Commission, Mr. Greg Christie and his team, have been invited to provide expertise as we improve our accountability and transparency mechanisms.
- I will now report on the work that was done over the past financial year, prior to and during this pandemic.
- I commend and encourage the Local Authorities, as they manage the Development Approvals process. It is very challenging at this time, as construction projects of all types have been hit by COVID-19.
- **In the last financial year, the Local Authorities and partner Agencies received 3,773 applications valued at J\$148.3 billion, and approved 2,777 within 90 days: an approval rate of nearly 84%.**
- As Jamaica works to recover from the pandemic, the expansion of the built environment will resume its pace. The Development Approvals process is a primary contributor to the Growth Agenda, and I encourage the Local Authorities to be diligent in its management.

SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMME

Infirmaries, Drop-In Centres, Indigent Housing

- We committed to building 28 modern, concrete houses for indigent persons. We exceeded that target and built 30 instead. Four are under construction now **Mr. Speaker**.



Indigent House in STETIN, Trelawny

- **This year, our aim is to build 12 houses at a cost of \$30 million: in St. James, St. Elizabeth, St. Mary and St. Andrew.**
- We will also continue to repair existing indigent houses this year.

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Recipient of a one bedroom housing solution under the Indigent Housing program

- We are also continuing to improve our **INFIRMARIES** island wide. The final phase of the \$200 million project financed by the National Housing Trust is underway. In the period under review Mr. Speaker, the new Female Ward at the Manchester Infirmary was completed.



New Female ward at the Manchester Infirmary

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- The new Administrative Building at the St. Elizabeth Infirmary is almost complete.
- The remaining works at the Portland Infirmary (new Female Ward), the St. James Infirmary (new Male Ward) and the Westmoreland Infirmary (new Male Ward and Matron’s Quarters) are far advanced and will be completed this financial year.
- **Mr. Speaker**, you will recall that last year, I announced an initiative involving the assignment of Dietitians and Physiotherapists to all Infirmaries. We have since added a new feature, **Therapeutic Parks**, that will become a permanent fixture at all our Infirmaries.
- **We built the first Therapeutic Park at the St. Elizabeth Infirmary as part of Local Government and Community Month last year.** These Parks will be devoted to **Therapeutic Recreation**, which promotes recovery and well-being for persons with disabilities, chronic illnesses or other challenges brought on by advanced age.
- **Mr. Speaker**, we are **rescuing** our homeless population, currently registered at **1,971**, through the expansion of **DROP-IN CENTRES** around the country. In the reporting period, the **Drop-In Centres in St. Thomas and Trelawny were completed at a cost of \$28 million.** Due to growing demand caused by the rising number of homeless persons in St. Catherine, a Drop-In Centre is now being built in **Linstead**, at a cost of \$20 million.
- After many stops and starts, works will shortly begin on a new homeless shelter at King Street in Kingston, to serve the vulnerable in Kingston and St. Andrew. This facility when completed, will cater to over 300 Jamaicans who are living on the streets.
- **Mr. Speaker**, a special project is being implemented by the Ministry, in collaboration with the Kingston and St. Andrew Municipal Corporation. We are rehabilitating a structure at 47 Highholborn Street in Kingston, which when completed, will serve as a Transitional Home for able-bodied people who are trying to get back on their social and financial feet.

This facility will be operated by the Poor Relief Department, and will give persons a chance, with the guidance of the Department, to experience personal growth, development and successful re-integration into the society. The location of the Halfway House is ideal, as it is near to hospital, police and postal services among other public amenities.

- The **Board of Supervision** is the Ministry’s guardian of the Social Protection Programme, and remains a beacon of hope for our vulnerable people. I am very happy with the work and the leadership of the BOS, and their already high value has risen further **Mr. Speaker**, by virtue of the quality of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Planting of Trees in the St. Elizabeth Infirmary’s Therapeutic Park

- All our interventions, from our efforts in the Infirmaries, to the work in our Drop-In Centres, to our special feeding and hygiene programme for the homeless, have relied on the hour-by-hour, day-by-day hard work and sensitivity of the Board of Supervision.



Trelawny Drop-in Centre



CHAPTER TWO

Employment Creation and Facilitation

- **Mr. Speaker**, the **YOUTH SUMMER EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME** has provided employment and skills training for over 12,000 young people since its inception in 2017.
- Over 600 of these young people have gained permanent employment since completing the programme, and over 230 are now being trained by HEART Trust /NSTA for Certification.
- This year, we will be providing training and employment opportunities for 5,000 young people through the **Youth Summer Employment Programme**, which will be implemented only in the month of August.
- **Mr. Speaker**, despite the challenges, we are building out infrastructure under the **MARKET REHABILITATION PROGRAMME**. We completed and officially opened Phases 1 and 2 of the **Clarks Town Market in Trelawny**, and Phase 3 is now being done.
- The new **Port Maria Market** is now complete and will be officially opened shortly. A brand-new complex is being built to house the Hopewell Market in Hanover.



Participants at the 2019 launch ceremony of the Youth Summer Employment Programme.

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Though we were not able to implement changes at all the Markets we targeted last year, works were completed at the Papine Market in St. Andrew and repairs to the Stony Hill Market are ongoing. Rehabilitation works are also underway at the Charles Gordon Market in Montego Bay and funds have been allocated for remedial works to be done on the Santa Cruz Market in St. Elizabeth.



Groundbreaking for the construction of the Hopewell Market

- I turn now **Mr. Speaker**, to access to potable water. We continued to install **WATER SHOPS** in drought-stricken communities.
- **We completed two of the four Water Shops we had committed to build in St. Elizabeth, at Malvern and Southfield. Residents of these and surrounding communities are now receiving over 30-thousand gallons of purified water every day. Work is far advanced on the Water Shop at Junction. We intend to build Water Shops in Brompton, Balaclava and Pedro Plains. We will also be building a Water Shop in West Rural St. Andrew and one in Bull Bay.**
- Work is still being done on a new Water Shop at Commodore in Portland, and we will be building a similar facility at Manchioneal in the parish.



Opening of the Malvern WATER SHOP in St. Elizabeth

BLACK TANKS INITIATIVE

- **Mr. Speaker**, in the last Financial Year, a pilot programme was established in St. Elizabeth, where 10,400-gallon water tanks were distributed to each of the 15 Divisions in the parish. This Black Tank Pilot Programme was very successful, and this year, we will be replicating it in all of the remaining Divisions across Jamaica. In other words, 2,140 tanks will be distributed under the programme.



Minister Desmond McKenzie handing over Black Tanks to the Councillors of the St. Elizabeth Municipal Corporation

- Access to proper **PAROCHIAL ROADS** is a constant demand from our citizens **Mr. Speaker**. In the last financial year, this Ministry invested approximately \$100 million in rehabilitating and repairing parochial infrastructure right across the island. This included the **Bowden Hill Bridge in Stony Hill, which was completed at a cost of \$27 million, and a swing bridge at Ginger House in Portland, which was built at a cost of \$7 million. This year, we will be spending \$150 million on parochial roads.**



Official opening of the Bowden Hill Bridge



Swing Bridge at Ginger House in Portland

- **Mr. Speaker**, I must specially commend the Local Authorities for working hard to maintain Own Source Revenue in these challenging times. **In 2019/20, the Local Authorities collected \$2.24 billion in Own Source Revenue, \$41 million more than the previous financial year. They collected \$4.3 billion in motor vehicle licence fees last year, \$276 million more than in 2018/19.**
- When it comes to **Property Taxes**, there has been a decline in revenues compared to last year. We understand the difficulties that some property owners are facing, and we continue to develop strategies to make it easier for them to pay their taxes. One of the services supported by Property Taxes is **STREETLIGHTS**.
- With regard to the three-year **LED STREETLIGHTS PROGRAMME**, 65% of the overall target of 105,000 lights have been installed, since its inception in the 2017/18 Financial Year.
- The Jamaica Public Service Company is expected to install 18-thousand LED Streetlights between now and December. The remaining 19,133 Streetlights are to be installed before the end of this financial year, which is the final year of the Programme.
- **Mr. Speaker**, I am frankly not pleased with the Company’s approach to implementing this programme, especially since the Government kept its promise and liquidated the long-standing Streetlight debt. I have requested a meeting with its management at the highest level to discuss our concerns, which include the repairs to and replacement of streetlights, and I will advise this House accordingly.



CHAPTER THREE

OUR AGENCIES: Jamaica Fire Brigade, Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management, Social Development Commission, National Solid Waste Management Authority

- I now turn to the JAMAICA FIRE BRIGADE (JFB). **Mr. Speaker**, construction works on the Barnett Street, Yallahs and Port Maria Fire Stations were started, but all have been affected by COVID-19.



Barnett Street Fire Station under construction

- **Mr. Speaker**, we continued to provide our firefighters with modern equipment. **We promised to give the JFB at least 2 command vehicles to aid in command and control, but were able to give them 5 instead. Additionally, J\$3 billion is being spent to procure 30 pumpers.**
- **As a result Mr. Speaker, 16 brand new pumpers are expected in the island in March next year, and the remaining fifteen will be imported in May. This Mr. Speaker, is how we build capacity, and build resilience.**
- **This year, Mr. Speaker, we will be doing more for the JFB. The Fire Stations at Black River in St. Elizabeth and at Lucea in Hanover will be rehabilitated, at a total cost of \$39.5 million.**
- **Relief is coming for the firefighters in Old Harbour. A temporary facility will be built on the site of the old Fire Station, and we expect work to start before the end of this calendar year.**

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- **Four additional Water Tankers and three new ambulances will be provided.**
- **Emergency Medical Services will be launched at Ocho Rios, and at St. Ann’s Bay.**
- **We will provide more Bunker Gears, Jaws of Life cutting tools and other equipment at a cost of \$248 million.**
- **The training of 85 recruits is underway, as we work to maintain and expand the complement of the JFB.**

OFFICE OF DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

- **Mr. Speaker**, the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management continues to demonstrate its value as Jamaica’s Disaster Management Agency. The Agency’s role in improving the national disaster resilience profile came into sharp focus during this pandemic.
- Since the National Disaster Risk Management Council was activated on March 5, the ODPEM has been at the forefront of the fight against COVID-19. The Agency was indispensable to the situational assessment and quarantine management efforts in Bull Bay, in Cornpiece, in Annotto Bay, Enfield and Dover, and in St. Catherine.
- Apart from responding to the immediate crisis, the Agency was instrumental in developing protocols for the re-opening of beaches and rivers, the tourism sector and the Business Process Outsourcing sector.
- **Mr. Speaker, we are already one month into the 2020 Atlantic Hurricane Season.**
- The ODPEM has intensified its programmes and messaging through the **National Hurricane Preparedness Campaign**. The Ministry is engaging the public through various channels including Digital Town Hall Meetings, the first of which was held before the start of this Hurricane Season. It is already predicted to be above average, with 19 named storms, up to 10 of which may become Hurricanes.



Digital Town Hall Meeting

- In light of COVID-19 **Mr. Speaker**, our Disaster Co-ordinators have been busy identifying and securing additional spaces for use as Isolation Areas for persons who may be suspected of having the virus and who need shelter during any storm. We have also integrated COVID-19 protocols into our disaster management apparatus.
- We are working to ingrain a total culture of preparedness. I urge every Parliamentarian to help us to drive home the message of preparedness.
- The House is aware **Mr. Speaker**, that this month, Jamaica was scheduled to host the 7th Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the Caribbean, in Montego Bay.
- All the preparations, including the training of volunteers from parishes in western Jamaica were done, and we maintained our close collaboration with our main partners, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency.
- Regrettably **Mr. Speaker**, this very special event is one of the casualties of COVID-19.



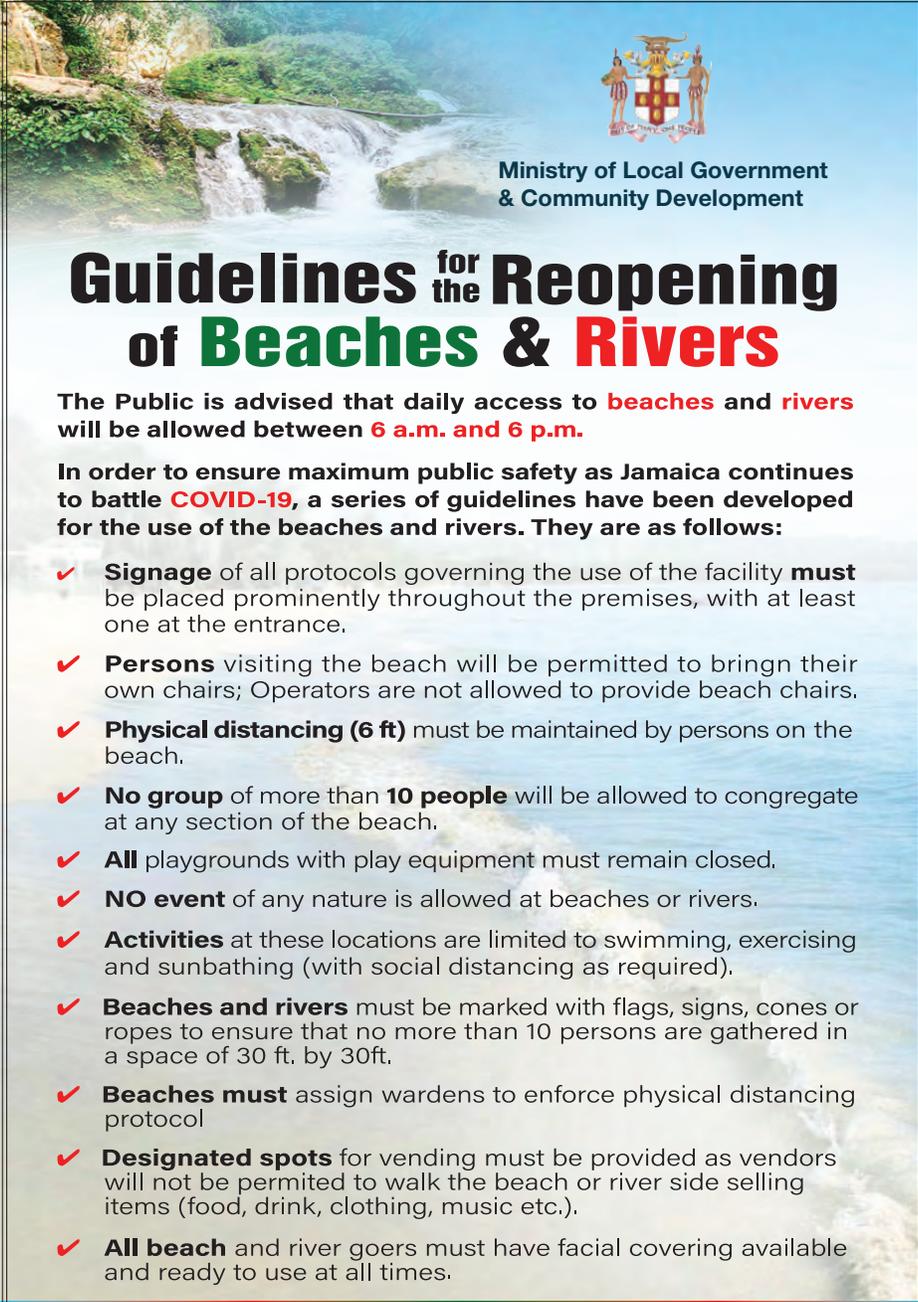
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

- **Mr. Speaker**, the **SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (SDC)** continues to be faithful to its mandate of community transformation.
- The Agency is creating a culture of entrepreneurship at the community level through the **Local Economic Development Support Programme**. In the last financial year, 151 capacity building sessions were held with Local Economic Initiatives and Civil Society Organizations across 11 parishes.
- 151 Business Models and Business Project Proposals were written and submitted, while 90 Business Fairs were staged, allowing our aspiring business-people the opportunity to showcase, market and promote their products and services.



Morant Bay Business Fair

- **Mr. Speake**, research is critical to community and national development plans, including plans for disaster mitigation. The SDC’s work in this regard is of the highest value, and the onslaught of COVID-19 has brought out the best of the Agency’s staff. I salute them for the critical work that they are still doing in the field.
- The Agency is also the main contact point of the **RONA Senior Care Response Helpline, which facilitates non-financial access to medical care, including transportation services for our population aged 70 and older. Over 3,000 calls have been made to the Helpline since its inception**
- **The decision to conditionally reopen community bars and taverns, was facilitated in no small way by the SDC.**
- **The officers surveyed 11-thousand establishments island-wide, and were critical to the monitoring of their operations so the Government could gauge compliance with the re-opening rules. The Agency also helped to develop the protocols for re-opening beaches and rivers, and is now measuring public compliance with all COVID-19 protocols. The SDC’s development of community profiles, and asset mapping of various industries and sectors island-wide are critical to our ongoing efforts to return Jamaica to normal life.**



Ministry of Local Government
& Community Development

Guidelines ^{for} the Reopening of **Beaches** & **Rivers**

The Public is advised that daily access to **beaches** and **rivers** will be allowed between **6 a.m. and 6 p.m.**

In order to ensure maximum public safety as Jamaica continues to battle **COVID-19**, a series of guidelines have been developed for the use of the beaches and rivers. They are as follows:

- ✓ **Signage** of all protocols governing the use of the facility **must** be placed prominently throughout the premises, with at least one at the entrance.
- ✓ **Persons** visiting the beach will be permitted to bring their own chairs; Operators are not allowed to provide beach chairs.
- ✓ **Physical distancing (6 ft)** must be maintained by persons on the beach.
- ✓ **No group** of more than **10 people** will be allowed to congregate at any section of the beach.
- ✓ **All** playgrounds with play equipment must remain closed.
- ✓ **NO event** of any nature is allowed at beaches or rivers.
- ✓ **Activities** at these locations are limited to swimming, exercising and sunbathing (with social distancing as required).
- ✓ **Beaches and rivers** must be marked with flags, signs, cones or ropes to ensure that no more than 10 persons are gathered in a space of 30 ft. by 30ft.
- ✓ **Beaches must** assign wardens to enforce physical distancing protocol
- ✓ **Designated spots** for vending must be provided as vendors will not be permitted to walk the beach or river side selling items (food, drink, clothing, music etc.).
- ✓ **All beach** and river goers must have facial covering available and ready to use at all times.

For further information you can contact the Ministry at **876-618-7360-9** or visit our website: www.localgovjamaica.gov.jm or our social media pages  MLGCD |  and |  @localgovja

- The SDC is showing **Mr. Speaker**, that in the institutional architecture of Jamaica it is a pillar. **This Administration resumed investment in the Agency by restoring Budgetary support, and just four short years later, tested by COVID-19, the dividends are already being paid out to the people of Jamaica.** We will continue to expand the capacity of this institutional treasure.

NATIONAL SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

- **Mr. Speaker**, the National Solid Waste Management Authority (NSWMA) continues to perform impressively.
- The Agency is practicing sound Corporate Governance, with all outstanding audited financial statements and annual reports having been updated. It is because of these significant improvements that the NSWMA was nominated for the Corporate Governance Award for 2019.
- With regard to its core responsibilities, the NSWMA collected **1-million, 583 thousand tonnes of solid waste island-wide last year. This was 675-thousand tonnes more than that collected in 2018/19. In this context, the Agency continues to improve the lives of its drivers and sanitation workers through increased salaries. This initiative started two years ago. Mr. Speaker, the Agency’s over 3,000 Sanitation workers will receive a 25% increase this month.**
- While the Agency has had to contend with COVID-19, the investments in new collection units are making a great difference to service delivery.
- **Since 2016, the NSWMA acquired 43 new units, 14 of which were obtained in the last financial year. As I had previously announced, the NSWMA is purchasing an unprecedented 100 collection units. On Thursday, Mr. Speaker, the Most Honourable Prime Minister and I will officially hand over 20 brand-new trucks to the Agency. These new trucks are NOT part of the fleet of 100 units being obtained. They will increase the number of new trucks bought by this Administration to 63.**
- **This is historic Mr. Speaker. No Administration has done more in provision to the NSWMA.**
- **The Agency has never received this level of attention from Government. We will still do more, as ideal collection schedules require more equipment.**



Garbage Trucks handed over to the National Solid Waste Management Authority

- The Agency is also at the forefront of our ongoing fight against Dengue, and has been removing bulky waste from communities islandwide.
- The NSWMA has also been prosecuting in partnership with the police, persons who litter and dump their waste illegally. In the last Financial Year, nearly 1,700 Litter Tickets and 5,894 Removal Notices were issued.
- Over 730,000 residents and 4,500 business operators were sensitized about the proper techniques for managing solid waste.

MITIGATION AGAINST FIRES AT DISPOSAL SITES

- **Mr. Speaker**, the NSWMA continues to ensure the integrity of Disposal Sites. This was demonstrated by the rehabilitation works done at the **Retirement Disposal Site in Montego Bay**, which for years was a nuisance to residents of the City.
- **This project cost \$41 million, and half of this money was generated by the NSWMA through Own Source Revenue. Overall, the Agency earned \$447 million in commercial revenue in the last financial year.**
- **Mr. Speaker, relief is coming for the people of St. Thomas this year. Plans are far advanced for establishing a new Disposal Site, to replace the existing one at Poorman’s Corner.**
- I congratulate the NSWMA Board, Management and staff, who continue to change the face of Jamaica through improved performance.



NSWMA Rapid Response Team Member



CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION: The National Resilience Project Depends on Good Local Government

- **Mr. Speaker**, life as we know it has been redefined by COVID-19. As this Administration leads Jamaica through this phase of adjustment to the virus, the role of Local Government will take on enhanced importance.
- The Local Government system literally accompanies all citizens through the stages of their lives. If the system fails, that creates a ripple effect of failure. Stability and Resilience are assured when the system is successful. That is why we have been making Local Government more professional, accountable, transparent, stronger, more nimble and responsive to our peoples' needs.
- **Mr. Speake**r, we have striven to instil a culture of knowledge and accountability in our elected and administrative servants. Things are not perfect and the work continues. We have also made unprecedented capital investments in the Local Government system.
- **These are the foundation stones of the new architecture of Local Government, that we are building to serve the modern Jamaican.**
- **Under normal circumstances Mr. Speaker, a medium to long-term investment would take up to 10 years to yield positive results. Today, our contribution to the national fight against COVID-19, after just four years of stewardship, has demonstrated the soundness of these investments in new policies, programmes and in the people of Local Government.**
- There have been many lengthy discussions about building resilience through local government, but this Administration has been putting its money where its mouth is. Since 2016, we have been tested as we tried to build resilience. We had Hurricane Matthew, but God spared us its full force.
- We had heavy rains in 2017 and then drought in 2018, as we were implementing the Water Shops Programme. **COVID-19 is the real test, the stress test, the acid test of the resilience of Local Government, and the capacity of Local Government to respond to the call of Central Government.**
- **Mr. Speaker, we have responded well to the test.**

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- Due to the investments in our Infirmaries, Drop-In Centres, and in the Board of Supervision, we have risen to the next level in protecting our residents, our indoor and outdoor poor and our homeless.
- Due to the investments in ODPEM and the SDC, we are helping to develop protocols for re-opening the economy and society.
- Due to unprecedented investments in firefighters, fire equipment and fire stations, we are better able to protect personal and public property. The last time a new fire station was built in Jamaica was fourteen years ago, Financial Year 2006/2007, in the parish of Trelawny. In the last four years we have invested in four new Fire Stations: 1 in Port Maria, 1 in Yallahs and 2 in Montego Bay and 1 in Old Harbour.
- **Mr. Speaker**, because of COVID-19, we now know the answer: **Local Government is resilient, and has the capacity to respond to national crises. But we have more capacity to build, and more resilience to develop.**
- This pandemic has sharply tested all of us, but the things we have accomplished in protecting our people have invigorated me.
- If we could do all this in less than five years, I am motivated to do even more to ensure that the Local Government system is a shining symbol of hope and pride for every Jamaican.
- The test is not yet over. But this Administration has shown that it has the courage, the good sense and the sensitivity to take our people back to the pathway of *prosperity*.
- **Jamaica is in the good hands of the Most Honourable Andrew Holness, the right man at the right time. He leads a Government that remembers every day that the people put us here to improve their lives.**
- **He leads an Administration that has given our people in four short years, the foretaste and the reality of a better life. But there is more to be done. We hear the call of our citizens to do better and to do more, and we are up to the task.**
- **We have made our case in this Honourable House **Mr. Speaker**. We are ready to put on our jogging shoes, because we are fit and eager to take the case to our people. We are ready to roll up our shirt sleeves, and travel from village to city, from hinterland to coastline.**
- **We are ready to roll up our pants legs, and cross every stream and river, to tell our people that this Government cares, and will work even harder for them.**
- **I am ready for the next phase of the challenge **Mr. Speaker**.**
- I have fought many battles in my 46 years as a Local Government practitioner, but I am not battle-weary. **I am battle-ready.**

- **Mr. Speaker**, sometimes my body feels sore, but it works.
- There are some nights that I may not sleep well, but I wake up motivated to work another day.
- My mind is always searching for the next big idea, because my heart overflows with the desire to make life better for our people.
- I may not have all the things I have ever wanted, but I do have everything I will **ever** need.
- **Mr. Speaker**, I am thankful, blessed and energetic, because I am clear about my mission on this earth. It is to serve my fellow citizens, to give hope to those who have none, and to make green blades of grass grow where there was only barrenness before.

Thank you Mr. Speaker.

