



# ALGAJ

ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES JAMAICA

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2) years, during

which we were subject to the Corona virus pandemic. As we exit to spin-off effects of the COVID-19 restrictions akin to the Disaster Risk Management Act let us remain vigilant amid the reality of science and mother nature. As leaders within Local Government, we must continue to give attention to environmental sustainability as we create the path towards the Jamaican vision. Being Members of local government, it is our duty to address the most relevant issues within our Municipalities.

We must allot time and effort, indicative of our resolve to adhere to our National Development Plan (VISION 2030), and the Local Sustainable Development Plans (LSDP's) which, intuitively, are aligned to the seventeen (17) Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) designated by the United Nations. As we plan about our future and our ideal Jamaica in twenty-five (25) to thirty (30) years; we must think proactively and collectively to actualize our national dream.

I speak of things such as our drainage system to mitigate against serious flooding promoting faster run-offs, within our Municipalities and townships we can look at constructing our paved drains in a manner which allows them to clean themselves, whilst the 'storm water' passes through them. Huge retention ponds can be built around our Towns and communities, which our drains need to be channeled into and this water can then be used for farming purposes, using solar pumps and pipes.

Our community earthen drains need to be widened to the required specifications commensurate with a hundred-year development plan in mind. These surfaces should be planted with the specified grass such as the zoysia or from that grass family, which will reduce or eventually kill the growth of unwanted weeds or bushes, which normally inhibits the free flow of flood waters. This practice will also, double as beautification for our verges along our main roads which are lined with parallel drains.

Our drains need to also be channeled into soak away pits, covered for safety or packed with rubble stones or river shingle, which will allow for the recharging of our underground aquifers. This will allow for access to more water from our pumping systems as well as an increase in volume of water extracted from our springs and minor water supply systems, especially during extensive drought periods.

Let us all start thinking about what our buildings and communities should look like, following a storm or hurricane of say category 5 magnitude. Our buildings should be constructed with a floor level of a minimum of one meter above ground. Our windows and doorways should be fitted with strong accordion shutters which can easily be closed before the impact of any storm.

Our roofs, if not casted with concrete should be properly fastened to the walls with straps on each purlin and every rafter securely fastened to those purlins using nuts and bolts. The roof sheeting should all be locked and interlocked with nuts, bolts and waterproofed washers, also, properly secured to the rafters with all eaves sealed so as to prevent high speed winds from accessing any open spaces. Likewise, all construction of buildings should conform to the new building code.

Our roadways are being damaged too easily almost with every passing showers. Our engineers need to think of more sustainable ways of constructing our roads. It is said that a Parochial Road built with 'double surface dressing' or as some people call it 'chip and spray', is supposed to last some five (5) to seven (7) years. However, we are seeing that most if not all our roads, built using this system are only lasting three (3) to four (4) years these days. Whether this is caused from poor quality materials being used or poor workmanship or just lack of proper engineering, we need to commence constructing more sustainable roads which will last up to twenty-five (25) to thirty (30) years.

As a member of this noble organization, we all should commit to working with the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development through our various Municipal Corporations, to ensure that we protect our environment and our future.

We at ALGAJ would like to ensure that all of what we are proposing becomes a reality and is therefore, suggesting that the Government allocates a percentage of the National Budget towards the same.