

Message from the Leader of the Opposition Mr. Mark Golding, MP for Local Government and Community Month 2022

It is with great pleasure that I join the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development in celebrating Local Government and Community Month 2022, under the theme, *“Reigniting the Nation for Greatness through Local Government”*.

This year, Jamaica celebrates 60 years of Independence. It is fitting that this year’s observances emphasize the role of Local Government in reigniting our nation for greatness, as local government is designed to deepen our democracy by making the state more closely responsive to the needs of the people in their communities across the country. This can only be achieved through the collective and coordinated efforts of our local government structures at the divisional, parish and regional levels.

Local government is vital to national growth and development, as it provides the legal and administrative framework for municipal corporations to exercise their authority and fulfill their functions and responsibilities. These include maintaining order and harmony in everyday life through responsive and effective community governance, which of necessity will involve providing the range of basic day-to-day services to meet the needs of the people in their communities.

Our elected councillors and the staff of our municipal corporations are dedicated to improving the quality of life of our citizens, and they often work in challenging conditions as the resources at their disposal are insufficient to satisfy the demands of the public. They are expected to deliver for the people they serve, while operating within the legislative framework in which they must operate. I lift my hat to them for giving yeoman’s service to the people of Jamaica under these circumstances.

This Local Government and Community Month, I take the opportunity to appeal for the greater prioritization of local authorities in allocating the resources required for them to serve the people in our communities.

Our citizens are crying out for better road maintenance, garbage collection, street lighting, water and sewerage infrastructure, all of which are essential for Jamaicans to live in dignity and with civility. We need to reconsider the excessive centralization of critical basic services, and move to empower local authorities to deliver as many of the services that people need in their communities as possible.

I wish for the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development and all its agencies a successful month of celebrations. Continue to highlight the importance of Local Government in reigniting our nation for greatness.

May God bless you all!

Mark J. Golding, MP
Leader of the Opposition