

PRIME MINISTER'S MESSAGE

- Brothers and sisters of the Local Government family, I am very happy to celebrate Local Government and Community Month 2022 with you. Though I am not able to physically attend this first church service to mark the occasion in two years, I assure you that I understand the deep meaning of this special Month. I also fully understand the major contribution that you have made to our efforts to return to normal living.
- If there were any doubts about the importance of local government to national resilience and national recovery, Jamaica's experiences in managing of COVID-19 over the past two years have ended them. **I want to place on record, that the Government's acknowledged successes in dealing with the pandemic are strongly connected to the work done by you, the men and women in the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, its Agencies and the Local Authorities.** Your efforts assisted the Government to develop and implement public health and safety protocols, which were critical to managing our society.

- We have survived the worst blows of the pandemic. Our people are finding their confidence again. **Our economy is growing again, as we continue the work of recovering stronger, together.** I pay special tribute to you for your role in this process. Recovering stronger means continued economic growth. The Local Authorities and the Jamaica Fire Brigade contributed to this, by issuing over four thousand new building permits valued at over \$130-billion in the last financial year.
- Through the work of the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management and the Local Authorities, Jamaica is one of nearly half of the countries in this Region, that has disaster risk reduction strategies, plans and policies in place. The National Solid Waste Management Authority collected over 900-thousand tonnes of waste, and will receive new collection units shortly. The Social Development Commission's work in developing the micro-economy through the Local Economic Development Support Programme is of utmost importance.

- The efforts of the Board of Supervision in caring for our indoor and outdoor poor, our homeless population through feeding programmes and Night Shelters, and the construction of modern, indigent houses, is also critical to the better Jamaica that we are building. No less important are rural electrification and rural water supply, and the role of the Rural Water Supply Limited is critical to the Government's plans to bring rural Jamaica into the development curve.
- I therefore encourage you to continue your important work. You are examples of the positive possibilities that come from tireless effort and belief. You are led by a hard-working and visionary Minister who is a passionate servant of Local Government. We know that Local Government still has a great contribution to make to national development, and we are confident in you, as you celebrate your achievements, and contemplate the tasks ahead.
- I salute you as nation builders. You are reigniting this nation for greatness.

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