



**Ministry of
Culture, Gender,
Entertainment
and Sport**



Deliberate about Development

Presented by
The Honourable Olivia Grange, OJ, CD, MP
Minister of Culture, Gender,
Entertainment and Sport

25 June 2024
Gordon House
Kingston, Jamaica

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By the Honourable Olivia Grange, OJ, CD, MP
Minister of Culture, Gender, Culture, Gender,
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Our purpose

“We cannot allow the future of our country to happen by accident. If we content ourselves to sit back and relax and allow time and the luck of fortune to attend to our problems and build Jamaica’s future, we will stop just where we are and begin a quick reverse into the mire of our distant past. Our future depends on service and hard work.”

- *The Most Honourable Hugh Shearer,
Former Prime Minister*

Madam Speaker: This year I begin my contribution to the Sectoral Debate with grateful acknowledgment of the people who make it possible for me to stand here today — my constituents of Central St Catherine — some of whom are in the gallery.

I’m humbled by the privilege to represent, to work for and to work with the people of Central St Catherine, the heart of which is Spanish Town. We have been on a mission to transform lives and build communities; and we’ve come a long way and have achieved remarkable success. When I look at the physical and social development that has taken place, I proudly say that Central St Catherine is not the same place as when we started this journey together in 1997.

It is the investments in education, in skills development, in welfare assistance, in small business development, in infrastructure development, and the partnerships with the residents, the security forces, community groups, businesses, churches, schools, everyone old and young, that laid the foundation

for the transformation of gritty communities into models of peace, safety and security.

The old reputation for violence and destruction has changed and continues to change. Today, Central St Catherine is building a fine reputation as a place of choice to live, work, raise families and do business.

Just last week, I had the honour of participating in the opening of the multi-billion dollar residential and commercial development called New Brunswick Village. It is a most impressive development that symbolises how much things have improved in the constituency and the confidence that investors have in the national economy built stronger by this Andrew Holness Administration.

None of this happened overnight or by accident. It required us to be deliberate about development. And that means doing all these things: articulating a clear vision of a better life for all, obtaining the buy-in and support of stakeholders, constructing a doable plan, and taking the

required steps to make the vision a reality.

Being deliberate about development is about recognising the areas in which our people have competitive and strategic advantage, developing the policies and programmes to promote those areas, and being steadfast in the face of challenges.

It is about making Bold, Ambitious, Beneficial, Strategic and Impactful decisions and actions towards our purpose of building prosperity for all.

At its core, deliberate about development is understanding, as former Prime Minister Hugh Shearer taught us, that: “We cannot allow the future of our country to happen by accident. If we content ourselves to sit back and relax and allow time and the luck of fortune to attend to our problems and build Jamaica’s future, we will stop just where we are and begin a quick reverse into the mire of our distant past.”

Deliberate about development is knowing that “Our future depends on service and hard work.”

I am pleased to be led by a leader who is deliberate about

development. This Prime Minister does not shy away from the challenges. He doesn't kick the can of difficult decisions down the road for some future government to address. This Prime Minister doesn't only dream of a new Jamaica, he actively, and he deliberately works to build a new Jamaica with justice, liberty and prosperity for all.

I thank the Prime Minister for his leadership and for his confidence in me. I continue to pray for God's guidance in all he does for our blessed homeland.

Today, I report to this House and the nation on our deliberate actions to set things right for Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport as part of a new Jamaica.

I thank my colleagues in the Cabinet, as well as you, Madam Speaker, and the members of this House for your support and friendship. Sometimes we allow the impression to be given that we are rabid partisans who are unfriendly towards each other, but the truth is that we have been able to work across the aisle in the interest of our country. There will always be differences but we mustn't allow them to harden into anger and disrespect. As the mother of the house, and someone who was a political prisoner who was exiled from this country, I know how far we fell and how far we have come in our politics. That is why I am concerned about some of what I hear and see in our political discourse. Today I

say, let us choose to act in a spirit of goodwill and respect for one another.

I express appreciation to the Permanent Secretaries, members of the various boards of management, and the entire team across the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, its Departments, Agencies and Advisory Bodies.

I pay tribute to the stakeholders across the portfolio for their support, comments and criticisms which have helped us to deliver on our purpose.

I give thanks for my Councillors and management team, assistants, driver and close protection officers.

Please allow me to say a special word of thanks to my family who stand with me through it all. They have been my rock through the long days and late nights.

I love you.



A new Jamaica

In building the new Jamaica, our government has deliberately chosen to focus on developing the infrastructure across the country among our key deliverables. In my Ministry, this has meant developing new facilities, rehabilitating ageing ones and repurposing others.

I am determined to present to the nation a re-developed National Stadium — a world class facility that meets the regulatory requirements of international sports federations — among the deliverables of the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport.

When we returned to office, we examined every asset in Independence Park, the home of the National Stadium and we came up with an ambitious programme of re-development which has seen us resurface the running tracks, upgrade the aquatic centre, upgrade the basketball and Leila Robinson netball courts, among other improvements including the establishment of monuments to our track heroes Usain Bolt, Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, Veronica Campbell Brown and Asafa Powell — primarily funded through the Sports Development Foundation.

The main stadium facility is a special and expensive project that requires a different approach to development. In this regard, we went through the necessary processes established by the Public Investment Management Committee which approved our

concept for the re-development which was costed at US\$100M.

I give thanks to our development-minded Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance and the Public Service who give constant support as we seek to re-develop this 62 year old National Stadium that has served us well, but whose features are now obsolete, unable to be upgraded, and will pose a challenge to normal operations as the recent challenge with lighting demonstrated.

With the agreement of the Honourable Minister of Finance and the Public Service I make the following statement.

The Government of Jamaica, acting through the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service recently signed a Framework for Cooperation with the Government of the United Kingdom, acting through UK Export Finance. The Framework establishes a basis for both sides to collaborate and cooperate for the purpose of financing projects in Jamaica involving exports from the United Kingdom for the purposes of achieving the economic development objectives of Jamaica. Among the priority projects listed to be addressed in this Framework is the re-development of the National Stadium.

Though this Framework, a team of architects and project managers from the UK held discussions with my team at the Ministry of Culture, Gender,

Entertainment and Sport and sent us a proposal for the renovation and re-development of facilities at Independence Park, particularly the National Stadium.

The document, in essence, proposes to not only address the shortcomings of the existing stadium but also to identify (through qualitative and quantitative assessment) the full potential of this iconic stadium through its enhancement as a major tournament venue, training centre and visitor attraction to promote Jamaica and Jamaican sporting talent.

We considered the proposal, which also has the development of the sports museum in its scope, and we accepted it. We have communicated our decision to the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service which will finalise the funding agreement and release funds in short order to begin phase one of the development which is the Stadium Assessment and Feasibility Study.

We are deliberately establishing a world class stadium for our world class athletes and entertainers. And we're still targeting to break ground in August 2025.

We have also asked the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service to provide special funding in the amount of J\$75M for urgent remedial work at the National Stadium to address the lighting infrastructure. This remedial work must be completed by

September for the stadium to meet the FIFA requirements for international matches that are scheduled to be played at 'the office' in the second and third week of September.

I also have exciting developments regarding the Trelawny Stadium to report. This government is determined to exploit the full potential of Trelawny Stadium for the benefit of the Jamaican people. In this regard, we have been in discussions about a US\$550M development at the facility. The venture is driven by private equity and not public funding. The investors propose to transform Trelawny into a high performance sports complex that can accommodate 21 sports disciplines, host international games, awards ceremonies and serve as training grounds.

This sports tourism development also proposes the

construction of high rise condominiums and a hotel.

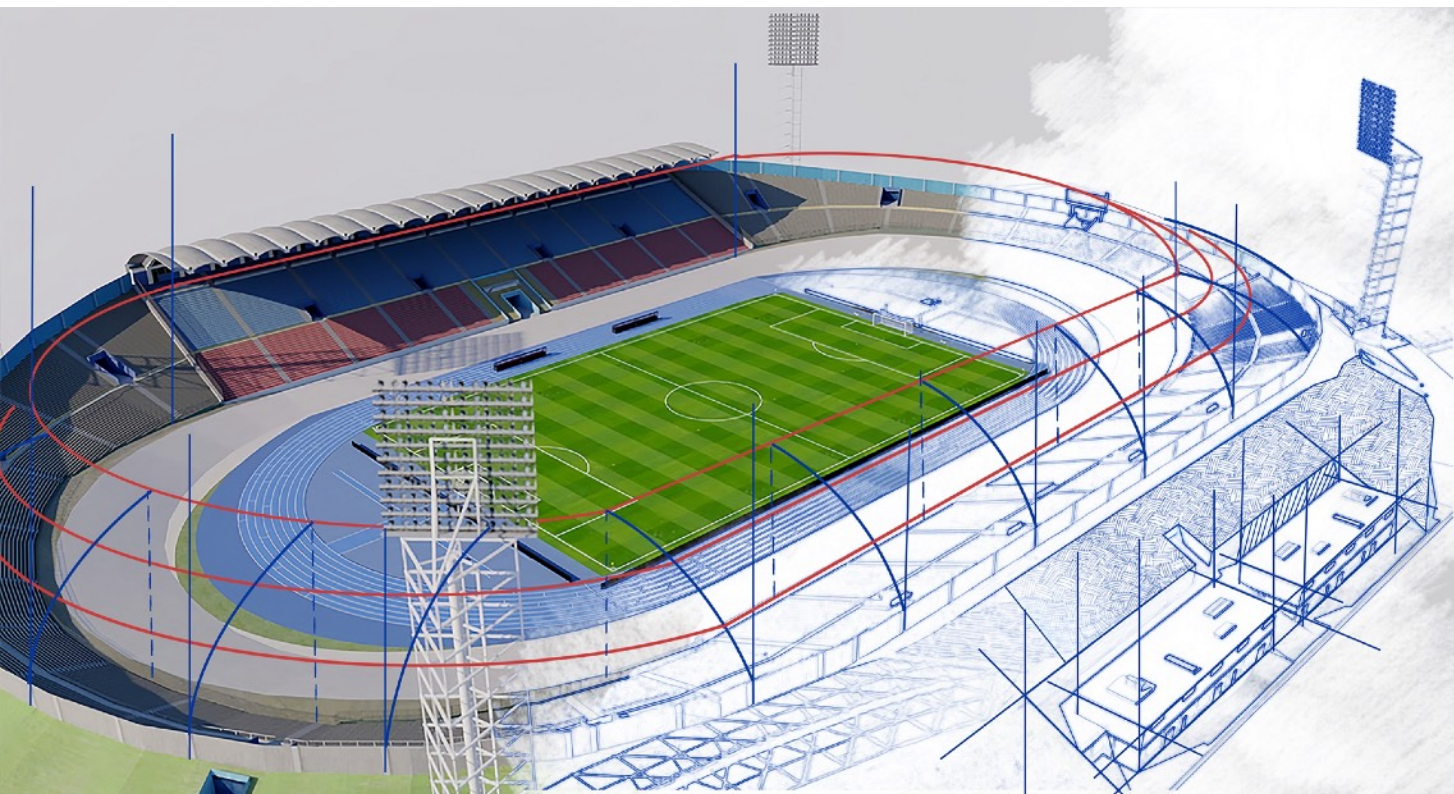
The discussions about this exciting development are going well and I look forward to more constructive talks towards a deal.

In the meantime, we continue to make Trelawny Stadium available for a range of activities. So far this year, the Stadium has hosted cricket tournament matches, parties, the Jamaica Youth Festival and church services. Later this year, it is scheduled to host the Trelawny Football Association finals, the Sandals Annual Funday, among other entertainment events.

Deliberate about development, the government continues to invest heavily in national, community and school sport, welfare, coaching and the development of facilities. Indeed, in the last calendar year, the Sports Development

Foundation invested J\$515M (more than half a billion dollars) on programmes and initiatives that reached every corner of Jamaica, from community sports to the elite level. From building sports facilities in underserved areas to supporting local tournaments and leagues, the SDF worked hand in hand with national federations, agencies and communities to harness the power of sports for social and economic development.

Deliberate about development, we have taken steps to address the issue of night noise and the insufficiency of entertainment venues by repurposing heritage sites into entertainment venues. In this regard we carried out extensive rehabilitation and upgrade of the Seville Heritage Park in St Ann, which is now available for use for a variety of events.





We are breathing life back into Fort Rocky as a major venue in the Port Royal Entertainment Zone. In building the Fort Rocky venue, we conducted an ecological assessment of the site, as well as a survey of flora and fauna and a study of sound and light. These have been critical in determining the type of entertainment activities that should take place at Fort Rocky considering potential effects on residents, aviation, and sensitive ecological resources in the area. We are aware that changes in light or noise in an ecosystem may have an impact not only the functions of individual species but the overall function of the ecosystem. So we have been deliberately careful and sensitive in the development.

I report to the House that based on the findings on the environmental assessment, Fort

Rocky is suitable for the purpose intended with careful environmental and ecological monitoring.

This year, we will proceed to build out the parking lots and viewing decks at Fort Rocky.

Deliberate about development, we are positioning Jamworld to become the first operational 24-hour venue. We have done site clearing, repairs and other works to make Jamworld suitable for events. We have also completed the Surveyor's ID report which is a foundation for architectural drawings, topographical map and development plan for Jamworld — which we expect to complete this year as well as the perimeter fence to secure the property.

We are also considering a proposal for public-private partnership in developing Jamworld as a TV and Film Soundstage Facility and live

performance space. The proposal calls for the development of multiple production soundstages, virtual production and gaming stage, post production facilities and a mill, among other facilities.

Our potential partner anticipates the completion of the topographical map to develop a detailed design plan and move our discussions forward.

Prior to this Administration, there were no state-run shelters for women wishing to leave violent relationships. We know it's difficult for some women to leave. The reasons are many and complex.

Deliberate about development, we put in the systems to help women leave violent men and to restart their lives. To date, we have established and are operating two shelters for victims of domestic violence. They are

safe, well secured and equipped to cater to women and their children. The environment is therapeutic. We have counsellors. We offer legal services. We have trainers who have developed various programmes to help women earn and become financially independent.

Women in one shelter are earning from a strawberry farm that they've established, while others are earning from jewellery making and other skills that they have learnt since leaving their abusive situation.

These shelters — established with the help of the European Union, UNFPA and UN Women, among others — provide hope for a better life.

We are currently developing a third shelter. The construction phase is ongoing and work is projected to be completed by the end of this financial year.

Any of us could become a victim of domestic violence, but none of us should stay in that situation. Help is now available. So my sisters, take that step. Call or text us on 876-553-0372 and 876-236-1713. We will help.

Connected to the National Shelter Strategy is the deliberate development of Domestic Violence Intervention Centres at police stations across the island through the support of the Spotlight Initiative. These centres provide counselling and other forms of support to people who experience domestic violence.

Deliberate about development, we have expanded the reach of the Women's Centre of Jamaica Foundation by rehabilitating and establishing new facilities at Santa Cruz, St Elizabeth and Mandeville, Manchester. We are working with the Factories Corporation of Jamaica on improving our facilities in St

Thomas as part of the government's deliberate development plan for the parish.

We have also put in infrastructure to improve the delivery of virtual CSEC classes in rural areas.

The Women's Centre, now in its 45th year, has been a lifeline to thousands of adolescent mothers for whom it has provided a second chance while helping to reduce the adolescent birth rate.

We have received funding to rehabilitate the 19th century sea wall that protects the Historic Naval Hospital in Port Royal from storm surges and maritime traffic. The extent of the deterioration of the sea wall was revealed in a Heritage Impact Assessment conducted in 2022. We are concerned that further deterioration could affect the integrity of the sunken city.

We sought international assistance through UNESCO to address the deterioration and the Netherlands Funds-in-Trust has responded. We are finalising the arrangement and hope to begin the project by September. We expect that this project will build our capacity to conserve and maintain the submerged city which is the subject of our nomination to the World Heritage List, titled 'The Archaeological Landscape of 17th Century Port Royal'. Our nomination is now at the final stage of the evaluation process and we anticipate a favourable decision by March of next year.

Port Royal is synonymous with Jamaica, but its significance stretches way beyond our shores. It was the port where Enslaved Africans were sold and shipped to plantations in other English colonies and the Spanish main. The trade in Africans became a significant source of Port Royal's wealth.

The town, once the enclave of pirates, grew to become the most important trading post and the most affluent town in the New World. It became known as both the richest and the wickedest city in the West, if not the whole world.

At the height of its immense wealth in the 17th century disaster struck. On 7 June 1692 an earthquake caused two-thirds of Port Royal to sink into the sea. Remarkably, 332 years on, it is a well preserved site that captures life as it was being lived in Port Royal at the time.

For us, this is a historic site of memory which must be preserved for all of humanity.

The inscription of the sunken city to the world heritage list, added to the development of the Cruise Ship Pier, would seriously enhance Jamaica's culture and heritage tourism product.

This would be further enhanced by development works to be undertaken over the next five years at the Rockfort Mineral Bath under a new license agreement with Carib Cement. The works will include enhancement of the baths, installation of accessories and the establishment of a robust security presence to ensure health and safety of visitors.

Carib Cement assured us that some renovations will be completed within the next six months which will make the facility available to the public shortly. As we know, Jamaicans old and young have great faith in the healing streams of our mineral baths. This will ultimately re-position Rockfort Mineral Bath among the list of culture, heritage, health and tourism attractions of Greater Kingston and Port Royal, adding to the attraction of the redevelopment of Downtown Kingston.

Deterrent and protection

Deliberate about development, we have sought to introduce and amend legislation to protect people's rights. With the approval of the entire House, we passed the Sexual Harassment (Protection and Prevention) Act and brought it into operation on July 3, 2023.

It is a game changing piece of legislation that will provide relief for those enduring the harmful effects of sexual harassment and hopefully cause a culture change.

Under the law, all work places and institutions must have their sexual harassment workplace in place by the end of June. The policy must be brought to the attention of each worker, client, student, resident, ward, inmate, patient or member, as the case may require. Any workplace or institution that fails to implement such a policy — which should outline a process for reporting and resolving a complaint of sexual harassment — could face sanctions.

The law also provides for the establishment of the Sexual Harassment Tribunal to hear and determine complaints and to make awards.

Today, I announce the members of the Tribunal who have all met the fit and proper eligibility requirements specified in the Act:

- Dr. Meric Dale Walker
- Mr Donald Roberts
- Mrs Debby-Ann Brown-Salmon
- Mrs Karen Thompson-Wilson
- Mrs Karen Campbell-Bascoe
- Mrs Gennetta Richards-Smikle
- Ms Camille Lee

- Mr Kevel A. Campbell
- Mr Ferdinand Algernon Smith
- Ms Khadrea Sharree
- Ms Shaneek Rose Clacken
- Mr Junior A. Latibeaudiere
- Ms Clare Pamela Miller
- Mr Devon Merrick Dick
- Ms Indera Persaud

It has been a necessarily detailed and carefully executed process of evaluation of the members.

We already fully staffed the Sexual Harassment Investigation Unit which will give support to the operation of the Tribunal.

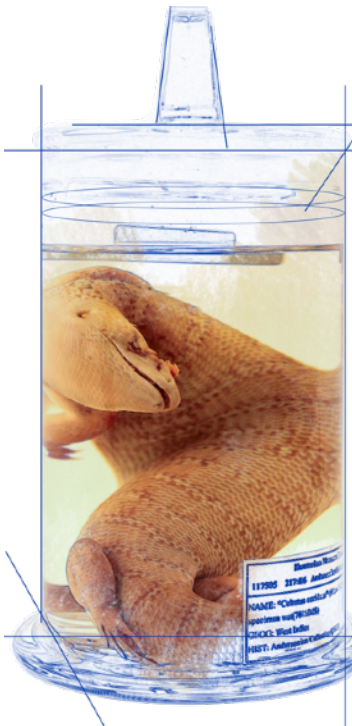
We are also deliberately strengthening the Domestic Violence Act. The Domestic Violence Act (2023 amendments) came into effect in January of this year. The amendments, among other things, allow the Court to issue Protection Orders and impose a penalty of up to J\$1M for a breach; and a sentence of up to one year in prison.

We continue to improve our services to victims, punish perpetrators and review our laws to create effective deterrents to would-be perpetrators. In this regard, a Joint Select Committee is reviewing the Domestic Violence Act towards further strengthening the protection of victims and dealing appropriately with perpetrators.

Deliberate about development, we are moving to amend the Jamaica National Heritage Trust Act to address deficiencies in the framework to respond to changing norms in the area of heritage protection

and management, consistent with international trends and best practices. This will serve as a precursor to Jamaica's intention to ratify the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property and accession to the 1995 International Institute for the Unification of Private Law Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects.

These important development matters are aimed at safeguarding our heritage assets. The Ministry has held sensitisation sessions with Customs Officials in Kingston and Montego Bay on the importance of the Conventions for the protection of Jamaica's heritage assets against illicit transfer and theft.



Repatriation and repair

The Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport continues to work towards the repatriation of artefacts that were taken from Jamaica by the British and housed in museums and universities in the United Kingdom. The negotiation for the return of many of these artefacts, including a whole repository of artefacts from the Taínos, is ongoing.

Recently, we celebrated the repatriation of the Giant Galliwasp through a collaborative effort involving the University of the West Indies, the Institute of Jamaica, and the University of Glasgow, Scotland. The repatriated Jamaican Giant Galliwasp was thought to have been collected in the 1850s and became part of the University of Glasgow collections in 1888.

The specimen, called 'Celeste', was transferred from the zoology collections of the University of Glasgow to the University of the West Indies, which, recognising the national importance of the specimen, has deposited it in the national faunal collections at the National History Museum of Jamaica on permanent loan.

We are making plans to display 'Celeste' to the public, the majority of whom have never seen a specimen of this species.

The IOJ is also in possession of a motor car featured in 'Bob Marley: One Love', the biopic about the Reggae Legend.

The 1973 blue BMW E was used in the film as a replica of Marley's motorcar.

The vehicle was donated to Jamaica by the film and television production and distribution company Paramount Pictures Corporation, as a goodwill gesture. The public will be able to view the vehicle as part of an exhibition.

The National Gallery of Jamaica, in celebration of its 50th anniversary this year, will stage special exhibitions, including a return to its former home at Devon House. The exhibition will feature several works which were originally installed at the Devon House, inspired by the documentary painting of Haitian artist Phanel Toussaint.

Currently, the National Gallery of Jamaica is showcasing artworks by some of Jamaica's outstanding artists in the 2024 Venice Biennial, the largest and oldest of its kind in the world. Its current exhibition, titled Strangers Everywhere, includes the following works from Jamaica: Negro Aroused by Edna Manley; Conversation by Barrington Watson; and Johnny Cool by Osmond Watson.

We cannot forget; and we must never forget our ancestors and what they went through.

We must not and will not rest until we get justice for the atrocities committed against our ancestors. And so we are more determined than ever to pursue reparations in the name of our ancestors our generation and future generations.

Through deliberate actions, there has been some progress towards reparations. Notable among them was the visit to

Jamaica in April 2024 of a delegation from churches in the United Kingdom during which the United Reform Church apologised to the people of Jamaica for its role in transatlantic slavery.

I reiterate my call on other churches in the UK, especially those who sent representatives to Jamaica to witness this historic apology, to signal to their government that the Christian thing to do is to admit culpability, apologise to us, and to engage with us to determine the various forms that reparations may take.

In recent times, we have been approached by descendants of enslavers who say they wish to apologise for the actions of their ancestors. Today, I announce that we will use Emancipation Jubilee on July 31 at Seville Heritage Park as an occasion for these apologies to be made to the people of Jamaica who still suffer from the legacies of enslavement.

Emancipation Jubilee is an occasion when we celebrate the ancestors winning the long battle for freedom in the face of chattel slavery. I believe the ancestors would be pleased to hear the apologies of the descendants of those who brutalised and enslaved them on plantations in Jamaica for over 400 years.

The apologies represent a significant moment on the long road to reparations.

Rastafari

Recently, the Leader of the Opposition sent me a message regarding a complaint he received about issues affecting Rastafari students at a primary school. I looked into the matter and it turns out that three students were being barred from sitting end of year exams because they had not been vaccinated as required. The parents were unwilling to have the vaccine administered on religious grounds. Thankfully, we were able to resolve the matter and the students were able to write their exams.

The emergency with the unvaccinated students made me realise that there are some matters relating to the Rasta community that need confirming by law here in Parliament. Rastas have recently sent me a list and asked me to meet with them and hammer them all out. Most date from before my time, but I see that God has put it in my hands to do what is right. I am glad to do that and God has also given me a helping hand in Barbara Blake-Hannah. I am sorry she is not well enough to be here with me today but I know she is committed to do everything possible for the community she is a part of. That meeting will happen shortly.

There is no room for discrimination of Rasta in the new Jamaica which we are determined to build. We must

live together in harmony respecting each other's cultural identity and expression.

This government is deliberate about engaging with, celebrating, and setting things right with our Rastafari brothers and sisters. The State did an injustice to Rastafari at Coral Gardens in 1963. For 54 years, our Rastafari brothers and sisters lived with the physical, psychological and emotional scars of that incident and the feeling that successive governments had let them down by not sufficiently acknowledging what they had been through.

It took this Prime Minister, Andrew Holness, to do the right thing by taking responsibility and apologising for what happened in Coral Gardens in 1963 - before he was even born.

It took this Administration to establish the Coral Gardens Trust Fund, in which was have pumped J\$100M to pay reparations, as part of a broad programme of reconciliation with the Rastafari community.

Another important step was the posthumous honouring of Leonard Howell, 'the First Rasta' with the Order of

Distinction as part of Jamaica 60 celebrations.

We are deliberate about showing honour and pride.



Full coverage

Deliberate about development, the Jamaica Entertainment and Creative Industries Practitioners Insurance Plan will be launched in a matter of weeks. This game-changing plan will address situations where there is no money to bury a practitioner upon his/her passing or where some entertainers become ill and are unable to fund the necessary medical treatment out of pocket.

As Minister and as a practitioner, I know the need for this insurance plan. Many practitioners and their families often turn to me as Minister for assistance. I try my best, but this insurance plan will provide a better, more sustainable, more dignified option.

Following a competitive tender process, the contract was awarded to Guardian Life Insurance Company. We will sign the contract in a matter of weeks. It is our expectation that through this deliberate action artists and creative practitioners will take advantage of this scheme and so reduce their vulnerability to adversity and death as has been the current experience. Those who wish to participate must sign up to the e-Registry on the Ministry's website: mcges.gov.jm

We will continue promote our series of symposia on asset management, preparation for death and other adversities, investment options and, ultimately, security of family after the passing of a practitioner.

The Jamaica Entertainment and Creative Industries Practitioners Insurance Plan will be similar to the very successful Jamaica Athlete Insurance Plan which provides Group Health, Group Life and Group Personal Accident cover to nearly 2,000 athletes from 35 National Sports Federations.

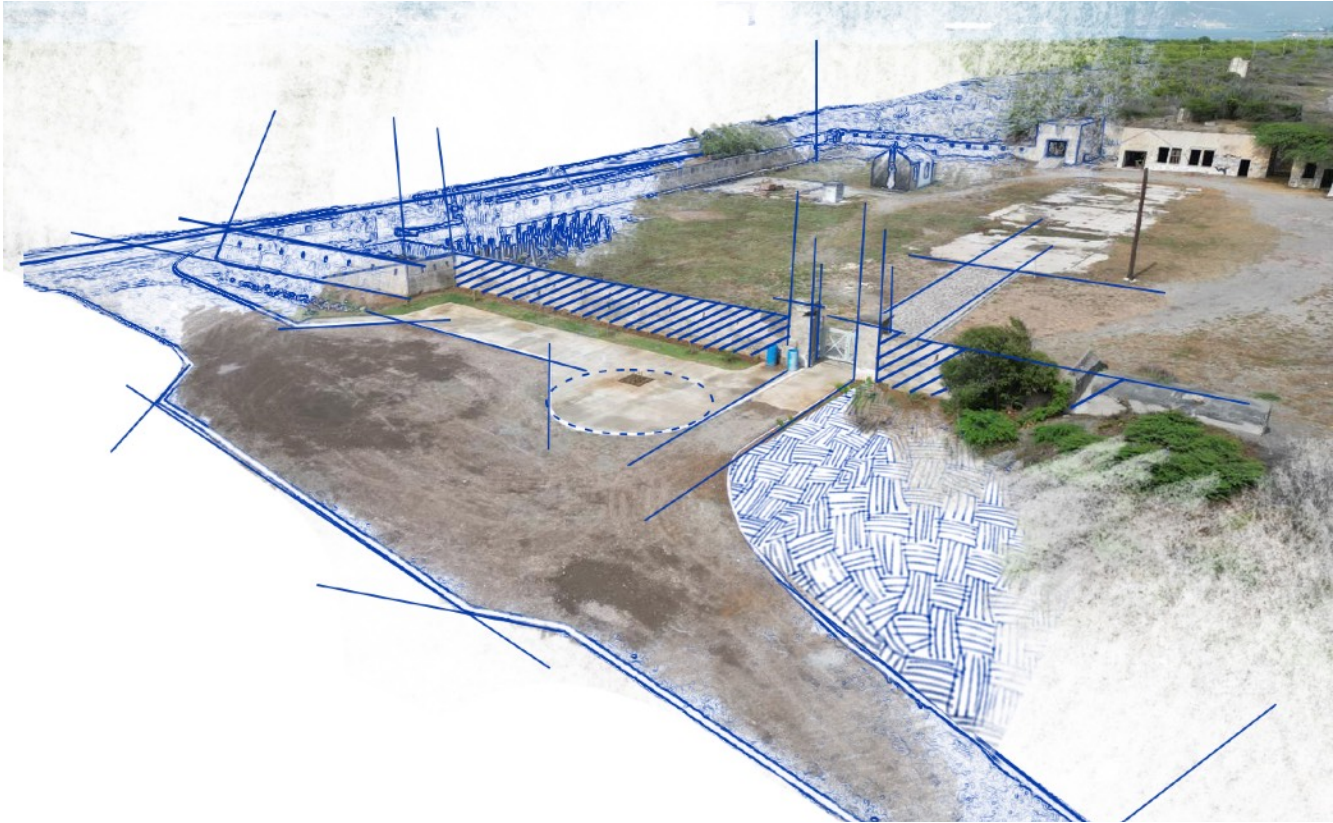
In response to issues raised by sports and entertainment practitioners on free movement within CARICOM and to the USA, Canada, the United Kingdom and Europe, my Ministry convened a series of Visa and Immigration Symposia with the respective missions together with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade.

The sessions allowed the practitioners to gain information on the visa process, while allowing the embassies and high commissions to recognise the nuances of travel for practitioners which may be different from regular visa seekers. This intervention resulted in the Spanish

Embassy creating a special system for athletes and their management travelling to the Olympics. The US Embassy instituted a similar process for student athletes travelling to Penn Relays.

We are deliberate about addressing the issues that affect our practitioners and will engage with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade with respect to future negotiations of trade agreements to include special arrangements for the mobility of sports, entertainment, culture and creative industries practitioners.

Enable and empower



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Starting Thursday, Jamaica's athletes will be in competition at the National Senior and Junior Championships, hoping to make the team for the 2024 Olympics Games in Paris which begin on July 26. I know the House will join me in sending best wishes to all our athletes who will be on show at the National Stadium.

In a bid to encourage the athletes, the government will give a sum of J\$360,000 to each athlete who qualifies for Olympics. We've also set aside J\$50M in incentives members of our national team who will compete at the Olympics.

We will use the opportunity of Paris 2024 to engage in cultural diplomacy. We will be partnering

with the city of Nanterre to stage Jamaica Day on Friday, August 9, which will culminate with a mega Reggae Night event, featuring the 2024 Grammy Awardee Julian Marley, Skip Marley and Luciano. On Sunday, August 11, the final day of the Olympics, we will partner with the CRC Church in Paris to stage Jamaica Praise featuring Kevin Downswell in concert.

We will also take the opportunity to finalise the twinning of the city of Nanterre, France and Spanish Town, Jamaica. The Mayor of Nanterre and the Mayor of Spanish Town will sign a partnership agreement, which will see the start of a mutually beneficial

partnership between the people of Nanterre and Spanish Town.

I'm happy to announce that the Jamaica/China sport cooperation programme is back on. The three year agreement under which 400 Jamaican sports representatives were to receive training in China was interrupted after the first two successful years by covid. In this the final year of the programme, we are sending Badminton, Women's Basketball, Women's Football, Women's Volleyball, Gymnastics and Swimming teams for 60 days of rigorous training across China.

We thank the Government of the People's Republic of China



for its friendship and support in this regard and look forward to the improvements in the skill and technique of our athletes.

In a deliberate move to develop youth athletes, the government is implementing a nutrition programme targeting track and field athletes who participate in Boys' and Girls' Champs.

We recognise that not all schools have the same resources. The top performing schools have established nutrition programmes, while many others struggle to provide the necessary support to athletes. This programme will be geared especially towards athletes that need the support the most. By giving them nutrition support, we are investing in their health, education, and potential to excel.

We will announce further details at a later date.

Deliberate about development, the CPTC through its training arm the

Media Technology Institute will embark on recruitment of media, cultural and creative industries personnel for training through the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) a new initiative of the Ministry of Education and Youth.

PLAR will allow for people who have years of experience but no formal qualifications, to be assessed and certified in their areas of expertise and thereby increase their economic prospects.

The MTI staff is currently completing training and certification in PLAR as part of the first cohort of advisors selected by the Jamaica Tertiary Education Commission.

My Ministry also facilitated training in the Art of Indonesian Batik Making as part of our economic opportunities programme that has been providing training, certification, grants, equipment and supplies to several communities and groups.

The free Batik workshops were led by the world renowned Indonesian fashion designer, Indah Darry. The Batik training programme was undertaken in partnership of the Government of Indonesia through its Embassy.

A total of 85 Jamaicans were trained in Indonesian Batik Making with 20 completing the more advanced 'Train the Trainer' curriculum which means they now have the capacity to perpetuate our training programme. We are targeting to train an additional 40 Jamaicans by the end of the year.

Under this programme, we are setting stage for the upward mobility of our people in the creative industries.

Jamaica 62: One Love to the World

This year the Jamaica Cultural Development Commission celebrates 60 years of unearthing, training, developing and showcasing the creative talent of the Jamaican people. Sixty years of preserving Jamaica's Culture. Most of us, at some stage in our lives, have been impacted by the JCDC, whose network stretches across the length and breadth of Jamaica.

Key among its programmes are the Festival of the Arts and the annual Emancipation and Independence Celebrations.

The Festival of the Arts includes Drama, Speech, Dance, Traditional Folk and Music, and involves approximately 15,000 participants. From Parish to National Finals, the best of the gold medal winners (approximately 250 performers) are selected for the Annual Mello Go Roun, one of the most popular events during Independence Week. This takes place at the Independence Village in the National Stadium Complex between August 1 and August 6.

We launched the Jamaica 62 celebrations last Thursday at the Ranny Williams Entertainment Centre and offered a taste of the highly anticipated drone show that will be a highlight of the Grand Gala on Independence Day.

The Jamaica Festival Song Competition continues to attract extraordinary talent. The televised Presentation Show of this year's finalists will take place on Thursday, June 27, live from the TVJ studios. The Results Show will follow on July 13 at the Ranny Williams Entertainment Centre, when one of the 10 finalists will emerge as the 2024 Jamaica Festival Song Winner.

The Jamaica Gospel Stars series airs live on CVM Television on Sundays (July 7, 14, 21 and 28) at 8pm. This will culminate on Sunday, August 4 with the naming of the 2024 Jamaica Gospel Star, inside the Independence Village, with guests artistes Kevin Downswell, Rhoda Isabella and other leading Jamaica Gospel performers.

It should be noted that the public will be able to vote for their favourite Festival Song and Gospel Star, on the Digicel Platform, with votes being accepted from Both Digicel and Flow networks. Voting can also be done via the Reggae Jamaica Mobile App which will allow the those in the Diaspora to participate.

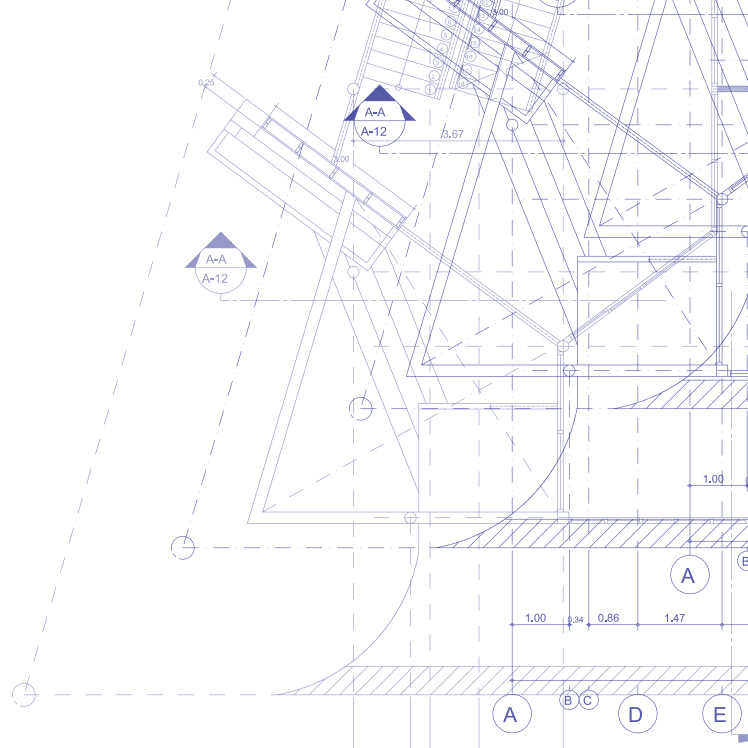
The Jamaica Festival Queen Coronation will be on Saturday, August 3.

The full schedule activities is available on the JCDC website at jcdc.gov.jm.

The Grand Gala inside the National Stadium on Tuesday, August 6, begins at 5:30pm. Gates will open from as early as 3pm. Patrons can expect the usual fireworks display, mass dances and the now popular drone show, which will this year feature 700 drones. There will be a display by the ladies of the Jamaica Constabulary Force, as they mark their 75th anniversary of enlistment in the Force. We will also recognise the 170th Anniversary of the arrival of the Chinese in Jamaica.

Our cultural and creative space is a pivotal part of our strategy to build Jamaica. Not only does it foster national pride and self-worth but it builds our economy. The multiplier effect can be seen through the Grand Gala and the Independence Village. With 2,000 participants annually, seamstresses must be engaged to provide costumes for the performers, caterers are engaged to provide meals, among various other cultural practitioners, artisans and suppliers.

Closing statement



Jamaica is a creative country. You can feel the creativity of our people in every part of this country — not just in museums or galleries or theatres or dancehalls. You see, feel and hear the creativity of the Jamaican people just walking the street and interacting with them.

For me, creativity is in the Jamaican DNA. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development put it well in its 2013 Global Economy Report that “Creativity is synonymous with Jamaica”.

Jamaica also has an outstanding reputation in global sports where our representatives continue to

punch way above our weight class — particularly in track and field where we’ve produced some of the fastest men and women the world has ever known, led by the great Usain Bolt. In many ways, sports help to define us as a nation.

However, Jamaica’s outsized impact on global culture, entertainment and sport, achieved with relatively little resources, didn’t just happen overnight or by accident. The development of a country does not happen by chance. It happens through service, hard work and by being deliberate about development.

That is our task: to build a Jamaica that will last and for

which future generations will be proud.

Let us go forward with confidence knowing that there is no challenge that we Jamaicans cannot overcome when we work together; when we are deliberate about development,

Thank you, Madam Speaker.



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