

SECTORAL PRESENTATION

2012-2013

BY

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MINISTER OF WATER, LAND, ENVIRONMENT

AND CLIMATE CHANGE

ON

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“PARTNERING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT”

OPENING REMARKS

Mr. Speaker, The subject of my presentation is **“PARTNERING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT”**. In this regard I would like to thank the Prime Minister, for conceptualizing and forming this new Ministry of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change.

Mr. Speaker my use of the word **“partnering”** is deliberate, as my portfolio areas touch and concern everyone. No one is excluded, particularly from our newest area, Climate Change.

As such, it is not by accident that we have an umbrella ministry, but by design.

This administration understands the interrelationship and interconnectedness between all these portfolio areas. Indeed Mr. Speaker, how we treat with our water resources and utilize our land impact on the environment and vice versa, All of these areas are being affected one way or the other by Climate Change to which we will all have to adapt. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, **“With Climate Change, We Must Change”**.

Mr. Speaker, this administration is aware that **“Teamwork Divides the effort, but multiplies the effect”**.

We therefore acknowledge the need for partnership and an integrated or “joined up” approach in managing all four portfolio areas of responsibility, with **Sustainable Development** as our overarching goal.

WATER – THE LIFEBLOOD OF OUR NATION

Introduction

Mr. Speaker, I begin with the water Portfolio. As a resource, water is, without a doubt, the lifeblood of any nation. Its importance is underscored by the fact that two former United Nations Secretaries General, and a former Vice President of the World Bank have opined that the next World War may very well be fought over water. No wonder the NWC's mantra is "Water is Life".

Its impact on sustainable development is without parallel, and it is critical for the maintenance of environmental and human health and for supporting all human activities—residential, commercial, industrial, electricity generation and agriculture.

As such, the provision of potable water to meet the needs of our population, particularly our rural population, is a focal point for this administration and for my Ministry.

Our vision for the development of water related infrastructure and supply, spans the length and breadth of this island.

This vision is encapsulated in our Manifesto which calls for the creation of **“an enabling environment within which agencies under the water sector can flourish, as well as the provision of policy prescriptions which support the sustained viability of the various water and sewerage service providers”**. All of this will be buttressed by comprehensive watershed management programmes which will be implemented in all parishes.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard the call for water all across Jamaica and our agencies responsible for water, are responding to that call by undertaking research, implementing projects and adopting strategies to maximize the volume of water available to our citizens, and improve its quality.

THE NATIONAL WATER COMMISSION

Mr. Speaker although there are challenges in the water and wastewater sectors, the government continues to work assiduously to overcome them.

In relation to activities in the water sector, this section of the presentation is divided into completed; ongoing and planned water projects.

COMPLETED WATER PROJECTS

Mr. Speaker I am happy to report our accomplishments in the Water Sector.

Works were completed on the following components of the Jamaica Water Supply Improvement Project.

A) Rehabilitation of the Constant Spring Treatment Plant

Mr. Speaker, the Constant Spring Treatment Plant was completed at a cost of **J\$704 million in March 2012**. New and more efficient meters which will yield more accurate readings have been installed, facilitating connections to almost **50,000 households** in the Corporate Area and **20,000 in Ocho Rios, St. Mary, St. Catherine and May Pen**.

B) Two modules at the treatment plant in Seaview, Stony Hill were rehabilitated in March 2012

This has improved the reliability of our service to approximately twenty thousand **(20,000) persons**.

C) A new supply system was integrated into the network at Kitson Town in March 2012 at a cost of J\$623million.

Under this project, service was extended to new areas removing the dependence of householders on high priced trucked water.

D) Rio Cobre Gorge

Approximately six (6) kilometers of new Ductile Iron pipes were laid to replace old pipes which were about fifty years old. This was at a cost of over J\$700m and was completed in February 2012.

E) Stony Hill Area Distribution Network Improvements.

Mr. Speaker I am pleased to report that the Stony Hill Distribution Network Improvements have been completed at a cost of J\$382.7 million. The works included replacement of leaking pipes and the upgrade of the pipe diameter in certain areas as well as the installation of pressure reducing valves, resulting in a number of areas previously on water scheduling now enjoying 24 hour supply. This has improved supplies to about **10,000 persons**.

Let me pay tribute to the Member from N.W. St. James for his role in pushing ahead with the projects, that I have just described, but I am reminded of the verse in the Bible from first Corinthians chapter 3 and vs. 6 in which Paul says “**I planted, Appollus watered, but God gave the increase**”.

CONTINUITY

Mr. Speaker the Government intends to continue and extend the following projects in the water sector:

ONGOING WATER PROJECTS

Mr. Speaker, under the JWSIP, we are executing physical works in the Stony Hill area aimed at alleviating the water woes for the residents of Sherbourne Heights, Wireless Station Road, Kingswood and sections of Mannings Hill. Other areas including lower Lawrence Tavern, Mount Ogle, Temple Hall and Golden Spring will also benefit from the project. This aspect of the project will cost J\$818 million. In the meantime the laying of pipes started on July 16th and will end in a very happy Christmas for the residents of the communities I just mentioned.

I am again happy to report that all the funding is in place for this project and all the approvals have been obtained.

F) The rehabilitation of the Mona and Hope Treatment Plants (part of the Kingston Water and Sanitation Project)

Mr. Speaker work is also on-going at the Mona/Hope Treatment Plant at a cost of **J\$1.6 billion**. These works are scheduled to be completed within the next 12 months.

My Ministry is targeting water lock-offs to ensure a more predictable and reliable supply system. The citizens of the Kingston/St. Andrew metropolitan area and the Portmore municipality should experience greater reliability in

their water service; greater coverage in these areas and water at a consistent pressure. Turning to Portmore we have procured **10 kilometers of 750 mm diameter pipes which will arrive in the island by mid August, with construction scheduled to start by the first week in September. This will provide an additional six million gallons per day to the municipality.**

Mr. Speaker I could not close this section without highlighting the sewerage works being done in the down town Kingston area as well as the anticipated works. Currently, works are on-going on the Darling Street pumping Station to the tune of **J\$614.1million**. That project is expected to be completed within the next 18 months.

PROJECTS TARGETED FOR THIS FINANCIAL YEAR

The long term plans relating to both water and wastewater services are being laid out by my Ministry and the NWC in the Parish Plans which are now being revised in relation to all parishes. These plans will put us in good stead to meet the desired level of coverage for our citizens over the next 5 to 10 years. Key stakeholder meetings will be organized at the local level to inform the public of the plans in these two critical areas.

All 63 members of this Honourable House will be notified in this calendar year of the schedule in relation to the stakeholders' consultations in their constituencies.

At this time I can report that the preliminary Engineer's Estimate is that it will require J\$191billion over the next ten years to execute all the works covered by the parish plans. We have raised thus far J\$26billion of this amount.

Fiscal space permitting, we expect to be able to raise the remaining funds over the period.

Mr. Speaker happily I can report that within a few days, I will be signing the contract for Phase One of the Port Antonio Water, Sewerage and Drainage Project at a cost of J\$1.65 billion dollars. We expect pipe work on this project to begin within three months.

I recognize that over the years the western section of the country has been plagued with water shortages. We intend to address this problem starting this fiscal year. To this end, and with the blessing and assistance of the Minister of Finance, we shall be shortly embarking on bilateral negotiations to secure both the financial and technical resources to effect a number of water supply projects in the parishes of Trelawny, St. James, Hanover, Westmoreland and St. Elizabeth to the tune of US\$250million.

Mr. Speaker these matters are at an early and delicate stage and I will make a further detailed announcement on these projects in due course.

Mr. Speaker we recognize that the increases in water production capacity that will come from the various projects highlighted earlier will not have the desired effect if immediate and definitive steps are not taken to reduce the levels of Non-Revenue Water (NRW) being experienced by the NWC.

NRW basically refers to the loss of water produced and arises mainly from old and leaking infrastructure and illegal connections to the NWC's network (theft) resulting in a loss of revenue.

The aim is to reduce the NRW by 8% annually over the next 5 years to a level of approximately 30% down from 66% by 2016/2017.

The physical works to achieve this target have already begun in areas such as Havendale, Waterworks, Norbrook and Hope Pastures.

The early successes are encouraging and the necessary physical works will be replicated throughout the island over the next 5 years.

Energy

The NWC is presently paying in the region of half a billion dollars (\$500million) monthly in electricity bills – that is \$6 billion annually. The aim is to cut this bill by \$1.8billion during the next fiscal year. The objective Mr. Speaker is to pump to the tanks during the JPS' off-peak periods and gravity feed from the tanks during periods of highest demand. We must do everything we can to reduce our energy consumption and thus reduce our carbon footprint.

Mr. Speaker, for this financial year, we will be laying 14 kilometers of pipeline from **Content to Ferry in St. Catherine** in order to improve and mitigate the major disruptions and leaks estimated at two million gallons per day from the existing Rio Cobre Pipeline.

We will also be rehabilitating three water treatment plants, Bogue in St. Ann, Martha Brae in Trelawny, and Great River in St. James in order to restore these plants to their designed capacity. The model to be employed for these projects will be Engineer, Procure and Construct (EPC) and we expect to have the design works completed this year.

Mr. Speaker, we will be commencing the following water projects this financial year:

- Rehabilitation of 26 water supply facilities in the KSA, inclusive of pumping stations and tanks, at a cost of J\$1.6 billion
- Comprehensive NRW program at a cost of J\$4.5 billion

Design works are also to be started for the following projects

- Rehabilitation of three rural water supply systems, namely Old Harbour, May Pen and Mandeville at a cost of J\$4.7 billion.

Mr. Speaker, there will be tremendous employment benefits to be derived from the projects I have just mentioned.

My portfolio as the Minister in charge of the environment also requires me to ensure that provisions are made for wastewater solutions.

In that regard Mr. Speaker I am again happy to report that the NWC, working in a collaborative manner with the Global Environment Facility and the IDB will be rehabilitating, replacing, retiring or **building 14 wastewater projects including Boscobel (St. Mary), Elletson Flats (St. Andrew), Mineral Heights (Clarendon), and De La Vega City (St. Catherine)**, among other plants under the CREW.

Mr. Speaker we intend to start with the Boscobel and Elleston Flats wastewater treatment plants. Within the next 2 to 3 weeks the Request for Proposals (RFP) in relation to these 2 projects will be published in the newspapers and **the NWC has been given a strict time line that physical works on these projects should commence this fiscal year.**

The amount involved in these projects is **J\$1.06 billion** and subject to some minor housekeeping affairs the funding for these projects is in place. Again Mr. Speaker the job creation benefits of these projects need to be underscored.

Work is also being done to retire all the small wastewater plants in Portmore St. Catherine owned and operated by the NWC. These flows will be diverted to the Soapberry Treatment Plant.

That project is now at the stage where bids have been received by the National Water Commission and it is expected that the physical work on that project will commence this fiscal year.

I would like to invite all my colleagues of this Honourable House in the Portmore area to sit with the NWC to review the plans and timetable in relation to this project and to ascertain when their respective constituencies will be impacted by the project.

Coupled with that Mr. Speaker, preliminary works are being done by the NWC in relation to the entire sewerage system in down town Kingston.

The thrust to return extensive commercial life to down town Kingston, especially the southern sections along the water front, will not be realized unless the wastewater disposal system is fully functional. My Ministry intends to play its part in this endeavour from the point of view of the provision of the wastewater services. My Ministry also intends to play its part in ensuring that there is no further deterioration of the environment in that section of the city especially in the Kingston Harbour.

In fact, it is the intention of my Ministry to ensure that within the next 5 years the Harbour and the surrounding mangroves will be on their way to full re-generation. The improvement in the wastewater works will go a far way in this endeavour.

In support of this, we have already started the design work on phases 2 and 3 of the Harbour View wastewater treatment plant at a cost of **J\$500million**.

Mr. Speaker, additionally we have embraced the public/private partnership (PPP) model and in this regard we are speaking with potential partners, for 3 major wastewater projects in Old Harbour, May Pen, and Savanna La Mar to be done over the next 3 years.

SUMMARY OF WATER & WASTE WATER SERVICES

Mr. Speaker I wish to close this section of my presentation by emphasizing the following points:

- 1) The NWC, working in close collaboration with my Ministry and the Ministry of Finance now has available J\$23.4 billion which will be used to undertake a number of highly beneficial projects in both the water and waste water sectors over the next five years.
- 2) The NWC, again working in close collaboration with my Ministry and the Ministry of Finance will endeavour to raise a further US\$300million in funding between this fiscal year and fiscal year 2013/2014. These funds when secured, will be used to undertake further projects in the water and waste water sectors with specific emphasis on the parishes of Trelawny, St. James, Hanover, Westmoreland and St. Elizabeth.
- 3) My Ministry has been and will continue to play its part as a major engine of growth in the economy both on a direct basis by the tremendous job creation

opportunities that will be realized and in the economic spin-offs from the projects to be undertaken by the NWC.

Mr. Speaker I invite members of the Honourable House to review the details of these projects in the Annual Report.

RURAL WATER SUPPLY LTD.

Mr. Speaker, the Rural Water Supply Limited, continues to play a critical role in the development of systems to serve our small rural communities.

Upgrading and Rehabilitation of Minor Water Supply Systems

During the Financial Year 2011 to 2012, upgrading works were carried out on the following minor water supply systems at: -

- Castle Bush in South St. James
- Cool Water and Charity Spring in East Central St. James
- Buena Vista in South St. James

Upgrading works were also carried out on minor water supply systems in the parish of St. Elizabeth. These include:-

- Ballards Valley in South East St. Elizabeth
- Joint Wood to Nanny in North East St. Elizabeth
- Top Redding to Haughton – North East St. Elizabeth

All of these areas are now receiving adequate water supply. The amount expended in completing these works was J\$4.8 million.

Rural Water Supply Limited will be carrying out upgrading and remedial works on the following small water supply systems during the Financial Year 2012/2013

- Lottery Water Supply System in East Central St. James
- Mt. Rosser Spring Entombment Rehabilitation, North West St Catherine
- Bamboo Ridge Pipeline Extension, South West St. Catherine
- Upgrading of Small Water Supply systems in Eastern Portland
- Upgrading of small water supply systems in Western Westmoreland

Twenty two million dollars was earmarked under the Capital 'A' Budget to fund these projects.

Catchment Tank Rehabilitation and Rainwater Harvesting

Mr. Speaker, of note is that fifty percent (50%) of households in rural areas have access to piped water. This is an increase from forty-five percent (45%) in 2004. Approximately twenty-three percent (23%) of rural households receive water from standpipes and twenty two percent (22%) from rainwater tanks.

Rainwater harvesting continues to be a viable mode of water supply for residents in several areas of rural Jamaica.

The parish of St. Elizabeth benefitted significantly from the **catchment tank** rehabilitation programme during the last Financial Year 2011-2012.

Twelve (12) rainwater catchment tanks were upgraded at a cost of \$12M in the constituencies of North West, North East, South West and South East St. Elizabeth, resulting in just under 7,500 residents benefitting from improved water supply.

A pilot rainwater harvesting project was carried out at two (2) schools, Maldon and Chatsworth Primary Schools in South St. James, at a cost of \$7.6M. Works undertaken included the installation of rainwater guttering, storage tanks, solar power technology as well as water saving devices such as low flush toilets. These works are completed and are operating satisfactorily.

Based on the success of these pilot projects, discussions will be entered into with the Ministry of Education with a view to duplicating these projects in deep rural communities which do not now enjoy piped potable water.

Going forward Mr. Speaker, **\$27M has been earmarked in the 2012–2013 Capital ‘A’ Budget for the rehabilitation of catchment tanks and rainwater harvesting systems.**

The Camrose Catchment in East Central St. James will commence in early August.

Other catchments in South East St. James, North West Manchester and North East St. Catherine should commence by the end of September 2012.

Completion of on-going Projects

The following ongoing projects for which funding was provided in the 2011-2012 Financial Year will be brought to completion.

- John’s Groin, North West St. Catherine
- Wharf Lane in Western Portland
- Farmers Height in North East St. Ann
- Quaminus in Southern Clarendon
- Comfort Hall/Copperwood in South St. James

- Broadgate in South East St. Mary and
- Cascade Water Supply System, South West St. Ann.

These systems, when completed will benefit approximately 43,200 residents at a total cost of J\$270M.

Rural Water Supply Limited in collaboration with the National Water Commission will be embarking on a major rural water supply upgrading programme. **Twenty six (26) projects have been slated for implementation over a three (3) year period at an approximate cost of J\$4.04 billion, twenty three (23) of which have already been identified and are included in the appendix in the tabled Annual Report.**

When completed, these water supply systems will benefit approximately two hundred fifty thousand (250,000) residents throughout all parishes in Jamaica. **This will increase rural water coverage in terms of access to potable water by twenty one percent (21%).**

Detailed designs have already started on the following six of the 26 projects:

- Cascade/Claremont/Jericho, Eastern Hanover
- Agualta Vale/Highgate/Islington/Richmond, St Mary
- Non-Pariel/Orange Hill/Retirement, Western Westmoreland
- Burnt Savannah/Knoxwood, South West St. Elizabeth
- Bull Head/Mason River/Kellits, Northern Clarendon
- Eastern Westmoreland, Distribution improvement

Works on these six (6) projects are estimated to cost J\$1.3B when completed and will benefit approximately 57,000 residents.

The selection of these projects was based on the high population density and the most favourable rate of return in relation to the capital cost per person.

It should be noted, however, that included in the project listing are constituencies with very little or no water; these will be given priority ranking in terms of implementation. **Mr. Speaker, the constituencies include North West Manchester, Northern Clarendon, North West Clarendon, North West St. Elizabeth, South East St. Elizabeth, South St. James and South East St. Ann.**

Rural Water Master Plan Preparation

It should also be noted that grant funding, has been obtained from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to fund the Rural Water Master Plan which is a study to be **conducted to ascertain areas in Jamaica without access to water and to provide solutions in this regard by employing different modalities. These will include piped solutions and rainwater harvesting systems.**

An advertisement requesting quotations for engagement of consultants has already been published.

Grant funding of J\$29M, is being provided to carry out this study and to review and update the Water Sector Policy.

RAPID RESPONSE

We are currently reviewing an existing Cabinet decision to wind up the operations of the Rapid Response Programme. In the interim, seven serviceable trucks are assigned as follows:-

Two each to Clarendon, Kingston and St. Andrew and Montego Bay, and one to St. Mary.

Funds have also been provided for the retrofitting of an additional ten trucks with tyres, batteries, and minor repairs. These will be available by the end of August and will be deployed as required in the drought stricken parishes to alleviate the water shortage as follows:-

- Six will be assigned to parishes in the western region which include Trelawny Hanover, St. James and Westmoreland.
- The other four will be assigned one each to the parishes of Portland, St. Elizabeth, Manchester and St. Catherine.

WATER RESOURCES AUTHORITY

The Water Resources Authority (WRA) manages the island's water resources. It adopts an integrated proactive approach to the management of our water resources. It collects vital statistics, analyses rainfall data, develops flood plain maps, and maintains strong interagency linkages. The authority also monitors ground and surface water and furnishes assessments that allow for the equitable allocation of water resources through the granting of permits and licences.

Mr. Speaker, this Honourable House can be assured that the water resources of the country are being carefully monitored and that relevant data bases on our rainfall intensity, ground water and stream flows are being updated.

It is noteworthy that during the year under review:

- One new river gauging station was constructed and commissioned into service on the Wag Water River in St Mary, and nine other such stations were repaired across the island; and
- The Rio Cobre Flood Warning System was upgraded. This is the system that transmits real time rainfall and river level from the collection points.

The data obtained are used to determine closure of the Rio Cobre Gorge by the ODPEM and the possible evacuation of persons living in the flood plain of the river near Spanish Town.

Response to Opposition Spokesman

The opposition spokesman on water in his presentation in June commented on the issue of the deforestation at Morelands Hill in Westmoreland and Hanover. He also commented on the reduced aquifer recharge from rainfall and the impact on the supply from the Logwood Water Treatment Plant that supplies Negril-Lucea.

The Authority has reviewed the land use changes in the Morelands Hills using Google images between 2003 and 2009 and has noted the following:

- There is increased land clearance though it is more to the south i.e. towards Negril-Whitehall

- There has been an increased development of housing especially in the Cave Valley area which would lead to increased runoff and reduced recharge.

A more detailed response is to be found in the Annual Report circulated to the members of this Honourable House.

LAND – A TOOL FOR EMPOWERMENT

INTRODUCTION

Mr. Speaker. I turn now to the Land Portfolio. It was National Hero, the Rt. Excellent Norman Washington Manley who said, and I quote..."***Land is the only source of the material life of the people. It provides food and shelter. It furnishes work and wealth. It is the basis of all production, of all development, of all security, of all growth. It is, in very truth, the root of our being***". Endquote

Mister Speaker, this is our 50th year of Independence. This House may recall the historical evolution of Land Settlements. It commenced in or about 1938 for the purpose of securing ownership of land for the poor and landless. The ownership of land is still an effective means of gaining economic and social independence.

50 years after our independence we have not been able to provide registered Certificates of Title to a large number of beneficiaries who have been disappointed.

Mr. Speaker, this administration is quite serious about security of tenure for ordinary Jamaicans, as this is one of the best ways to empower our people to improve themselves, build better communities, and ultimately build a better nation. As outlined in our Manifesto, we will continue to encourage more land owners to secure titles for their properties and thereby stimulate more productive use.

The progressive agenda for land titling will be facilitated through ongoing education programmes and direct interventions at the community level , as well as streamlining the actual titling process by our implementing agencies and project such as the Land Administration and Management Project (LAMP).

Without a Title, the land owner's tenure is insecure. He is not able to use his land asset as collateral to borrow money to help to finance his children's education, or to improve himself and his family.

THE NATIONAL LAND AGENCY

Revaluation Programme

The National Land Agency is currently carrying out a revaluation exercise to update all property values for the purposes of assessing property taxes. The last revaluation programme was carried out in 2002/2003 so a revaluation exercise is long overdue. This administration regards this as a priority and this has been explained by my colleague Minister of Finance.

Land Settlement Schemes

Mr. Speaker there are 344 land settlement schemes islandwide comprising approximately 50,000 lots.

These schemes are broken down as follows:-

➤ St, Catherine	-	28
➤ Clarendon	-	31
➤ Manchester	-	24
➤ St, Elizabeth	-	26
➤ Westmoreland	-	25
➤ Hanover	-	21
➤ St. James	-	27
➤ Trelawny	-	17
➤ St. Ann	-	20
➤ St Mary	-	32
➤ Portland	-	33
➤ St. Thomas	-	31
➤ St. Andrew	-	29

There are currently **17,000** lots yet to be titled which are at various stages of the process, that is, they either require the lands to be surveyed and/or subdivision approvals are required.

Mr. Speaker there are **7,631 Certificates of Title** in the name of the Commissioner of Lands, and **1060 Certificates** in the name of the purchasers. A Probate Unit has

been established to assist beneficiaries of deceased land settlement allottees and advertisements have been placed in the newspapers to try and find the beneficiaries.

Mr. Speaker, I have asked the Commissioner to prepare a list of the properties affected, and I will ask my colleague Members of Parliament and Councillors to assist with this matter because more than likely they will be able to identify these persons.

I will continue to put emphasis on this area, as I firmly believe that these titles must be put in the hands of the beneficial owners, and the sooner the better.

LAMP

Mister Speaker, of the estimated **800,000 land parcels** in Jamaica, approximately **fifty-five (55%)** per cent are still not registered. In addition, among a certain section of the society, the practice is not to administer estates and instead our people continue to dispose of land informally. Consequently, a large number of registered titles do not reflect existing ownership or property rights.

This is because over the years there has been a failure to update the register. As a result these valuable assets continue to be “transferred” outside the formal economy. This Mr. Speaker does not bode well for the development of our nation.

Mr. Speaker, happily LAMP has now been expanded to cover all parishes except Kingston, Saint Andrew, Portmore and its Environs.

We are also exploring the feasibility of declaring parts of rural Saint Andrew as project areas as I gather that many land owners have been approaching LAMP for its services and our objective is to assist them.

Mr. Speaker, this Government is dedicated to creating an 'ownership society' , and so we will use LAMP as far as we can to address titling for these land settlement beneficiaries who have been waiting for far too long to receive their Titles. LAMP has been preaching to every land owner who has no Title to use the services of LAMP to secure a Title.

In an effort to expand its services, the government of Jamaica through LAMP had entered into a public/private partnership for a privately financed expansion programme with a South Korean Company, the Korea Cadastral Survey Corporation (KCSC) and Geoland Title Limited, a Jamaican Project Management Company.

KCSC invested the amount of just over US\$2 Million to privately finance the venture, with the expectation that they would recover cost if they were able to undertake at least 12,500 applications for Titles.

Although the results thus far are below expectation, the project will nonetheless be continued and I would like to congratulate KCSC as well as the Korean Ambassador for their continued support of this programme.

Under LAMP II, as at May 31, 2,653 land parcels have been cadastrally surveyed and 3,749 parcels have been placed in the digital Cadastral Map data base for St Elizabeth. Of the over 4,800 files opened, 697 applications for Titles have been made. 205 Titles have been completed and another 384 have been provisionally approved.

The issues which have negatively affected LAMP II range from

- a. Landowners not being able to get their names on the tax roll
- b. Affordability. For example Mr. Speaker the regular cost of obtaining a title is J\$150,000 as opposed to LAMP which is more affordable at J\$45,000.
- c. Root of Title issues.

These issues have dogged the LAMP programme for years and have their genesis in our cultural habits which have stayed with us from Emancipation.

To put it baldly Mr. Speaker, the laws are anti-poor. The present legal system militates against poor people.

We therefore must adjust our system of land administration and take into account our cultural norms. We must meet the people at their varying levels and not exclude them because the way in which they buy and sell land does not fit within the framework that was adopted which is in many respects simply alien to the way of life of a significant number of our people.

We have undertaken to address these matters head on. **Land owners and those in possession of the land must be entered on the tax roll. If this is not done, their land cannot be titled, nor can taxes be collected. The irony Mr. Speaker, is that they are anxious to pay.**

Mr. Speaker, **we are proceeding with the use of the Certificate of Compliance process under the Facilities for Titles Act. This involves proof of ownership for seven years. This approach will certainly solve the Root of Title problems for many of LAMP's clients.**

We will also be establishing the Adjudication Committees under the Special Provisions Act in the parishes where LAMP operates, in an effort to establish reputed ownership of the land owners. Armed with this document, the applicants' case to the referees will be strengthened and can be used to establish evidence of root of title. I will be depending on our Councillors and Members of Parliament to assist in the process of establishing Adjudication Committees. Mr. Speaker we will first establish Adjudication Committees in parishes that have experienced a high rejection rate.

Low cost financing is being provided under the Land Access for National Development (LAND) through the People's Cooperative Banks firstly in the pilot parishes of Saint Elizabeth, Clarendon and Manchester. This project was launched in September of Last Year. The loans are being made available at three percent interest.

We are making efforts to secure an additional amount of \$50 Million from the Petro Caribe Fund which will be used to expand this programme and we are very optimistic about this.

A Register of Compliance Certificates is also being established by the Agricultural Development Bank in collaboration with LAMP. It is essential that proper records be kept so that the title investigation process is as efficient as possible.

Regulations under the Land Surveyors Act

We are moving to address the issue of surveying capacity in Jamaica. The Virtual Reference System (VRS) has been fully established at a cost of over \$30 Million. This allows surveyors to produce survey plans that can be tied into the national grid at a cheaper and more efficient rate.

The land surveyors must now seek to equip themselves to take advantage of the VRS. In due course we will implement new Regulations under the Land Surveyors Act to ensure that all plans are tied into the national grid and can be used to build the national cadastral map. This map is needed to make land titling cheaper and more efficient. We must move to modernize this area because it affects our competitive edge under the competitiveness enhancement programme and as such, impacts doing business in Jamaica.

KOICA Grant

Mister Speaker, I am pleased to announce that the Government, through the efforts of LAMP, has received grant funding in the amount of \$2.1 Million United States Dollars, from the Korea Overseas International Corporation Agency (KOICA) of South Korea. This will be used to facilitate the delivery of land surveys to at least 1,000 needy households in St Mary, St. Ann and Portland and will help us to accelerate the delivery of some long overdue land settlement Titles. This project is scheduled to get underway in September of this year.

LAMP will receive under the KOICA project much needed equipment valued at J\$80.9 million United States Dollars which will significantly improve its ability to manage the total number of files which now number over 23,000 and are at various stages of completion, as well as to enhance the customer service experience of its clients, its tenure regularization and clarification activities and ultimately help to produce more registered titles.

Mr. Speaker, let me once more extend our sincere gratitude to the government of Korea for its efforts and support in this venture.

Additionally, support is also being sought from the Petro Caribe Fund in the amount of J\$18 Million, to help to deliver another 1,000 titles to beneficiaries whose titles are in the vault at LAMP but who have severe difficulties in completing payments. Shortly Mr. Speaker we will be delivering another 250 titles, and by year end we expect to deliver many more.

Land Acquisition Projects

Mr. Speaker, my Ministry through the NLA continues to support the National Works Agency (NWA) with the acquisition of land to facilitate infrastructure projects, as follows:

- (1) **Soursop Turn to Danks** (Constituency - North Central Clarendon)
- (2) **Toms River to Agualta Vale** (Constituency – St. Mary South East)
- (3) **Highway 2000** – (Mount Rosser Bypass – Linstead to Moneague)
(Constituencies – St. Catherine North Western, St. Ann South Eastern and St. Catherine North Eastern)
- (4) **Highway 2000** – (North/South Link – Caymanas to Ocho Rios):
(Constituencies – St. Catherine North Central and St. Ann South Eastern)
- (5) **Northern Coastal Highway Improvement Project** – (Hanover to Port Antonio)

Web Chat

The National Land Agency commenced its new Live Web Chat Support Service via its website in March 2012. This service gives members of the public access to real-time text-based conversations with a Customer Service agent. It also allows them to leave messages relating to all NLA issues outside of normal working hours.

Property Watch

The NLA has instituted several measures to reduce incidences of fraud at its Land Titles Division. We will be further strengthening these measures with the

introduction of “Property Watch”. This service will provide a notice to land owners whenever any transaction on their titles is done. This service will be fully operational by March 31, 2013.

The other initiatives to improve customer service such as the search for certificates online and access to survey records online through eLandJamaica are set out in the full document.

REAL ESTATE BOARD

The Real Estate Board and the Commission of Strata Corporations fulfilled their mandates and exceeded their targets in the 2011/2012 financial year. They will continue to receive applications from developers and to register real estate dealers and salesmen. Details on the registration of dealers, developers and salesmen can be obtained in the Annual Report.

Mr. Speaker, during the period under review, the Board received forty-six **(46)** complaints from members of the public. The majority of these was against developers and unregistered and unlicensed real estate practitioners. Of the complaints received twenty-five **(25)** were resolved to the satisfaction of the parties and twenty-one **(21)** are at various stages in the investigation process. The Board successfully prosecuted three **(3)** illegal dealers during the previous financial year. Another dealer, with three **(3)** complaints of illegal practice, was referred to the Flying Squad.

The Board also investigated and monitored a further fifteen **(15)** problematic development schemes in protection of **1,039** purchasers depositing over US\$4.9 million and just over

J\$2.9 billion paid under prepayment contracts. The Board is currently in the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal in protection of depositors in six of these schemes.

The Commission of Strata Corporations

The Commission of Strata Corporations' first two (2) years of operation were very action packed ones. It fully registered **84%** of all the strata plans currently incorporated in Jamaica. A further **4.8%** has been partially registered. The Commission is currently preparing to prosecute the remaining **11.2%** of the strata plans that are non-compliant.

It has sought the guidance of the Director of Public Prosecutions and has sent warning letters by registered mail, advertised warnings in the local press and visited the delinquent Proprietor Strata Plans.

The Commission has received a total of One Hundred and Twenty-three **(123)** requests for Power of Sale Certificates due to non-payment of maintenance fees. After careful examinations and assurances that due diligence was done, Seventy-eight **(78)** certificates were issued. Four **(4)** applications were withdrawn. Additional documents have been requested for the remaining applications.

The Commission also received seven **(7)** applications from aggrieved parties to be heard by the Tribunal. The Tribunal convened three **(3)** of the hearings and issued its rulings. The remaining four **(4)** are awaiting dates for the hearings.

The Commission is currently moving for the urgent amendment of two sections of the Registration (Strata Title) Act. The drafting instructions have been issued.

New Mandates

The Real Estate Board is also slated to undertake two additional duties. These are:

- To supervise gated communities to address similar challenges as those faced by Proprietor Strata Plans; and
- To supervise, train and register the marketers and the marketing of Time Share in Jamaica.

The Real Estate Board is working with the Ministry of Tourism to pilot the legislation for Time Share. Three (3) Draft Bills have been obtained to date. The intent of the working group is to circulate the third draft for comments from the appropriate government agencies and stakeholders.

LAND POLICY ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT DIRECTORATE

Land Divestment

With changing times the land divestment process has also come under the microscope as we strive to ensure transparency and fairness in the allocation of such lands and promote prudent and sustainable land utilization that will lead to

social and economic development. I am therefore pleased to report that the Land Divestment Advisory Committee (LDAC) which was established a number of years ago to provide the Minister with critical technical and professional guidance in this area, is to be enshrined in statute. I will shortly take the Bill to amend the Crown Property Vesting Act to the legislative committee of Cabinet and hope to have it tabled in the House as early thereafter as possible.

The amendments will not only enshrine the Land Divestment Advisory Committee (LDAC) in statute but will also outline the composition of the Committee, its appointment and other related matters.

During fiscal year 11/12, the LDAC processed 31 applications (including re-submissions) for divestment. A total of 25 applications, were recommended for divestment.

Ministerial approval was obtained for 22 applications valued at approximately \$112 million for sale or lease of government owned properties. The remainder of the applications was deferred for further information and clarification as required by the LDAC.

Mr. Speaker, for details regarding the Policy and Procedures Manual to guide the divestment of Government owned lands; the Policy to guide Divestment of Government owned Houses; and progress in the Revision of National Land Policy (NLP) 1996, I refer members of the Honourable House to the Annual Report.

NATIONAL SPATIAL DATA MANAGEMENT.

Mister Speaker, I now move to the matter of our national spatial data.

I wish to share with this honourable house that **it has been proven that the countries which have been able to harness and leverage geospatial information have been able to successfully plan and manage their physical and natural resources.**

Geospatial information can be a critical tool for decision makers as they communicate issues and design solutions for example in the planning of our towns and cities.

Mister Speaker, I now wish to share some of the **work that has been done in the past financial year in the geospatial sector.** In regard to geospatial policy development, we are working to build our National Spatial Data Infrastructure for Jamaica. This is necessary to facilitate sectoral growth, and for us to keep up with technological advancements and of course, provide for the geospatial data needs of the government and our people.

We will be working assiduously to prepare **legislation to govern the geospatial industry.** After 20 years being guided by policy it has now become necessary to have a firm governance framework.

Mr. Speaker we continue to build capacity in this area and I am pleased to report that we have even been delivering GIS training regionally and are looked upon as leaders in the area in the Caribbean and Latin American region.

We have begun to work on a **metadata policy** which will make it mandatory for all creators of geospatial data to collect and maintain metadata which is simply the information that describes and gives information about other data. All creators and users of geospatial data need to collect and manage metadata.

This activity is important as it preserves the millions of dollars of investment made to create geospatial data. I therefore call upon all Ministers to do their part to ensure that their data are collected and maintained in line with policy.

We are also in the process of contracting the services of an imagery distributor to procure the most current, highest available resolution, true color, imagery of the entire island. The acquisition will be at a cost of J\$24.5 million and will be funded by contributions from over 15 geospatial data users.

I am pleased to report that so far we have J\$10.2 million in cash and commitments. The imagery will be distributed to over 40 entities to be used in their operations.

I am pleased to say that this government has continued to make the necessary investments, in the areas of training and education, technology, data collection and management, systems and processes and the preparation of standards and guidelines to manage the country's geospatial information. We have been successfully using this information to support management and decision making not only in my Ministry but across all of government.

POLICY, PLANNING AND STANDARDS DIVISION

Town and Country Planning Act

Mr. Speaker, in this financial year our administration will be moving full speed ahead with the amendments of the Town and Country Planning Act. These amendments will enable greater effectiveness for planning, land use and development in Jamaica. The amendments will also enable improvements to the development approvals process.

Some of the major recommendations include:-

- The period for the serving of Stop and Enforcement Notices
- The role of the Minister versus the role of NEPA
- The roles of local government especially in relation to enforcement of planning control
- The empowerment of the Government Town Planner
- Whether to include Development Plans as legal stand alone Planning instruments or whether to adopt the general permitted development Orders along with development plans as allowed in the Bill.
- The feasibility of a proposed new environment and planning legislation will also be addressed.

Best practices are being researched and drafting instructions for some of the amendments are currently being prepared

Gated Communities and Town House Legislation

Mr. Speaker the government will also vigorously pursue the preparation of new legislation to govern the maintenance of and management of common areas in gated communities, town house complexes, and commercial complexes.

This legislation will be similar to the recently promulgated Strata Titles Act which governs the management of apartment complexes. Research has commenced to formulate the proposals for the new legislation and a policy document will be prepared by my Ministry in conjunction with the Real Estate Board.

This policy document will inform the preparation of the drafting instructions for the new legislation before the end of the financial year.

A Revised Residential Density Zoning Policy for Jamaica

Mr. Speaker, the need for a review of residential density zoning standards in Jamaica is a major issue. The increase in urbanization as well as population demand, have placed additional stress on the allocation and uses of land.

The rapid expansion of urban centres and the finite land resources bring to light the need to review existing residential density standards as an integral part of Jamaica's spatial development strategy.

There is a need to increase densities especially in the urban areas to maximize the use of scarce land resources and to take advantage of economies of scale in respect of infrastructural investments such as central sewerage systems and mass transit.

My Ministry in conjunction with the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA) is currently preparing a policy paper for revised residential development densities in Jamaica.

The paper will inform the preparation of new density standards for urban areas for approval by the Town and Country Planning Authority and the Cabinet after the solicitation of comments and recommendations from the relevant stakeholders.

ENVIRONMENT – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE FUTURE

Introduction

Mr. Speaker I now turn to matters concerning the environment. The management of the Environment and Planning issues in the country is a cross-cutting theme which affects **ALL** Sectors! It impacts Health, Agriculture & Fisheries, Water, Housing, Tourism, Mining, Science & Technology and Energy...to name a few.

The Ministry through its Environmental Management Division and its agency, the National Environment and Planning Agency, (NEPA) will continue to advocate, promote and where necessary enforce the laws that govern and protect the environment, always mindful of the delicate balance that must be achieved between economic development and the preservation and conservation of our natural resources.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT DIVISION

Protection and sustainable use of Jamaica's biodiversity is critical for the prosperity and well being of our nation. Vision 2030 includes as national goal No 4 that **"Jamaica has a healthy natural environment"** – without this goal, achieving our Vision would be extremely challenging, if not impossible.

In this regard, a number of initiatives related to protected areas is underway. Mr. Speaker, details are included in the tabled Annual Report, but I would like to mention the main aspects.

Jamaica has committed to the development of a Protected Areas System Master Plan (PASMP) which promotes a coordinated approach to Protected Areas management within the Government and across the other sectors of society.

An important section of the Master Plan concerns the sustainable financing of Protected Areas and proposes strategies to be taken to accomplish this, one of which is the establishment of a National Trust Fund for PAs. The Master Plan is now being finalized and will be completed this year.

Jamaica has also endorsed the Caribbean Challenge Initiative, which now includes ten countries in the Caribbean. These countries have committed to the following:-

- I. protect at least 20% of their near-shore marine and coastal environments by 2020
- II. to mobilize funding and put in place sustainable funding mechanisms and

III. to accelerate and support on- the- ground action to implement the commitments by Government.

Two weeks ago, we co-hosted with Grenada the first meeting of senior officials of the countries participating in the Caribbean Challenge Initiative to plan for a summit of political and business leaders to be held in the British Virgin Islands in mid 2013.

The Summit will be hosted by the Governments of Grenada and the British Virgin Islands. Sir Richard Branson (CEO, of the Virgin Group of companies) will host business leaders and CEOs of major corporations to set a new course for the region's marine and coastal environment. Key development partners will also be invited.

The event will be an opportunity to (i) endorse, at the highest level, new commitments to marine conservation action; (ii) announce concrete conservation actions being taken; (iii) announce new funding programs; and (iv) announce innovative public-private partnerships.

Under the CCI there will be, as the centerpiece of the new sustainable finance architecture, the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF), which will be a large-scale, independent, regional fund.

Consolidation of the Environmental Foundation of Jamaica and the Forest Conservation Fund

Mr. Speaker, the Government has given approval for the consolidation of two debt swaps – the Environmental Foundation of Jamaica (EFJ) and the Forest Conservation Fund (FCF).

Through the EFJ, the resources freed from debt are used for environmental protection and conservation and to promote child survival and child development in Jamaica.

Under the FCF, eligible entities are community-based organizations and non-government entities working in forestry, environmental management and conservation that involve local communities in planning and project execution as well as academia.

The merged funds will be called the Environmental Foundation of Jamaica with a mandate for the management of funds related to various environmental issues such as protected areas, climate change, sustainable development, tropical forest conservation, and child survival and development.

Management of Chemicals and Hazardous Wastes

Work will continue on the development of a National Policy and Strategy for the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes. A draft Policy document has been prepared and will be forwarded to Cabinet for approval as a Green Paper in the 2nd half of the 2012/2013 FY.

Under the Trust Fund of the Quick Start Programme established under the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) **Jamaica will implement a Project inter alia to develop an inventory of priority chemicals, namely mercury and asbestos and develop and implement a National Programme for the environmentally sound management (ESM) of electrical and electronic wastes (e-wastes).**

The primary focus of the Programme will be the collection and export for recycling of used and end-of-life computing equipment as well as mobile phones and related accessories. It will also include a pilot Project including select communities within the Kingston and St. Andrew region and St. Catherine.

Clean-up of Hazardous Materials at the Ports

In the first quarter of the 2012/2013 Financial Year, I convened a multi-agency Advisory Committee to address the accumulation of hazardous chemicals at the Queens Warehouses as well as the port installations.

This Committee includes representatives from the Port Authority of Jamaica, the Maritime Authority of Jamaica, the Shipping Association of Jamaica, the National Environment and Planning Agency, the Ministry of Health (Standards and Regulatory Affairs Division, the Environmental Health Unit and the Environmental Health Laboratory), the Bureau of Standards, Kingston Wharves Limited and Kingston Container Terminal Limited.

The Committee is coordinating the clean-up and re-packaging of hazardous chemical consignments at some of the Queens Warehouses and port installations. This exercise is being undertaken with a view to initiating disposal of the hazardous substances at appropriate facilities locally or internationally.

Another initiative is the hosting of awareness raising seminars for key stakeholders in the maritime sector with respect to the existing regulatory framework for hazardous chemical consignments in Kingston and Montego Bay.

Wastewater and Sludge Regulations

The Ministry in collaboration with the NEPA has finalized work on the Natural Resources Conservation (Wastewater and Sludge) Regulations. The Regulations will be gazetted in the next two months.

These Regulations include requirements for licences to:-

1) construct and operate sewage and trade effluent treatment facilities 2) treat and discharge sewage and trade effluent into the environment 3) deal with the renewal and modification of licences, and 4) establish sewage and trade effluent standards.

Rio+20

In preparation for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development 2012 (Rio+20), a number of consultations were held and Jamaica contributed to the document from which the negotiating text was developed. At the international level, Jamaica participated in the negotiations of the preparatory committee as well as in regional meetings.

The main themes of the Conference were – **a green economy in the context of sustainable development poverty eradication; and the institutional framework for sustainable development.**

Eradicating poverty was seen as the greatest global challenge facing the world today.

Of particular interest to Small Island Developing States, was a focus on ocean issues – **the Blue Economy** - as well as agreement for a meeting in 2014 to follow up on the Conference on the Sustainable development of Small Island States held in Barbados in 1994.

As we contemplate post Rio+20 implementation and preparation for Barbados +20 in 2014, it is critical that there be a strong, effective mechanism in place at both national and regional levels to participate effectively in and prepare for the planned activities.

A number of countries – China, Italy and Brazil- announced the availability of financial resources available to SIDS including initiatives for climate change adaptation. It is our intention fervently pursue these potential funding sources.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING AGENCY

Mr. Speaker, NEPA faces a number of challenges but the Natural Resources Conservation Authority (NRCA), the Town and Country Planning Authority (TCPA) and the administration of the Agency have been proactive and are determined to take the necessary action to strengthen the stewardship for protecting and conserving the environment and improving the planning framework in the country.

The Agency has experienced success in a number of key deliverables as well as initiatives undertaken during the period under review. It has:-

- Strengthened its monitoring and enforcement capability, **the details of which are outlined in the tabled Annual Report.**

- Placed greater emphasis on planning and development matters, *inter alia*, finalizing the Development Orders and Plans for selected parishes and areas; continued to work towards the development of a national spatial plan and placing emphasis on Special Areas: Negril, Port Henderson, Blue Lagoon, Portland Cottage and Canoe Valley.

NEPA recently completed preparation of the draft Development Order for St Thomas and commenced reconnaissance surveys for the growth centres and rural settlement nodes towards the preparation of the Draft Clarendon Parish Development Order. This means that in order to ensure that a proper management system is in place to guide any proposed development in these areas, all developments will have to be approved by the TCPA instead of being considered at the local parish level. Details are contained in the tabled Annual Report.

- NEPA has continued to be a key secondary player in the national response scheme to pollution incidents. Within the last year, there were 37 pollution incidents, such as oil spills, fish kills, chemical spills, air pollution and trade discharges and ship groundings. The Agency responded to these incidents within 24 hours.
- I would also like to highlight the fact that NEPA has implemented a Kingston Harbour Environmental Management Programme to encourage major

industry players to comply with environmental standards, regulations and permit conditions.

- Implemented key strategies for the management of major polluters, such as the Sugar-producing Sector and Distilleries as well as the Bauxite/Alumina Industries
- Developed an effective air quality management programme whereby major and significant facilities in areas, for example, electricity generation, cement production and bauxite and alumina are required to obtain air discharge licence from the NRCA.

Regarding our Environmental Performance record, I am happy to report that during the period 2010 to 2012, Jamaica improved its position on the International Environmental Performance Index, moving from a position of 89 in 2010 to 63 in 2012 out of 151 countries.

Mr. Speaker, NEPA has maintained its efforts to achieve timely approval of permits and licences for developments. The Agency continues to work through the Development Assistance Centre (DAC) to offer pre-application consultation and facilitation.

The main purpose of the DAC is to assist developers of “large investment projects” to adequately prepare their projects to achieve approval within the GOJ 90-day target after formal application.

On the point of Applications Management, Mr. Speaker, NEPA has achieved noticeable improvement in the processing of applications in a bid to promote

sustainable development particularly of large investment projects. The data indicate that the Agency has been relatively consistent in the number of applications that is processed within 90-days.

Over a 3-year period the percentage of applications processed within ninety days has averaged 78%.

Partnerships

Mr. Speaker, NEPA has placed strategic priority on governance and partnerships. Partnerships and good governance are keys to success in achieving the Agency's mandate in an environment of cost containment and burgeoning environmental problems such as climate change, increased risk of water pollution, air pollution and increased threat from invasive alien species for example the lion fish.

Mr. Speaker, last November (18-20) the NRCA/NEPA, Environmental Law Institute, The Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges Association, The Norman Manley Law School and the Jamaica Environment Trust conducted a Judicial Training Seminar for Resident Magistrates to sensitize members of the judiciary.

What this sensitization has led to Mr. Speaker, is an increased awareness in the courts of environmental and planning breaches.

There are currently 17 matters in court, (5 related to the NRCA, 2 to the TCPA, 5 to the Wildlife Protection Act ('WLPA') and 5 to the Beaches Control Act).

FORESTRY DEPARTMENT

Jamaica's Forests

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to Jamaica's forest resources. 30% or approximately 335,000 hectares of Jamaica's landmass has been classified as forests. Unfortunately too many of us view these wooded areas as just 'bush' to be chopped and burnt and the land developed or used for agricultural purposes. This has resulted in an annual deforestation rate of 0.1% or the removal of approximately 300 hectares of forests every year. I submit to you today that **our forests are irreplaceable and are as important to us as the very air that we breathe. One of the key functions of our forests is carbon sequestration, which is the removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.**

At the **local level, the forests:**

- Regulate water supplies
- Prevent or reduce landslides and flooding
- Assist in the maintenance of soil fertility for agriculture
- Provide income through nature related Tourism
- Provide for cultural and aesthetic values important to the society.

And at the **national level, our forests**

- Enhance environmental stability and security
- Provide possibilities for recreation and related services for local use and for the expansion of the tourism sector

At the **Global level**, the forests

- Absorb carbon dioxide thereby reducing the amount of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere, which help to decrease global warming
- Help to regulate global climatic conditions and mitigate the effects of climate change
- Have a key role in maintaining the biological diversity of plants and animals

It is for these reasons that forests on crown lands across the island are protected under the Forest Act 1996 and Regulations of 2001. While no forest reserve is excluded, a few are given greater prominence based on the level of endemism and biodiversity.

Mining in the Cockpit Country

Over the years there have been on-going, rigorous and heated discussions about the Cockpit Country and the possibility of the area being mined for bauxite.

Today Mister Speaker I would like to lay the issue to rest.

The Cockpit Country constitutes about 2.1% of the land area of Jamaica, mostly within the West-Central region of the island and is an important Centre of Jamaica's natural and cultural heritage. It consists of uninhabited moist tropical limestone forest, the largest remaining block of moist to wet limestone forest in Jamaica.

The Cockpit Country is the second largest expanse of contiguous forest remaining on the island, with the 22,327 hectare Cockpit Country Forest Reserve at its heart. This feature is unique to 3 locations worldwide.

The Cockpit Country is a karstic area characterized by dense formations of rounded peaks and steep-sided, bowl-shaped depressions sculpted over millennia by erosion and chemical dissolution of limestone. This has resulted in an extensive network of caves. This Mr. Speaker, is exactly why a forest like this is irreplaceable.

In addition, the area supplies 40% of the island's freshwater resources.

A number of flora and fauna endemic to Jamaica can only be found in the Cockpit Country. At the same time, the Cockpit Country with its high level of endemism also contains significant deposits of bauxite.

In 2006, due to concerns raised by various stakeholders regarding proposed mining in the Cockpit Country and the significant threat to the biodiversity in the area, the Ministry of Agriculture through the Mines and Geology Division contracted the Department of Geography and Geology at the University of the West Indies to undertake a study to define the boundaries of the Cockpit country and the area that should receive protection under the law.

Mr. Speaker, very shortly we will have to make a decision as to what allowable activities can take place in the Cockpit Country. I have been meeting with various stakeholders to determine the boundaries and what activities will be allowed.

This area is far too important to the country's cultural and environmental heritage to have it jeopardized. Mining in the area, for example could potentially destroy the resources found there.

Mr. Speaker, here is another classic example of the struggle between economic development and the protection of the environment, similar to what is happening in Brazil.

Even as we speak, Mr. Speaker the Forestry Department is finalizing a management Plan for the Cockpit Country. The comprehensive document will identify the roles and synergies among the major stakeholders including community members operating in the area. Our energies must now be focused on reforestation, not just in the Cockpit but in all reserves islandwide.

We have secured funding for consultations to take place with stakeholders in the Cockpit Country area and the general public on the proposed boundary and management plans for the Cockpit Country.

The Forestry Department

The Forestry Department is the agency **that has as its mandate, the protection and conservation of forests on government land.** Since becoming an executive agency in 2010, the Forestry Department has been evaluating and revising its processes to make it more efficient, effective, and customer oriented.

In keeping with this improved mode of operation, I deemed it fit and have so given my approval for the name of the organization to be changed to the National Forestry Agency. I will soon be making a submission to Cabinet to this effect, and thereafter the public awareness and education programme will be launched.

During the last financial year, the Forestry Department continued with its reforestation activities with the replanting of approximately 275 hectares of land under funded projects as well as its recurrent budget. An additional 522 hectares were maintained to support establishment. A total of approximately 220 thousand seedlings was produced and distributed islandwide.

As I indicated earlier Mr. Speaker, only a third of Jamaica is still forest. Of this portion, two thirds is owned by private individuals. That means partnership is of the utmost importance. The agency continues to court small, medium and large landowners to participate in its private planting programme.

Under the programme, the participants are given seedlings free of cost as well as technical advice on the species to be planted. Currently there are approximately three thousand participants in the programme.

And I repeat, while we can replant new trees, we cannot plant a forest. They are irreplaceable.

A key strategy being employed by the agency to ensure sustainable forest management, is the direct involvement of communities in the preservation and

conservation efforts. Last year, three new local forest management committees were established, bringing to eleven the number of such committees operating islandwide.

Draft Forest Policy

Mr. Speaker, soon there will be a new forest policy for Jamaica. Jamaica's previous forest policy was adopted in 1996, and amended in 2001. The forest policy 2012 sets out a vision, principles and goals relating to Jamaica's forestry sector. The provisions of this policy are highlighted in Annual Report. However, let me hasten to say that public consultations, a necessary part of the process, are currently underway.

2012-2013 Financial Year

Mr. Speaker, for this financial year, the forestry department, with funding from the European Union Climate Change Adaptation Disaster Risk Reduction Project, will undertake several activities. Chief among them is the determination of the percentage change in Jamaica's forest cover. The new deforestation figures will give us a clear indication of the direction of the agency's replanting efforts.

Also under the project, the agency's nurseries will be rehabilitated. I will also be producing a forest fire management plan, the purpose of which is to reduce health risks and also associated carbon dioxide emissions.

The Forestry Department also expects to plant an additional 160 hectares of denuded land and to have 2,600 hectares of land gazetted as forest reserves. It is expected Mr. Speaker that 640 persons will be employed under this programme.

As we continue to involve communities, we will be establishing five additional Local Forest Management Committees.

THE METEOROLOGICAL SERVICE

Mr. Speaker the Meteorological Service Division remains committed to the monitoring of weather conditions over Jamaica and the wider Region, especially during this year's Hurricane Season. With almost a third of the Season already gone, adequate staffing is in place and resources have been allocated to ensure that equipment remains operational, and the nation will remain fully informed and warned in the event of a tropical cyclone threat.

The Division has also made steady progress in the establishment of a Quality Management System for aeronautical meteorological services provided through the National Meteorological Centre at the Norman Manley International Airport. The goal is to complete the process and apply for ISO Certification by the end of October 2012.

CLIMATE CHANGE – “WE MUST CHANGE”

Mr. Speaker, Climate Change is the epochal, multi-sectoral issue of our time which even at this very early stage is proving to be disruptive and regressive, attacking the natural and built environment, our economy, and our society.

This universal phenomenon is threatening the very economic base on which we seek to build our country and the time honored traditions inherent in our culture. Without our collective, concerted actions Climate Change could prove to be a major obstacle in achieving the goals of making Jamaica a better *place to live, work, raise families and do business.*

For instance, this week in the world, we have seen the random and devastating impacts of climate change. The southern USA is experiencing the worst drought since 1956¹. While fighting forest fires in the North West, there is flooding in the north east. In Canada they are experiencing mud slides due to heavy rains.

Japan and Russia are simultaneously experiencing severe flooding with rising death tolls. Europe is also inundated with episodes of flooding, while Greece has now declared a state of emergency because of drought and forest fires.

Already 16 people have died as a result of the sub zero temperatures being experienced in Chile. Indeed, in Beijing, China, 37 have perished as a result of severe flooding. The worst recorded in the past six decades.

¹ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

What the world is experiencing and what we are seeing is not just a Climate Change crisis but the unfolding of a horror story. Let me warn as well, that the drought in the US will have significant impact on the price of grains as well as chicken meat in Jamaica.

Indeed we are all adrift in the same boat, and there is no way half the boat is going to sink.

The Caribbean Region is not immune to climate change, on the contrary we are the most vulnerable. And I want to emphasize, that although we produce **less than 1%** of greenhouse gas emissions that give rise to Climate Change as a group of Small Island Developing States, we pay the heaviest price.

For instance, the Caribbean saw extremely warm sea temperatures in 2005 which caused the largest bleaching of coral reefs in the region, to date. This event wiped out as much as 70% of the reefs in some countries².

Not only did this result in the loss of biodiversity, but also our natural barriers to hurricanes and storm surges, as well as **significant loss of livelihoods of fishers and tourism entities.**

One silent impact of climate change on our Blue Economy is the increased acidification of our oceans.

One can anticipate the impact of this acidification of the exo-skeletons of valuable marine species such as conch.

² Allen and Garcia-Navarro, 2010

I do not have to remind us that our conch industry not only contributes significantly to the GDP but is a major industry on which many fishers and their families depend. We cannot afford, as a nation to lose this valuable export. As a result of climate change, loss from agricultural exports alone was valued at **US\$30 to 50 Billion** dollars for the region.³

In total if we do not act now, then it is estimated that Latin America and the Caribbean will stand to lose **US\$100 Billion** annually as a result of climate change.

In bringing the climate change crisis closer to home, within Latin America and the Caribbean, Jamaica is listed as **having the 2nd highest economic risk exposure to two or more hazards.**⁴

This means that the impact of each disaster independently and cumulatively has had significant impact on Jamaica's economic progress and affects the GDP in a negative way.

For example in 2004, agriculture contributed J\$13.8 billion to the GDP, but Hurricane Ivan cost the industry J\$8.5 billion in damage.

According to the IDB/ECLAC WWF Report, in the ten year period **between 1998 and 2008, disasters cost our country US\$14 billion per year.**⁵

It is clear. As a nation we must protect, prepare, adapt and mitigate against the increasing impacts of climate change and climate variability. **We must aim to**

³ IDB/ECLAC and WWF Report

⁴ Natural Disaster Hotspot Study done by the World Bank in 2008.

⁵ IDB/ECLAC and WWF

build a climate resilient society and defend the gains that we have made, as well as protect our prospects for future development.

Climate Change knows no boundaries, nor does it discriminate against social class, colour, religion, nor might I add, does it know ministerial or political boundaries.

Climate Change illustrates humankind's interconnectedness across national boundaries. We did not see Hurricane Allen, Gilbert or Ivan needing a visa to come to Jamaica did we?

On January 2, 2012, the Most Honorable Prime Minister established for the first time, a Climate Change Ministry which she mandated me with the responsibility for the Portfolio.

I will proudly state that **Jamaica is the first small island Developing State and one of the few globally that has established a Ministry of Climate Change.**⁶

Building on the establishment of this Ministry, on April 19, 2012, the Prime Minister took another step and established a Climate Change Advisory Committee. This comprised a multi-sectoral group of experts who were charged with certain responsibilities, and among their early tasks are to:-

- 1) Establish a Climate Change Department**
- 2) Prepare a Climate Change Policy**
- 3) Educate and build public awareness on climate change and**
- 4) Seek additional bilateral and multi lateral support for climate change projects.**

⁶ UNDP Technical Report

In 2006, this Administration proposed the creation of a **Climate Change Unit** to help drive Jamaica's coordination and management of the country's climate change efforts.

This has been met through the second directive given by the Prime Minister. On January 2, 2012 which was to establish, not just a unit, **but a Climate Change Department.**

I am pleased to announce that with the assistance of the UNDP, two international consultants were provided and have now submitted a draft report for the establishment of the Climate Change Department. It is my intention to have this Department up and running **by the end of the year.**

In the meantime, pending the establishment of the Ministry's Climate Change Department, the Meteorological Division continues to function as the focal point for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). As such, it has actively participated in meetings of the Subsidiary Bodies in Bonn, Germany during May and June.

Mr. Speaker, I have recognized the need for the development of an overarching, cohesive policy framework to address climate variability and change.

I have recognized that more congruence and consistency among various sector policies are needed to attack the impacts of climate change. To deal quickly with this, I will be hosting, with the support from the United States Agency for

International Development (USAID) a National Climate Change Workshop, at the Wyndham Kingston Hotel, from July 26 – 27, 2012.

This workshop will contribute towards the development of a comprehensive Climate Change policy framework and road map by year end, while identifying existing gaps that need to be addressed immediately.

I would like to emphasize at this point, that this workshop has already gained international attention, Development Partners (World Bank, IDB, USAID) will begin arriving from Washington DC., as of tomorrow. It is my hope that we will attract additional financial and technical support from these partners to fill the gaps identified at the Workshop.

We have proceeded with a number of initiatives and projects which target adaptation to climate change and I would like to highlight a few.

The EU and UNEP funded Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction Project.

This project has gained significant ground in fulfilling its objectives to strengthen Jamaica's adaptive capacity and contribute to sustainable development.

We have rehabilitated and improved the management of the Hope and White River/Rio Bueno watersheds. Of the proposed 300 hectares we have already rehabilitated 240 hectares.

In affording the Blue Economy the importance it deserves, we have sought to increase the resilience of our coastal ecosystems to climate change impacts through a number of activities.

We have replanted 5.04 hectares of mangrove in Portland Cottage and will be replanting 1.98 hectares at Refuge Cay (Kingston Harbour) starting in August.

In August we will also be restoring areas of seagrass in Long Bay Negril as well as we will be officially installing Artificial Reefs in Old Harbour Bay and Negril. All this is in an effort to develop our coastal resilience.

Public Awareness

Public awareness about climate change continues to be one of the Ministry's primary objectives. A public awareness campaign was launched on the 23rd of March, 2012, World Meteorological Day.

To date, we have covered **four** parishes, and have engaged the entertainment fraternity, creating climate change songs as well as skits and plays which have been used to engage our citizens. In addition to this, we have held numerous climate change awareness workshops in Portland Bight and Long Bay in Negril.

The Road to Qatar- the 18th UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

From as far back as 2006, this Administration promised, in our Manifesto, **“to become an active and effective voice in the global and regional debate on climate change.”** I am pleased to announce that we have kept that promise.

We have actively participated in climate change conferences, even as recently as **RIO +20** as well as negotiations in Johannesburg and Copenhagen and we will be present at the next Conference of Parties in Qatar. Indeed Mr Speaker, former Prime Minister led the first delegation to Rio 10.

This has helped in positioning Jamaica to benefit from recent developments, as well as to access to funding and initiatives in international fora.

On this note it is with pleasure that I inform this Honorable House that **The Adaptation Fund** Board has approved a grant of **US\$10 Million (J\$850 million)** to Jamaica for a Climate Change Adaptation Programme that will introduce measures to protect livelihoods and food security in communities that are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of Climate Change.

In this regard, I take this opportunity to thank the Met Office and PIOJ.

The Project will focus on improving land and water management for the agriculture sector, strengthen coastal protection, and build institutional and local capacities for climate change adaptation in the Parishes of:-

- Westmoreland (western)
- Manchester (north-eastern)
- Clarendon (northern)
- St. Mary (southeastern)
- St. Ann (south-western)
- Trelawny (southern) and
- St. Thomas (western).

The old adage of **Rome burning while Nero fiddled** will never be used to describe us, not when the impacts of climate change are manifesting themselves more and more and with increasing ferocity. We are in a race against time.

We are crossing a threshold into uncharted territory.

While there is no precedent to guide us, we have had to find the courage to look the reality of Climate Change in the eye and swiftly do what we need to do, in order to **ensure that we create a climate resilient and sustainable Jamaica, that will prove to be an enviable place of choice to live, work, raise families and do business.**

I repeat, Mr. Speaker, with Climate Change we must Change.

CLOSING REMARKS

Mr. Speaker, I make bold to say that this Ministry, in terms of infrastructure development in the Water Sector, will be spending \$10.7 Billion in this fiscal year, and the expenditure will touch and concern every constituency in this country. I have more, but I am constrained by the lack of fiscal space.

Mr. Speaker I make bold to say that hundreds of poor Jamaicans will receive hundreds of Certificates of Title for the first time at last. This is what I mean when I say we will be creating an “ownership society” which will no longer exclude the poor of the land.

Mr. Speaker **I make bold to say** that in terms of the environment, we will be the fair arbiter between the demands of economic development and the preservation of our natural resources.

Mr. Speaker, I make bold to say that in terms of our most recent addition to my portfolio responsibilities, Climate Change, we will be increasing awareness among our fellow citizens that “With Climate Change, We must Change”.

Mr. Speaker, as we conduct the business of our nation, let us agree with President Obama when he said:-

Quote... **“This is the moment when we must come together to save this planet. Let us resolve that we will not leave our children a world where the oceans rise and famine spreads and terrible storms devastate our lands.”** ..endquote.

And let us also agree with Tom Burke when he said:-

Quote....**“The security of people and nations rests on four pillars - food, energy, water and climate. They are all closely related, and all under increasing stress”**...endquote

But Mr. Speaker, despite the vicissitudes of this life I am comforted by what the prophet Micah had to say in Chapter 6 verse 8:-

“...and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God”

-end-