

Local Government and Community Development Minister, Hon. Noel Arscott, says Jamaica needs to entrench a culture of recycling and reuse of its solid waste in a bid to preserve the environment.

“We generate 1,200 tonnes of waste per day in the Corporate Area alone. Of this, 40 per cent of it is recyclable, which presents a tremendous business opportunity,” the Minister noted.

Mr. Arscott was addressing the official opening of Jamaica Recycles, at the company’s plant at Spanish Town Road, Kingston, on January 16. The company backed by American investors, Harold Kirsten and Dennis Soriano, is recovering recyclable materials in the Corporate Area initially, before expanding into the rest of Jamaica.

“I am indeed happy that these progressive businessmen found an opportunity and have stuck to the task and today we can see the work in progress. They have currently employed 10 persons and I am sure with the multiplier effect, they will increase that number,” the Minister said.

Mr. Arscott also gave an update on a pilot programme undertaken by the National Solid Waste Management Authority (NSWMA) in the communities of Havendale, Karachi and Whitfield Town (in Kingston), to determine the willingness of residents in these areas to separate the plastic portion of the waste generated in their households.

“After analyzing the data, I conclude that the project was a success,” he informed, adding that 1,647 or 3,624 pounds of plastic were collected from the three communities between May and September 2012.

“There were, however, some interesting observations. There were wide gaps in the level of participation among the three communities and some residents did not see the importance of the project,” the Minister said.

He emphasised that his Ministry is determined to entrench the recycling culture in Jamaicans and this can be accepted over time with public education.

Mr. Arscott added that the NSWMA will be conducting a similar project in another region, in an effort to determine how the project should be implemented islandwide.

“This will not only reduce the volume of plastics at our landfills and in our drains and gullies, but will create job opportunities for our citizens and promote a cleaner and healthier environment in which we work and live,” the Minister pointed out.

Jamaica Recycles’ initial concentration will be on waste paper and plastic, with the intent to expand its scope of services in the future to include other recyclable material, such as electronic scrap, industrial plastic, glass and metals.

The company will pay for recyclable material either delivered to their Spanish Town Road facility or collected at customer sites. The purchase price will be set based on the value of the individual recyclable commodity. The company also operates a buy-back centre at its processing facility, where customers can sell their recyclable material.