



The city of Montego Bay and by extension, western Jamaica, should benefit significantly from an international partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Emerging and Sustainable Cities Initiative (ESCI), which was launched on January 17, at the Wexford Court Hotel, in Montego Bay.

The primary objective of the initiative is to improve the quality of life in selected cities in the Caribbean and Latin America in the areas of environmental sustainability and climate change; urban sustainability; and fiscal sustainability and governance.

Five cities included in the pilot project, which began in 2011, have already completed their action plans, and Montego Bay was among 11 cities added in 2012, chiefly due to the rapid rate of urbanization.

Addressing the launching ceremony, Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Noel Arscott, lauded the team members of the IDB and the local counterparts for the “intensive and deliberate” strategies and quality research, discussions, analysis and output, which has set Montego Bay on a path of progress and sustainability.



“In this regard, the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development continues to support this extremely worthwhile initiative that not only complements our strides in the local government reform process, but also offers concrete long-term developmental tools for broader national development,” Mr. Arscott said.

“This partnership programme is undoubtedly seen as a co-operative catalyst to assist in our development. We welcome the partnership with the IDB, as local governance is systematically moving beyond being seen as just a separate sphere of governance, but an integral component for sustainable nation building,” the Minister added.

Mr. Arscott said he is pleased that under the project, there is a distinct focus on the effects of climate change, to include sea level rise, water resource management and methodologies for adaptability, especially for persons living near to these water resources, or who earn a livelihood from these areas.

“As Minister of Local Government and Community Development, I commit the support of the Ministry and its agencies, particularly the Social Development Commission and the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management to ensure that this programme yields the greatest sustainable benefits to all stakeholders in the shortest possible time,” he said.