



Construction of some 88 houses, earmarked for development in Springfield, Clarendon under the European Union (EU)-funded Sugar Barracks Relocation Project, is set to start shortly.

A contract for the development, valued at just over \$160 million, was signed on Wednesday, February 6, during a ceremony at the project site.

Approximately 209 sugar workers residing in that community and its environs, who occupied estate barracks for many years, will benefit from the houses, slated for construction over eight months by the engineering firm Seal Construction Company Limited.

Prime Minister, the Most Hon. Portia Simpson Miller, in her remarks at the signing ceremony, said the Sugar Barracks Relocation Project is “one of the most satisfying and heart-warming programmes I have presided over”.

“We are building new communities in which to raise our children in accordance with the old African proverb...‘it takes a village to raise a child’. Sugar workers can look forward to moving their families out of the barracks and into brand new accommodations. We are not only building houses, we are building communities with first class infrastructure,” the Prime Minister said.

She also expressed gratitude for the support and partnership of the EU, without whom, she said, “this would not have been possible. The Government and people of Jamaica remain grateful for our bi-lateral and multilateral partners.”

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In her remarks, Head of the EU Delegation in Jamaica, Her Excellency Paola Amadei, said

the organisation is happy to extend assistance to the Government on a project aimed at improving the lives of the people, who have helped to build Jamaica's sugar industry.

"Today, we are happy to get started on a project, which will positively impact even more lives in Clarendon. This new settlement will cater to the social and economic welfare of its residents, including all basic infrastructures and including, also, small scale economic activity," Ambassador Amadei said.

Agriculture and Fisheries Minister, Hon. Roger Clarke, said the project's implementation marked a major step for the beneficiaries, whom he said would, in the long run, be able to "relax with peace of mind and security that something has been done for them".



In welcoming the development, Local Government and Community Development Minister and Member of Parliament for South West Clarendon where Springfield is situated, Hon. Noel Arscott, contended that it will contribute significantly to community development.

"It will provide suitable housing and living arrangements. Those barracks are many, many years old...and it's about time that we take our people out of those shacks and put them into decent housing," Mr. Arscott contended.

The Springfield project is being undertaken on lands provided by Sugar Company of Jamaica (SCJ) Holdings Limited, and will include development of roadways, installation of electricity and water systems, and a bio-gas digester system, among other inputs. The houses are being provided free of cost to the beneficiaries, who will only be required to pay for the preparation of the property titles.

The development is the fourth for which contracts have been signed, since the Sugar Barracks Relocation Project started in 2012. The other communities where similar work is already in progress are: Barham and Masemure in Westmoreland, where 28 houses are being developed for over 30 residents; Spicy Hill, Trelawny, where 35 units are earmarked for

construction for 88 persons; and Stokes Hall and Hampton Court in St. Thomas, where 486 residents will benefit from 225 houses.

Over 800 residents of sugar estate barracks across the island are slated to be resettled in some 400 housing solutions being developed at a cost of over \$1 billion.