

Prime Minister, the Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller has assured the nation that the National Housing Trust (NHT) will still be able to honour all its commitments to its contributors.

The Prime Minister gave the assurance in light of the Government's decision to use NHT funds for budgetary support under the pending agreement with the International Monetary Fund.

"As I acknowledge the work of the NHT for building houses and communities, I also wish to acknowledge their role in helping to build Jamaica and its economy at this critical time. The NHT will be able to honour all its commitments to its contributors and at the same time will remain a major player in the construction industry, spending billions of dollars as is customary," the Prime Minister said.

She was speaking at the handing over ceremony of NHT houses in the Longville Park Phase 3 Scheme in Clarendon on Wednesday, February 20.

The Prime Minister said the government had several choices which included approaching the NHT, raising taxes even further or apply additional taxes.

"Everyone would have to pay more, much more than they already are. We do not want to do that. That is why we entered into talks with the NHT. If we had to impose more taxes, then the cost of everything would increase such as houses, interest rates on loans and mortgages, food and other basic necessities. That is a situation we could not accept or follow," she said.

The Longville Park Phase 3 comprise 918 housing solutions provided by the NHT and about 100 new homeowners were presented with their keys and documents to their homes on Wednesday morning. Of the 918 houses, the NHT approved 165 home grants of \$1.2 million each to help lower income contributors with their purchase.

The beneficiaries also included 20 young professionals between the ages of 25-40, 20 low income contributors and a person with disability. One hundred and sixty eight (168) applicants

obtained their homes at subsidized rates. The total value of the subsidy to this group was some \$127 million.

Longville Park Phase 3 was developed at a cost of \$4.8 billion dollars.

“This major investment has had a positive economic impact providing employment for skilled and casual workers with a positive multiplier effect on businesses, large and small, in the Old Harbour and surrounding area,” the Prime Minister said.