



The country could soon see the entrenchment of local government in the Jamaican Constitution far advanced, as the Government focuses on passing key pieces of legislation in Parliament.

Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Noel Arscott, made the announcement as he addressed residents at a Social Development Commission Parish Forum at the St. Mary High School on Thursday, February 21.

Mr. Arscott said the matter is now with the Minister of Justice and the Attorney General.

“The legislative agenda is tight, but I am pressing and I hope that we can get support to ensure that we get that aspect, so that when the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Jamaica’s celebration is wound up we can at least be able to announce that the entrenchment of local government is well on the way,” he said.

Minister Arscott noted that three strategic laws, the New Local Governance Act; the Unified Services Act and Local Government Financing and Financial Management Act, have been discussed extensively across the island and are now before the Attorney General’s chambers and the Ministry of Justice for further ratification before being taken to Cabinet and Parliament.

Once passed, these pieces of legislation will make local governance significant in the day to day life of residents, the Minister informed.

Mr. Arscott also urged the parishioners to pay their property taxes so that they can be better served by the Parish Council in areas such as garbage collection, street lighting, and road maintenance.

He revealed that the total property tax collection for St. Mary was just under \$70 million at the end of December 2012. Property tax arrears for St. Mary now stand at \$151.3 million.

“I therefore implore you all good people of St. Mary, to support improved local governance and service delivery by paying your property taxes,” Mr. Arscott urged.

The Local Government Minister further informed that the administration is reviewing current anti-litter fines and will be moving to prosecute persons who discard waste on the streets, and in gullies, and other public spaces.

He noted that the National Solid Waste Management Authority (NSWMA) will be increasing its anti-litter activities across the country, and implored residents to keep their communities clean.