



Prime Minister, the Most Hon. Portia Simpson Miller, has welcomed the official opening of a new MegaMart store in Mandeville, which she said, will provide a host of economic opportunities.

In addition to employment, local producers are expected to supply the store with an estimated \$500 million in produce annually.

The Prime Minister praised the MegaMart chain of wholesale clubs, under the leadership of entrepreneur Gassan Azan Jr., for its “solid investment, which creates real growth and opportunities for the people.”

“In economic times like these, this investment serves to remind us that we cannot curse the darkness and wait to die,” Mrs. Simpson Miller said on Wednesday, February 27, as she addressed the store’s official opening.

She noted that the MegaMart stores, which now stand at four, last year purchased over \$1.5 billion in local produce and has provided more than 1,000 direct jobs through a host of local producers.

She further added that the stores are a lifeline for many farmers in the nation’s bread-basket regions.

The Prime Minister pointed out that despite challenges, the agricultural sector continues to grow, noting that in 2012, total crop production across the island increased significantly in areas such as vegetables, yams, potatoes, fruit and legumes, with over 600,000 tonnes of the crops produced.



She also reported that real value added for agriculture, forestry and fishing grew by 2.9 per cent last year, relative to 2011, while the gross output for traditional export crops and other agricultural crops grew by 1.7 per cent and 2.4 per cent, respectively. There was also growth in animal farming.

In the meantime, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of MegaMart, Gassan Azan, Jr. said the store's opening, in the midst of the economic challenges facing the country, shows that it is quite possible to reap great success amidst adversity.

Mr. Azan pledged the support of the MegaMart family, to "do everything possible to ensure that Jamaica is firmly set on the path of sustained economic growth and job creation."

He also promised the company's continued investment in the "real economy" of Jamaica as it has been doing for the last 13 years.

Also participating in the official event were Minister of National Security and Member of Parliament for Central Manchester, Hon. Peter Bunting; Mayor of Mandeville, Brenda Ramsay; Custos of Manchester, Sally Porteous; President of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, Wendy Freckleton; and President and Chief Executive Officer, Bank of Nova Scotia Jamaica. Ltd, Bruce Bowen.