

Minister with responsibility for Sports, Hon. Natalie Neita-Headley has advised that overseas charity donations being sent to local sporting associations should be channeled through the Sports Development Foundation (SDF).

Mrs. Neita Headley says that she will then make interventions on behalf of the associations to the Ministry of Finance, as an interim measure, until the Charities Act comes to Parliament in November.

The Minister was responding to concerns raised by local sporting bodies about the removal of tax waivers on the importation of donated equipment for events, at a meeting on February 28 at the Jamaica Conference Centre. The meeting also saw Prime Minister, the Most Hon. Portia Simpson Miller, participating in discussions with the associations on the way forward for the development of sports as a part of national life.

Mrs. Neita Headley explained that the impending Charities Act will allow the Finance Ministry to clearly differentiate between items being imported for charity and those for commercial use.

“There have been several occasions on which goods are coming in solely for the purpose of donations, for schools from alumni associations, to athletes...which end up in the marketplace as saleable items, so there really has to be a clearly defined policy, and we are waiting for that to come to fruition. Once that is established, then a clearer path will be available,” Mrs. Neita-Headley said.

The Charities Act is one of the proposed legislative measures which will form a part of the government's tax reform agenda. Under the reform, there will be a reduction and virtual elimination of discretionary tax waivers. This is part of the prior actions that the country will have to take in order to secure the support of the board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for an Extended Fund Facility.