



Jamaica's Ambassador to the United States, Professor Stephen Vasciannie, says the Government of Jamaica is determined to stamp out the lottery scam.

The Ambassador, who was addressing the annual scholarship and award gala of the Jamaican- American Bar Association's (JABA) Northeast Chapter on Saturday (March 16) in Queens, New York, noted that the Government has implemented several measures to combat the illicit activity, which is primarily rooted in the western end of the island.

He said that a comprehensive five-point plan has been rolled out, which includes public education and awareness, increased enforcement, enactment of new laws, strengthening of judicial and procedural rules, along with restitution for victims.

The public awareness effort seeks to sensitise Jamaicans about the dangers of scamming and to encourage persons to report any such activity in their community.

The Ambassador also noted that the United States (US) and Jamaican authorities are working closely to weed out the scammers.

Ambassador Vasciannie, in the meantime, commended members of the JABA Northeast Chapter for providing legal services to many Jamaicans, as well as scholarships to Jamaican students and those of Jamaican parentage studying at the Norman Manley Law School and at American institutions.

Prime Minister, the Most Hon. Portia Simpson-Miller, in a message, also hailed, the members of the association, noting that they have demonstrated that "they are not only concerned with their own achievements and successes, but are fully committed to the building of their homeland and improving the lives of our people".

She said that the Government is fully committed to taking the measures required for the sustained development and long-term prosperity of the nation, and pointed to the need for greater partnerships, renewed commitment and support from all Jamaicans, sectors and organisations, both at home and in the Diaspora.

In her remarks, President of the JABA Northeast Chapter, Joan Pinnock, said the organisation has been successful in preventing a number of deportations, and returning one person to the US, who was deported.

The 2013 Magistrate Award was presented to Jamaican Judge Stephen Drummond, who sits on the bench in Freeport, Connecticut, while the Barrister Award went to Jamaican Attorney Wayne Bennett, who practises in Philadelphia. The Jamaican Community Award went to Chairman of the Independence Celebration Foundation, Paulette Willoughby.

The three recipients of the 2013 JABA education scholarships were: Shantel Smart, who attends Quinnipiac University of Law; Kellsie Barton from New York University School of Law; and Trichana Gray from the Norman Manley Law School.

Among those in attendance were Jamaica's Consul General to New York, Herman Lamont; Former New York Councilwoman, Una Clarke; Founder of the JABA Miami chapter, Don James; and Jamaica's Honorary Consul to Pennsylvania, Dr. Alston Meade.

The JABA Northeast Chapter, launched in January 2009, consists of eight attorneys of Jamaican birth or heritage, who practise in the tri-state region of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. The not-for-profit association provides pro-bono legal services to reduce the number of Jamaican nationals deported each year, and grants funds to Jamaican students, who are pursuing law degrees. It is seeking to establish the JABA-NE Legal Defense Fund (JLDF) to assist persons in need of legal representation.

By Derrick Scott, JIS Reporter