

**2004/05 SECTORAL PRESENTATION**  
**MINISTER OF LAND & ENVIRONMENT**

**INTRODUCTION**

Mr. Speaker:

I rise to make my 2004/05 contribution to the Sectoral Debate when global environment is at a crossroads.

The 2002 Johannesburg Summit sent a powerful warning to leaders and peoples everywhere.

This is the decade of reckoning for the world.

Global environmental trends have shown that ecological decline has accelerated. The global ecosystems are reaching dangerous thresholds. Many life support systems risk long-term damage.

Globally, people are paying a high price for environmental degradation which worsens natural disasters, increases poverty and causes severe health risks.

It is estimated that almost 3 million people have perished as a result of natural disasters in the past three decades. Tens of millions have suffered hardships. Natural disasters have cost the world some \$608 billion over the last decade. Overall, it is the poor of the world that suffer the most and the least likely to be insured.

Mr. Speaker, the six warmest years of the 20<sup>th</sup>. Century occurred in the last decade. The Arctic ice cap has thinned by forty-two percent (42%). Twenty-seven percent (27%) of the world's coral reefs have been lost.<sup>1</sup>

This decade of reckoning has brought a new sense of urgency to Governments and peoples of the world. One hundred and four (104) Heads of Government and 21,000 people at the 2002 Johannesburg Summit agreed to a series of commitments in priority areas including:

1. The expansion of water and sanitation;
2. Expanding access to modern energy service;
3. Reducing health risks due to environmental degradation;
4. Protecting biodiversity; and,
5. Improving ecosystem management.

It is against this background of unprecedented environmental risks that I give an account of the performance of this Government in pursuing sustainable development.

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<sup>1</sup> See Global Environment Outlook 2000 pp. 30-31 & State of the World 2001

Mr. Speaker, in my presentation I will:

- 1. Briefly look at Jamaica's history in environmental protection and management;**
- 2. Present the work and achievements of the Ministry of Land and Environment for the 2003/04 financial year within the context of the country's global and local commitments; and,**
- 3. Outline the work for the 2004/05 financial year.**

## **JAMAICA'S HISTORY IN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION**

Jamaica's participation in that Summit marks the continuation of a fine record of a country that is committed to the protection of the environment. I want to salute the leadership on both sides of this Honourable House for displaying consistency and balance in their environmental stewardship of the country over the years.

The record shows that from as early as 1874 with the passage of the Harbours Act, Jamaica demonstrated concern for the environment. Since then, numerous laws related to the environment have been enacted by successive Governments. Some of the oldest ones include the:

- Forest Act, 1937
- Mining Act 1944
- Wildlife Protection Act 1945
- Beach Control Act 1956
- Town and Country Planning Act 1958

- Clean Air Act, 1961
- Watershed Protection Act 1963

In 1972 the Ministry of Mining and Natural Resources was created which provided a strategic focal point for environmental policy and management issues. In 1988, the call was made for a more comprehensive framework for environmental management and for the National Resources Conservation Department (NRCD) which was formed in 1975 to be strengthened. This move resulted in the passage of the NRCA Act and the establishment of the Natural Resources Conservation Authority in 1991.

The decade of the 90s was a turning point for the global response to the environment. The world embraced the concept and value of sustainable development. It was a moment of great change for the world and Jamaica.

In 1995, the Jamaica National Environmental Action Plan (JANEAP) was completed following on the 1992 UN Conference in Rio. Based on this conference a comprehensive blueprint for global and local actions - Agenda 21, was created to achieve sustainable development.

In 2001, this Government created a super Agency, the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA) from the merger of the Town Planning Department (TPD), Natural Resource Conservation Authority (NRCA) and the Land Development and Utilisation Commission (LDUC) to assume the functions of orderly planning and environmental management.

Mr. Speaker, it is only fair to say that successive Administrations in Jamaica have built on the fine legacy of their predecessors.

## **THE WORK AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE MINISTRY OF LAND AND ENVIRONMENT: MEETING OUR GLOBAL AND LOCAL COMMITMENTS**

The Ministry of Land and Environment has the awesome responsibility for effective land management, the sustainable use and development of the country's resources, mining and quarrying and disaster forecasting and management. Our vision is to *“achieve the highest level of sustainable environmental and land management practices that support the economic, physical and social well-being of all Jamaicans”*.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry is carrying out its role at a time when the greatest level of social and economic expansion is taking place in the country. As far as the eyes can see, there are:

- Billions of dollars of road works
- Housing developments for hundreds of thousands of Jamaicans down town, up town and out of town
- Expansion of water supply into the nook and cranny of Jamaica
- Bauxite expansion never before witnessed in Jamaica
- Tourism development that is unprecedented
- Expansion of our sea and air ports

On the one hand, these developments are critical to the country's social and economic development and the achievements of the Government's vision of prosperity and dignity for all Jamaicans. On the other hand, they have the potential to destroy the environment.

My Ministry must also contend with the grave environmental trends globally that have implications for us locally. Here are some facts that are informing the global environment agenda:

1. OECD countries are the largest producers of hazardous waste a portion of which is imported officially and illegally into developing countries.
2. Agriculture remains an important sector in the economies of most developing countries. However, global cropland has declined by 25%.
3. Fertilizer use continues to rise in developing countries despite the threat of nitrate pollution.
4. If present water consumption patterns continue, 2 out of every 3 persons on earth will live in water-stressed conditions by year 2025.<sup>2</sup>

As far as Jamaica is concerned:

1. Population growth in some rural towns is in the region of 5% posing a challenge to central government and municipalities to provide basic social services and posing a threat to the orderly development of these areas:
2. A 1995 survey shows that we have approximately 50% of small farmers occupying land with no clear ownership rights

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<sup>2</sup> Global Environment Outlook 2000, pp 6-25

3. There is a 27% probability of a hurricane affecting Jamaica in any given year
4. Over the past ten years, Jamaica experienced an average of over 3 flooding episodes per year
5. We have experienced drought conditions every year except in 1996 and 2003<sup>3</sup>

The Ministry of Land and Environment is meeting these global and local challenges by focusing on three broad areas:

1. Land administration and management
2. Environmental management; and,
3. Disaster preparedness and hazard mitigation

### ***Land administration and Management***

Mr. Speaker, Jamaica has 700,000 parcels of land on the Land Valuation Roll but it is estimated that some additional 300,000 parcels are not included. This pattern of informal settlement is a legacy of slavery and colonialism. Our drive to account for every single parcel of land is of fundamental importance to every Jamaican as we strive to build a strong Jamaica.

This Government intends to free our people who are living on the low plains and in the valleys, and on the hills and mountains of Jamaica from the tenacious grip of this last vestige of slavery and colonialism.

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<sup>3</sup> *Towards a National Strategy and Action Plan on Biodiversity in Jamaica*, pp. 13; *Jamaica Country Development Strategy*, Water Resources Institute, pp.5; *State of the Environment*, pp. 35

***We are building a new Jamaica, a strong Jamaica.***

Mr. Speaker, the divestment of Government owned lands, the Land Administration and Management Programme (LAMP) and legislative reforms are the initiatives that will give poor Jamaicans legal ownership to lands, secure legal tenure for thousands of Jamaicans who are living on unregistered lands and advance the Government's agenda of establishing a credible database of all parcels of land in Jamaica.

***Divestment of Government-owned lands***

The divestment of Government owned lands is a fundamental part of Government's social and economic programme of providing land for the poor and landless. During the last financial year, a National Land Divestment Committee was re-established to ensure the orderly, transparent and equitable divestment of Crown lands. The Committee is refining the procedures for divestment.

***Land Administration and Management Programme***

Under LAMP, some 30,000 parcels of land in St. Catherine will be surveyed and regularized and 15,000 of these parcels will be brought under the Registration of Titles Act and Certificates of Titles issued to landowners. To date 19,085 parcels have been surveyed. The remaining 10,915 parcels should be completed by December 2004.

Mr. Speaker, the residents of:

- Old Harbour
- Treadways
- Sligoville
- Point Hill
- Harker's Hall
- Mount Rosser
- Glengoffe
- Above Rocks
- Church Pen
- Bog Walk
- Sections of Spanish Town
- Watermount
- West Prospect

who are benefiting under LAMP are experiencing the vision of prosperity and dignity adopted by this Government.

We have three and four generations of families living on lands with no security of tenure. This Government, through a hardworking and dedicated team at LAMP is helping thousands of families in these communities to say: **“this land is our land”**.

Land ownership provides an incentive for people to employ sustainable agricultural practices that will benefit Jamaica's environment.

## *Cadastral Map*

The proposed piece of legislation, The Special Provisions Act:- Cadastral Mapping and Tenure Regularisation, is in its final draft stage. It will facilitate the cadastral mapping, clarification and regularisation of all parcels of land in Jamaica.

The Map will improve the integrity of the land titling system and allow for a credible Land Valuation Information System (LVIS). This System provides vital parcel information such as geographical location and Land Valuation Roll Report.

When completed, the Cadastral Map will also facilitate the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS). This system will be used to capture data that are geographically based, such as utilities, watershed, land use and soils.

Jamaica's ability to prepare development projects, analyse and predict social, environmental and economic impacts on communities will be greatly enhanced by the use of this system. The Cadastral Index which has been developed will be used to assist with the preparation of the Cadastral Map. This Index is also being used for the planning of the Highway 2000 corridor to ensure sustainable development.

Cadastral Index is completed in all parishes except St. Thomas. Of the 700,000 parcels of land on the Valuation Roll, 661,029 parcels have been captured on the Index.

### ***Informal Settlements***

Mr. Speaker, I could not complete my presentation to the House without speaking about the problem of squatting in Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker, squatting remains a major and chronic problem in Jamaica. It involves both public and private lands. Various governments have sought to deal with this issue in a variety of ways through several programmes, including Operation PRIDE.

My Ministry has begun a major review of matters pertaining to informal settlements and this year will continue consultations on approaches and solutions with other government agencies including KSAC and the Parish Councils, the private sector, other relevant organizations and representatives of political parties. The objective is to determine a variety of solutions to deal with this very critical issue.

### **Environmental Management**

Mr. Speaker, I now turn my attention to environmental management. The National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA) has responsibility for sustainable planning, environmental awareness and management. NEPA has an important role to play in ensuring that development projects are in line with the Government's policies and laws on sustainable development.

During the year, external funding was identified to implement some of the programmes in the **National Strategy and Action Plan for Biodiversity** approved by Cabinet and this Parliament in May 2003.

We are examining the development of incentives, to encourage the conservation of privately owned lands. These lands are fragile and require the protection of the state.

Mr. Speaker, enforcement and compliance continue to be a primary focus of NEPA. The agency conducts routine monitoring visits as well as post-permit monitoring. Currently six cases representing breaches of Acts administered by the Agency are before the courts.

The country continues to play an active role in the implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements. Jamaica has signed or become a party to over thirty of these agreements. Further details are included in the Ministry Paper on *The Status of the Implementation of Environmental Agreements and Treaties* which was tabled today. Jamaica has prepared a National Assessment Report of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States which was agreed ten years ago.

The **National Programme of Action (NPA)** for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Sources of Pollution highlighted the three main sources of pollution of the marine environment. These are sewage, solid wastes and pesticides run-off from agricultural lands. Projects are being developed to address these sources of pollution.

Jamaica is also preparing its **National Implementation Plan** to deal with the management of certain pesticides and industrial compounds which persist and pose serious threat to human health and the environment.

Work is progressing on the various components of the Kingston Harbour rehabilitation programme, an important national economic, environmental and social asset. Through a US\$500,000 grant from the IDB and J\$7,320,000 from the Government of Jamaica, a project is being implemented to deal with institutional strengthening, public education, and assistance to industries to improve their environmental management performance.

Mr. Speaker, the work of NEPA and the Government of Jamaica is supported by many international partners. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is implementing many programmes to support the capacity of key Jamaican organizations involved in decision-making management and use of natural resources. Special mention must be made of the Environmental Action Programme (ENACT) which started in January 1994 to provide support to activities for the sound management and use of the island's natural resources.

The Programme was scheduled to conclude at the end of June 2004, however CIDA has approved funding for a 9-month extension to March 2005, to ensure institutionalisation of the various processes initiated under the ENACT.

The Coastal Water Quality Improvement Project (CWIP), a six-year GOJ/USAID initiative for the improvement of Jamaica's coastal water quality, is being implemented in selected coastal sites including Negril, Ocho Rios and Portland.

The Environmental Foundation of Jamaica has also been playing a critical role in efforts to protect and conserve our environment. Grants made to non-governmental organizations for environmental projects have increased significantly since its establishment in 1993. The Foundation issued a call for proposals from November 2003 to January 2004 and has awarded 109 grants totaling \$392 million to various Non- Government and Community-based organizations for proposals sent in response to the call. Of the total amount awarded, \$208 million was for the child development and welfare sector.

### **Disaster Preparedness and Hazard Mitigation**

Mr. Speaker, the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management, the Meteorological Services Division and the Earthquake Unit are the three entities under this Ministry that form the national hazard warning system of the country. We thank the leadership and staff in these entities for reducing the effects of disasters on Jamaicans.

During the last financial year, Jamaica experienced drought, flooding, tropical storms Claudette and Odette and six minor earthquakes.

ODPEM, which has lead responsibility for disaster preparedness and mitigation, continued to work to strengthen its capacity to respond to disasters and to ensure the speedy delivery of service to the Jamaican people.

To this end, one hundred and three shelter managers were trained, thirty-nine shelters were inspected and marked and shelter kits developed for children and adults.

The organization strengthened its systems for managing disasters through the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS). A USAID funded Flood Early Warning System Project for Annotto Bay was completed. Flood early warning and Data Network Systems were installed in the parishes of St. James and St. Ann with the assistance of the UNDP

Sixty of the most vulnerable victims of the 2002 May/June flood rains are benefiting from houses under an ODPEM/Food for the Poor agreement.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a big thank you to Mr. Bradley Finzi-Smith, Executive Director of Food for the Poor, and his team for the significant contribution they have made and continue to make.

***The Haitian Crisis***

Mr. Speaker, between February and May this year, over five hundred Haitian Nationals landed on the shores of Jamaica, as a result of political and civil unrest in their country.

The ODPEM together with the Ministry of National Security, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, the Ministry of Health and other agencies spearheaded the effort to receive, shelter and provide medical care by way of the national response mechanism.

The Portland and St. James Parish Disaster Committees provided support for the two camps at Winifred Rest Home and Montpelier.

The total value of the rehabilitation works at Montpelier is \$35 M of which GoJ contributed \$14.5 M. The rehabilitated facility will be used for other purposes once we have dealt with the Haitian Issue.

Mr. Speaker I would like to express my appreciation to the many organizations and Jamaicans for their contribution and participation on this project.

The Government recognized that the Haitians are part of the Caribbean family and therefore sought to assist them. The United Nations has expressed thanks for the manner in which Jamaica dealt with this issue.

### **Mining and Quarrying**

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to the Ministry's mining portfolio. I am pleased to report to this Honourable House and the people of Jamaica this sector's performance during the financial year 2003-2004 was noticeably better than most other sectors. Mining and quarrying grew by an estimated 4.8%, reflecting record levels of output in local mining and quarrying industry.

Last year we developed a Quarry Policy which concentrated on the halting of illicit quarrying. This will form part of a National Minerals Policy. The first draft of this comprehensive policy is scheduled for completion in September 2004. In the meanwhile several aspect of the quarry policy are being implemented and with very positive results.

Last year the Mines and Geology Division collected \$36 million in quarry tax, surpassing the \$24.5 million collected during 2002-2003.

The Cabinet has also approved significant increases in the fines which may be levied against those involved in illicit quarrying. The fine for a first offence moves from \$30,000.00 to \$300,000.00 and from \$50,000.00 to \$800,000.00 for a second offence.

In addition, there will be a provision for quarries to employ certified quarry managers who should make the operations of quarries more efficient while taking better care of the environment.

The Quarry Tax is to be increased from 3.5 percent to 5 percent to assist in generating an increased pool of funds to facilitate improved monitoring of the quarry industry.

Mr. Speaker, from the 13.5 million tonnes of bauxite mined during 2003 – 2004, the Mines and Geology Division collected royalty totaling \$703 million. Other income from fees and quarry tax took the overall revenue earned by the division to \$741 M.

In order to ensure that we continue to improve our ability to protect the environment in the mining and quarrying areas, Cabinet has approved an increase in the fine for non-restoration of mined out lands from the present US\$4,500.00 an acre (US\$11,115.00 per hectare) to US\$10,000.00 per acre (US\$24,700.00 per hectare). Failure to restore the lands within three years of mining will attract further annual penalties of US \$1,000.00 per acre (US\$2,500.00 per hectare) per year.

## **AHEAD WITH THE VISION: 2004/05 PLAN OF ACTION**

Mr. Speaker, the Government is convinced that sustainable development is the only foundation on which we can build a strong Jamaica. Environmental trends indicate that we are in a new global order. This is the decade to reverse the trends of environmental degradation through sustainable development. It is the decade to protect our endangered species, our coral reefs and watersheds. It is the decade to plant trees, adopt environmentally friendly practices to safeguard food production and reduce energy cost and pollution by using solar and other forms of energy. It is indeed the decade of reckoning.

### ***National Sustainable Planning***

A number of policies and legislation will be introduced in this new financial year to support the Government in its quest for sustainable development.

We are putting in place a National Sustainable Planning process and framework. This will specify the roles of the KSAC, Parish Councils and Parish Development Committees (PDC) which are now using the local sustainable development planning process. It will also define at the national level the role of Sector Ministries & Agencies the private sector, NGOs and other stakeholders.

These will work together with the group at the local levels to achieve the highest levels of coordination and cooperation in the preparation of sustainable development plans.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize that several large-scale projects are coming on stream and that there is a need to provide advice and guidance to developers on their proposals. I invite all large-scale developers/investors to make contact with my office in order for us to arrange a meeting with all the relevant agencies, to provide this service at no cost.

We are also visiting Portland this weekend to meet with the Parish Council and the Developers to look at the development of the town.

A National Policy on the Management of Hazardous Substances and Wastes will be completed this year.

We will phase out the environmentally damaging substances including Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) and Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).

### ***Legislation***

Mr. Speaker, in the area of legislation the National Environment and Planning Act will be drafted to deal with the mandate of NEPA in the areas of planning, land utilization and the environment. To this end the Town & Country Planning Act, the Local Improvements Act, the NRCA & the LDUC Acts will be repealed. The new Act will also incorporate several other existing statutes. The Ozone Layer Depletion Act is to be completed this year to facilitate the country's schedule for the phase-out of ozone depleting substances. Regulations relating to sewage and trade effluents and sludge and Air Quality will also be enacted this year.

## CONCLUSION

Mr. Speaker, I have looked at Jamaica's history of environmental protection and management, provided an update of the work of my Ministry in the 2003/04 financial year and focused on some of our priority areas for the new financial year.

There is work to be done to restore depleted fisheries by 2015, reduce biodiversity loss by 2010 and phase out the use of chemicals that harm human health and environment by 2020. These are some of the goals that were set at the Johannesburg Summit in 2002.

They are great goals that will allow billions of the world's people to breathe clean air, enjoy good health and improve their standard of living. This decade we do - or world environment dies.

Here in Jamaica:

1. We must help 150,000 small farmers to adopt sustainable farm practices;
2. We must act firmly to resettle Jamaicans who are living on lands and in ways that will harm Jamaica's environment;
3. We must relentlessly pursue those who are bent on destroying the environment-whether they are big businesses or ordinary people.

Mr. Speaker, in the past we have shown courage in making policies and passing and enforcing laws that protect our environment.

Today, Jamaica and Jamaicans must rise to this decade of reckoning to reclaim the true meaning of our country: **Land of Wood and Water.**

Our great vision of prosperity and dignity for the Jamaican people will see us through.

Thank you.