

SHORT ADDRESS



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MINISTER OF INDUSTRY, INVESTMENT &  
COMMERCE

JAMAICA FILM FESTIVAL CLOSING CEREMONY

COURTLEIGH AUDITORIUM

SATURDAY, JULY 11, 2014 at 7:00 PM

## Salutations

- Colleague Ministers
- Mr. Milton Samuda, Chairman, JAMPRO
- Ms. Diane Edwards, President, JAMPRO
- Ms. Carole Beckford, Film Commissioner, JAMPRO
- Representatives of Ministries, Agencies and Departments across Government
- Members of the local and international film fraternity
- Sponsors
- Members of the press
- Specially invited guests... good evening

Let me start off by adding my words of commendation on the first staging of the Jamaica Film Festival! I must say, the last few days have been **phenomenal**. I was pleased to attend the workshops, screenings and even speak with many of you. With each encounter, I felt a strong sense of enthusiasm and excitement about the prospects for the growth of the film sector into a thriving industry and its contribution to Jamaica's sustainable development.

Ladies and gentlemen, the success of this Festival has served to reinforce the correctness of our decision to refocus the sector towards the business of film-making for a new generation of creative people with the talent, capacity and a story to share with the world. Even at this time, we are aware of the different conversations around this shift in focus. However, we had to take hard decisions to find a happy medium between the long awaited development of the creative economy and simply enabling our creatives to “eat a food”.

We already have many models, athletes and musicians making a name for themselves internationally, why not Jamaican producers and script writers? It is our responsibility, indeed our duty to support the development of this nascent talent in our people. We must work to make them the owners of content rather than simply participants and thus, the rights holders in intellectual property, the source of new wealth for those not from the land owning class.

As I said at the Opening Ceremony, the Jamaica Film Festival is one element of a comprehensive strategy for the development of the film industry, and by extension the creative economy.

### **So, what's next?**

The Government will continue its efforts to create the legislative and administrative framework for the development of the creative economy but, we need the members of the private sector, especially our financial institutions and financiers to come on board in an even bigger way to support the development of the sector. This collaboration becomes of increased importance when the following projects are taken into consideration:

First, the development of a Cultural and Creative Fund to assist in alleviating the challenge of access to finance in the creative sector. As Minister, I will continue to lead the charge in ensuring that this fund becomes a reality, even

as it represents another tangible expression of our interest in the growth and development of the creative economy.

Second, the need for a post-production facility in Jamaica. We believe that a facility of this nature is critical, especially as we develop our home-grown film industry. The old Goodyear Facility in St. Thomas will remain available for this purpose and we will continue to pursue investor interest. Let me be clear, the role of the Government in this instance is to facilitate the investment through a private-public partnership, as this cannot be achieved by the Government going it alone, especially during this period of fiscal constraint.

Third, the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce through JAMPRO will be actively facilitating the creation of a film guild. This will be a basis for building stakeholder capacity and engagement, even as we build our creative economy.

Now more than ever, we need the private sector to collaborate with us as we seek to develop this critical industry. To this end, we will continue dialogue with all stakeholders.

In closing, let me commend JAMPRO and particularly the Film Commissioner, Carole Beckford, for your continued drive and hard work to ensure that this, the inaugural Jamaica Film Festival was a resounding success!

I also want to thank the sponsors for coming on board to make this festival a reality. I am certain Diane will mention each sponsor by name in her closing statement, but I wanted to say special thanks to Red Stripe for making a three year commitment as lead sponsor for the festival.

Let me also thank the specially invited guests and members of the creative fraternity that attended the screenings, participated in the workshops, discussions

and networking events over the past five days. Just in case you missed it, most of the overseas participants have a Jamaican connection- Paula, we applaud your dogged efforts in Finding Henry Lowe.

Once again, thank you all for making the Jamaica Film Festival a success!

One Love and Nuff Respect