

GREETINGS
HON. SHARON FOLKES-ABRAHAMS
MINISTER OF STATE- MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY,
INVESTMENT AND COMMERCE
JANAAC's CEO BREAKFAST & AWARDS FUNCTION
TUESDAY, JUNE 11, 2013

Salutations:-

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First, I extend to you all, the warmest greetings on this very special occasion.

We have just commemorated World Accreditation Day, and of course, there couldn't be a more opportune occasion for an event of this nature.

Why is this so important?

If Jamaica is to fully exploit the opportunities presented by globalization and trade liberalization, it is imperative that our economy and society be intergrated into the global value and supply chain. One critical aspect of this integration is the delivery of goods and services at levels of quality that are competitive with those from any other economy across the globe.

The utilization of international standards delivered by a national quality infrastructure, which is accepted and integrated into the international quality infrastructure, is one critical dimension of this inescapable integration of our national economy into the global value and supply chain.

Today, implementation of regulations can present potential barriers to our country's growth and development, restricting access to free and fair trading activities between companies and across national borders.

Examples of these laws and regulations include:-

- The new Food Safety Modernization Act of the United States, passed on January 4th, 2011. This law was promulgated to protect US consumers from potential hazards that could pose serious health and safety risks. Consequently, the law requires that a programme for testing of foods by accredited labs be implemented within two years of the implementation of the Act. The enactment of this law and its attendant regulations has significant implications for Jamaican companies exporting food into the US market.
- Another example is the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008, which started with the regulation of children's products, but is expected to eventually affect all consumer products entering the US market.

Both of these laws and their attendant regulations require that products be tested by an accredited laboratory as a requirement, before being allowed entry into the US market. Further, it is required that the accreditation body be signatory to the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA). JANAAC, is currently on track to become an ILAC signatory by the end of 2014.

JANAAC's reason for existence, therefore, is to facilitate trade between Jamaica and her trading partners by enabling our conformity

assessment system to meet international standards, as well as the WTO Agreement on TBTs.

JANAAC as Jamaica's national accreditation body, provides a bridge to assist manufacturers and service providers to overcome potential technical barriers to trade (TBTs). This bridge is constructed as a consequence of the position and role that JANAAC plays in Jamaica's national quality infrastructure. This position and structure was designed to facilitate global acceptance of products, processes and services tested by a JANAAC accredited conformity assessment body (CAB), and supports the free trade mantra, **“Tested once, accepted everywhere”**.

And, I must tell you, I really welcome the fact that JANAAC in addition to the four accreditations already awarded, is now making two additional accreditations today. This is a big move and I look forward to other accreditations being made in the near future, including our medical laboratories, which are important as we seek to attract investors in the area of health tourism.

Ultimately, ladies and gentlemen, our aim is international competitiveness. The more accreditations awarded by JANAAC, the more our position as exporters will be strengthened in overseas markets. The more accreditations awarded, the more internationally recognized the Jamaican market will become, and the more attractive we will be to overseas investors.

Ladies and gentlemen, I commend you all, and wish you the best for the future.