



Honourable Audley Shaw, CD, MP  
Minister of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture & Fisheries  
Launch of the Electronic Single Window Project  
Jamaica Pegasus Hotel  
Wednesday, September 5, 2018  
9:00 a.m.

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## Salutations

- Mr. Kingsley Henry, Moderator
- The Hon. Fayval Williams, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service (MOFP)
- Representative of Hon. Dr. Christopher Tufton, Minister of Health
- Hon. Danville Walker, Jamaica Customs Agency (JCA), Board Chairman
- Mrs. Velma Ricketts Walker – CEO/Commissioner JCA
- Mrs. Patricia R. Francis, Chairman of Trade Facilitation Task Force
- Dr. Jan Hoffman, Chief Facilitation Branch United Nations Conference on Trade & Development (UNCTAD)
- Other Representatives of UNCTAD
- JCA Staff

- Representatives from other Ministries, Departments & Agencies
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

I am pleased to join in the launch of the ***Electronic Single Window (ESW) Initiative***. Today marks another important step in creating a facilitatory business environment for the trade of goods as well as improving the pathway to increased economic growth.

We are here to launch a project that will see greater efficiency, transparency and competitiveness.

The ESW will see:

- The efficient use of our resources as we streamline our business processes and procedures
- Transparency of our processes through the availability of accurate, reliable and timely information **AND**
- Improved conditions of doing business, leading to improved competitiveness.

The ESW represents an important addition to Jamaica's Trade Facilitation Programme and complements well, other initiatives such as the business reforms being led by the National Competitiveness Council (NCC), to increase Jamaica's rankings on key global competitiveness indices such as *Doing Business Report*, *Logistics Performance Index* and the *Global Competitiveness Report*.

Ladies and gentlemen, I had the pleasure of touring facilities such as Port Bustamante and Kingston Wharves recently. These sites attest to the really tremendous opportunities for trade and transshipment that Jamaica enjoys.

We are a centrally located port of call, connecting the world. For example, Jamaica has a port service operator that facilitates both imports and exports to over 30 international ports in Latin and North America and the rest of the Caribbean!

This is a coveted position!

**Points:**

- Ladies and gentlemen, as the Minister with responsibility for the majority of the goods producing sectors of the economy, representing approximately 30% of GDP, I am pleased to witness the actualization of the ESW.

- Jamaica relies heavily on imports but our vision is to improve that situation by narrowing the trade imbalance. We need to export more, and systems such as the ESW will help us achieve that goal.

### **Cross-Ministerial Approach:**

- As you may know, the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries (MICAF), is the coordinating Ministry for the implementation of the Trade Facilitation (TF) reform agenda. This agenda has several other complementary initiatives aimed at increasing the country's trade competitiveness and enhancing its revenue collection architecture.
- The Trade Facilitation (TF) reform agenda is also a cross-ministerial and has truly benefitted from a collaborative approach. The successes we have achieved, thus far are indicative of the benefits of cross-ministry collaboration and coordination.
- In this regard, we are grateful for this successful partnership with the Ministry of Finance, through the Jamaica Customs Agency, who will manage the roll-out of the ESW.

- More directly, the ESW builds on the architecture of the ASYCUDA World Customs Clearance System from which we have already derived significant improvements, including reduced costs and clearance times, increased revenue collection and accurate and timely provision of international trade statistics.

### **Enhancing the Landscape:**

- The ability of businesses to thrive locally and to participate competitively in the international trading system is a significant driver of sustainable economic development.
- We still have '*a way to go*' as traders continue to identify the timely clearance of imports and exports by customs and other border regulatory agencies as a challenge to their operations.
- These challenges feed into Jamaica's performance on indices such as the *Doing Business Report*.
- While we improved our position in the ease of trading goods across borders in the most recent report, trade costs remain higher in Jamaica than in many other Caribbean countries.

- The ESW will significantly address some of the major problems faced by the trade through the provision of a single avenue for traders to lodge standardized information and documents for all import, export, and transit-related regulatory requirements.
  
- Ultimately, the frustration of having to provide the same information to multiple agencies, which leads to delays, will be eliminated.
  
- Ladies and gentlemen, even as we seek to monitor our borders, there is the constant need to be more efficient and to apply more sophisticated systems, such as risk assessment capabilities, to ensure that closer attention is paid to what we should reject without impeding legitimate trade.
  
- The ESW will help us to build on these systems and tailor them to fit our specific needs and those of the business community.
  
- The ***Electronic Single Window*** complements the establishment of the ***National Trade Portal*** which makes all trade related

information readily available in a single integrated website to Jamaican importers, exporters and investors.

- Importantly, the ***National Trade Portal*** will also be launched within the next couple of weeks and I look forward to the added benefits that will come from this.
- These benefits will include added transparency and predictability of trade procedures that will reduce, even further, the cost of doing business through trade.

**Close:**

In closing, I want to express gratitude for the support of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's (UNCTAD) Project Team, toward the development and implementation of the ESW.

I want to also encourage all stakeholders to lend their full corporation and support to the success of the ESW. At the end of

the day, the benefits of our improved mechanisms will not just rest with traders.

We must remember that ***a rising tide lifts all boats.***

I therefore look forward to not just greater efficiency and business competitiveness, but to us achieving accelerated economic growth to the benefit of all citizens.

Thank you!