



Statement on the Recent Flood Rains

(May 2018)

By

**The Hon. Audley Shaw Minister of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture
and Fisheries**

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to provide an update to the nation regarding the impact of last week's heavy rains and subsequent flooding and landslides in some parts of the island, on the agricultural sector.

Mr. Speaker, the Meteorological Service of Jamaica reports that 10 parishes were affected by landslides and flooding as a result of the trough that affected the island between May 4 to May 7, 2018.

Given the susceptibility of the agricultural sector to extreme weather events, Mr. Speaker, the Rural Agricultural Authority (RADA), moved to conduct an urgent assessment of the level and the value of the damage to the sector, in a bid to ensure there is no loss of production time.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report, based on RADA's preliminary figures, that the damage was not as devastating as the \$800M loss at

the same time last year or even when compared with the \$300M in losses incurred in November and December of 2017.

Mr. Speaker, RADA has indicated the following:

- Total Hectares impacted -**136.9**
- Estimated Tons of produce lost –**1,520.2**
- Total no. of farmers affected (Crops & Livestock) – **1,192**
- Estimated Value **\$76,749,000**
- No. of Livestock - **1,649 (mostly poultry)**
- Main Parishes Affected- **St. Andrew, Clarendon, St. Ann, St. Catherine, St. Thomas, St Elizabeth, Manchester, Westmoreland**

Mr. Speaker, while we are happy that the damage was not major, some of our small farmers were, in fact, affected and are in need of assistance and we are committed to providing this support to get these farmers back on their feet.

Mr. Speaker, we are particularly sensitive to the onset of fungal and bacterial diseases, especially in relation to Irish potatoes.

The House will recall the steady progress the country has made in the production of Irish potatoes with over 90% self-sufficiency last year.

In order to maintain this, we will move to provide farmers with the chemicals they need to stave off the Leaf Blight Disease that has arisen.

Mr. Speaker, despite its effects when we get too much, over too short a period of time, the sector needs rain. In that regard, we are satisfied with the level of rainfall this year which resulted in a 2.1% increase in production of domestic food crops for the first quarter.

To capitalize on the good weather, as is customary, the Ministry will place at the disposal of Members of Parliament (MPs) in collaboration with RADA, funds to be dispatched to our registered farmers in a bid to hasten the process of getting them back on their feet.

Each rural constituency will be given \$1 Million while our urban constituency will receive \$600,000.