



## Sectoral Presentation 2018

Gordon House  
Tuesday, April 24, 2018



**Ministry of Industry, Commerce  
Agriculture & Fisheries**

# **BUILDING RESILIENCE, SECURING OUR FUTURE**

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**Hon. Audley Shaw, CD, MP**  
Minister of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture & Fisheries

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## INTRODUCTION

**Mr. Speaker**, at the beginning of the Budget Debate, I had no clue that I would be making history in our Honourable House by being the first Minister of Government to open and close the Budget Debate and, then, only a few weeks later, be given the honour to open the Sectoral Debate.

**Mr. Speaker**, when we negotiated the current standby agreement with the IMF, we were clear that fiscal consolidation was not an end in itself. It is a necessary precondition for growth in the economy. Growth is the only way we can deliver prosperity, which is the mandate with which this Government came to power in 2016.

**Mr. Speaker**, God moves in a mysterious way. Having achieved the mandate of putting the economy on the right track, I have now been placed by the Prime Minister in the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, to continue the work started by my colleague and friend, the Hon. Karl Samuda. The mission is clear **Mr. Speaker**: We must grow the economy through production. This, **Mr. Speaker**, is the greatest imperative now facing Jamaica.

The Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries represents the main productive sectors of the economy, contributing 33.3% to GDP. Agriculture contributes 7.3%; Manufacturing contributes 8.5% and the Distributive Trade contributes 17.5%. Together, these sectors engage some 45% of the workforce.

Sustainable growth and wealth creation must start with these sectors – Agriculture, Industry and the Distributive Trade, underpinned by an attractive business environment and promoted through aggressive and innovative marketing that attracts investment and state of the art technology to boost productivity.

It is not surprising, although disappointing, that the agricultural sector declined by 3.8% in 2017 compared with 2016, due to adverse weather conditions. The disappointment arises not only from the relative decline of the sector in and of itself, but more so due to the strong positive correlation between agricultural growth and growth in the economy. The reality of this correlation has, at last, dawned on everyone.

It therefore follows that if we are going to make a fundamental difference and move from the anaemic average annual growth of less than one percent per year in the economy in the last 20 years, we have to put the productive sector on a more sustainable footing.

In this quest, agriculture is important as it has the greatest multiplier effect and retained earnings in the economy and, perhaps more importantly, it lies at the base of our manufacturing sector and at the heart of rural development.

**Mr. Speaker**, whilst I have an obligation as the people's servant to account for the subjects in the portfolio in 2017, the main thrust of this presentation will be focused on articulating a vision and a strategy for the repositioning of the productive sector in order to allow it to realize its tremendous potential for generating economic growth, job creation and prosperity in the entire economy.



## ACHIEVEMENTS IN POLICY AND LEGISLATION

**Mr. Speaker**, before going into the future I want to briefly highlight some of the significant achievements of the Ministry in 2017 that we must build on as we chart a new strategy for the way forward.

Government's primary role is to create the enabling policy, legislative, institutional and regulatory environment to facilitate private sector investment and production. In this regard, I am proud to report that what the Ministry has been able to achieve in 2017 in the area of policy and legislation is nothing short of Herculean. The former Minister and the team at MICAF, along with the Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel, must be commended.

We developed the following policies and tabled these as Green Papers in this Honourable House during the last fiscal year:

- The MSME & Entrepreneurship Policy
- The National Quality Policy
- The National Seed Policy and
- The Craft Policy

In the area of legislation, we enacted the following pieces of legislation:

- The Jamaica Agricultural Commodities Regulatory Authority Act, 2017
- The Jamaica Agricultural Commodities Regulatory Authority Regulations, 2018
- The Jamaica Agricultural Commodities Regulatory Authority (Cess) Regulations, 2018
- The Agricultural Loan Societies and Approved Organizations Act, 2017
- The Fishing Industry (Special Fishery Conservation Area) (Amendment) Regulations, 2017
- The Animals Diseases (Importation) Control (Amendment) Regulations, 2017
- The Companies (Amendment ) Act – Global Forum requirements
- The Processed Food (Amendment) Act and Regulations, 2017
- The Protection of Geographical Indications (Amendment) Act and Regulation, 2018 (**Bill passed in the Senate – to be enacted**)
- The Trade (Prohibition of Importation of Refined Sugar on Retail Trade) Order, 2017
- The Trade (Prohibition of Importation) (Used Tyres) Order, 2017
- The Coffee Industry (Amendment) Regulations, 2017
- The Trade ( Dealer Disclosure) (Pre-Shipment Certificate) Order, 2018
- The Trade (Scrap Metal) (Amendment) (No.2) Regulation, 2018

In the case of the Fisheries Bill, **Mr. Speaker**, I have to emphasize that after it had languished for over 20 years, I had the honour of commencing the debate on the Fisheries Bill in this House on Wednesday, April 11, 2018, and we look forward to having this Bill enacted soon. **Mr. Speaker**, in this regard, I want to pause to recognize the efforts of the previous eight Ministers of Agriculture before me, including, of course, my immediate predecessor, the Hon. Karl Samuda.

As indicated before **Mr. Speaker**, policy and legislation are at the very core of an effective and proactive Government.

## FISHERIES

That is why our Fisheries Sector will come in for sharp focus. This Government will leverage our Blue Economy! What this means, **Mr. Speaker**, is that we will be looking to more stringently protect and monitor the assets of our waters.

The World Bank estimates the annual value of the Caribbean Sea at US\$400 Billion. They further predict that the entire sea economy could be generating US\$3 Trillion annually!

To this end, **Mr. Speaker**, we will be embarking on an active programme over the next three (3) years to ensure our fishing industry reaps the rewards of our Blue Economy.

The plans, **Mr. Speaker**, include improved focus on our fish sanctuaries, providing a system of production assistance to our small artisanal fishermen to assist with the necessities of the trade such as fishing wire, to boost their production, among others.

However, **Mr. Speaker**, let me stress that we will not seek to enhance production at the expense of the sustainability of our industry. I am therefore putting my fishers and those who trade in the product on warning that while we improve and bolster the industry, sustainability is paramount!

## THE RESPONSE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

This performance by the Ministry, in setting the appropriate policy and legislative framework, has resonated well with the private sector. They have expressed an overwhelming level of confidence through investments in industry and agriculture, totaling over \$29.9 billion throughout the 2016/17 financial year up to roughly March 2018, which are as follows:

- Lasco Manufacturing spent \$130 million to expand its juice manufacturing business with the aim of accessing the export market. They have also signaled their intention to enter the cannabis market.
- J. Wray and Nephew has spent \$780 million to improve its manufacturing capabilities and further increase its environmental and waste management systems.
- Seprod has invested \$3 billion in the development of a state-of-the-art grain mill and another \$5 billion in a new venture to develop local palm oil.
- Red Stripe has spent \$2.3 billion in the expansion of its production



*Discussing manufacturing, export, agro-industrial production and investment with (from left) Larry Watson, President of the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce; Permanent Secretary Donovan Stanberry; David Wan, President of the Jamaica Employers' Federation; Metry Seaga, President of the Jamaica Manufacturers' Association; and Howard Mitchell, President of the Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica at a meeting held at the Terra Nova All-Suite Hotel in Kingston on April 18.*



lines, which now see it being able to meet its local and international demand for its products with LNG being the main energy source.

- Grace Kennedy has invested US\$25 million in downtown Kingston to build its new regional headquarters which is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2018. They are also seeking to expand the agro-park at Hounslow by adding 300 acres using the “Mother Farm” business model and will be opening its 6th factory at Denbigh where they will be using new and innovative technology for the processing of ground provisions such as yam and sweet potato to supply the export market by the end of 2018.
- The CB Group has spent \$15 billion to consolidate its operations to a world-class facility located in Hill Run, St. Catherine.



*On tour of CB Group's Imagination Farms with group director, Lori Lyn and onion harvester Omar Riley on April 13, 2018*

- Caribbean Cement is to invest \$3.2 billion over the next 12 months to complete its coal and kiln facilities to be able to produce over 1.2 million tonnes by 2019.
  - Jamaica Broilers has spent \$260 million in a new pellet mill, which will see an increase of 23% in its output capacity, making it the largest such entity in the region.
  - ARC Manufacturing has spent \$392 million in the commissioning of a new fabric mesh manufacturing production line as well as the expansion of its roof manufacturing outfit.
  - Confectionary & Snacks Jamaica Ltd. began construction in Jamaica in 2017 and is projected to invest approximately \$5 billion in this facility to cover distribution to the rest of the Caribbean.
- Manufacturing and Logistics, **Mr. Speaker**. This is a big part of Jamaica's future.

**Mr. Speaker**, we must take keen note of these investments as they send multiple signals. They tell us that manufacturing is alive and kicking in Jamaica. And since several of the investments are in value-added food processing operations, the investments underscore the integration between agriculture and

manufacturing and tell us that this link is strong and growing. But, perhaps most importantly, **Mr. Speaker**, these investments signal that the holders of capital, here and abroad, are expressing confidence in Jamaica and its future.

In markets, **Mr. Speaker**, whether financial, services or goods markets, securing confidence is everything. It means our partners trust us; they trust our vision; they trust our plans and they trust us to implement. Securing confidence is at the heart of securing a solid platform for expansion and growth of the Jamaican economy.

## SMALL FARMERS' CONTRIBUTION

**Mr. Speaker**, Jamaica is for all Jamaicans. Every Jamaican, in every parish, in every city, town or rural village has a contribution to make.

As the former Minister of Finance and Public Service, I had the privilege of leading the national narrative on building an inclusive economy. I, therefore, must use the opportunity provided by this Sectoral Debate as the Minister with responsibility for Agriculture to pay tribute to the over 220,000 small farmers who feed and nourish us.

The small players in the agriculture industry, notwithstanding the almost continuous adverse weather conditions throughout the year, have demonstrated considerable resilience. We salute these small farmers.

Notwithstanding an overall decline of 3.8% in agriculture, we have seen growth in specific sub-sectors, with a 7.9% increase in the production of corns, including hybrid corn which grew by a substantial 14.9%; we also registered an increase of 6.1% in plantains; a 10.4% increase in the production of bananas; a 2.2% increase in pineapple production; a 13.3% increase in dasheens; a 24.9% increase in coconuts, while milk production increased by 10.6%.

**Mr. Speaker**, once again we have broken a record in relation to the production of chicken meat, which in 2017 stood at 128.4m kilograms, representing nearly a 2% increase over the 2016 figure.

Egg production moved from 174.2 million in 2016 to 184 million in 2017. That is a 6.1 % increase.



*Minister J.C. Hutchinson along with MP Floyd Green join farmer preparing Irish potato plot.*





The increase in chicken meat and eggs further reinforces our self-sufficiency in these two critical protein sources.

We've also had growth in exports, Mr. Speaker. We exported 35% more bananas, 18% more yams and fish, 32% more baked goods and 11% more meat and meat products.

The local production of Irish potatoes continues to increase with close to 90% of our needs now being produced locally.

## THE FUTURE

**Mr. Speaker**, as proud as we are about the performance of these sub-sectors within our portfolio, we are also acutely aware that if we do not do things differently, we will forever be subject to the roller-coaster of boom and bust, feast and famine as the fortunes of the agricultural sector are inextricably tied to the vagaries of the weather.

The reality and seemingly irreversible nature of climate change demand that the Government urgently address the structural issues in the agricultural sector to eliminate the vicious cycle of boom and bust and realise the enormous potential of the sector to make a qualitative leap in its contribution to economic growth.

## A LONG-TERM PLAN

**Mr. Speaker**, obviously if we are going to chart a new course for the agricultural sector, we must begin with a plan with a sufficiently long term horizon.



**Mr. Speaker**, we need to determine the level of growth we need the agricultural sector to attain in 10 to 15 years, and then work backwards to identify the quantum of lands and the level of infrastructure required on those lands. We then need to establish the menu of crops and livestock that we need to produce, given the opportunities for import substitution, exports and for satisfying the requirements for raw material and intermediate goods for a robust manufacturing and tourism sectors.

The plan must also address the imperative of climate-proofing our agriculture and how to adapt and respond to external shocks.

If we do less than that, we are simply groping in the dark and hoping for the good fortunes of rain in order to have a certain level of growth each year.

In this regard, the former Minister was proactive in meeting with the Director General of the FAO at the 40th conference in Rome last year. He requested and received his support for the FAO to work with Jamaica to formulate such a 10 year agricultural development plan. And I am sure these discussions were intensified during the 35th Session of the FAO for Latin America and the Caribbean held here in Montego Bay in March.



*Prime Minister Andrew Holness (2<sup>nd</sup> left) views Red Stripe beer with cassava, along with Director General of the FAO Dr José Graziano da Silva (centre); Dr Margarita Cedeño, Constitutional Vice-President of the Dominican Republic/Special Ambassador of FAO (2<sup>nd</sup> right); Minister Karl Samuda (right); and Permanent Secretary Donovan Stanberry (left) during tour of displays at FAO's 35<sup>th</sup> Regional Conference for Latin America and Caribbean.*

I am pleased to indicate that the IDB, the CDB as well as the USAID want to play a role in the formulation of this plan, and all these partners are now being engaged through the coordination of the PIOJ to have this plan ready within the current financial year.

## STATE OF LAND USE

**Mr. Speaker**, what is our reality? According to the 2007 Agricultural Census, Jamaica has some 325,810 hectares of lands in farming.

Of that amount only 202,727 hectares are in active production, and this figure has declined by 25.8%, relative to the previous census in 1996.

**Mr. Speaker**, some 75% of the farmers engaged on those lands occupy plots of less than one acre.

Clearly, **Mr. Speaker**, we cannot hope to engage in efficient production on the scale required if we do not deliberately and consciously promote larger farms and enterprises and, at the same time, introduce, through RADA, appropriate technologies to the existing small farmers to boost their productivity.

Additionally, of the over 187,000 hectares of all cultivable lands that is irrigable, only 7% is in fact outfitted with irrigation.

## ENGAGING LARGER PLAYERS/ NEW TECHNOLOGIES

**Mr. Speaker**, what we have in this country is an agricultural sector with declining acreages in production, dominated by small players, and with production hopelessly dependent on rainfall.

We have to fix this situation by promoting larger farms, lifting the productivity of smaller players and expanding irrigation.

As part of the menu of solutions to increase productivity, particularly of small holders who have limited lands, we must also urgently promote protected agriculture. Not only will this solve the issue of small land space, but it will help to bring on board the technology that will result in high productivity and continuous production, not to mention building resilience in the face of climate change.

## ADDRESSING STRUCTURAL ISSUES

**Mr. Speaker**, in addition to the issues of farm size and land utilization and lack of irrigation highlighted before, we also have to address more structural issues such as poor infrastructure, poor farm roads, inadequate research and extension, and low levels of modern technology, including machinery.

Lack of access to financing is also a major issue to be addressed, if we are to arouse this sleeping lion called agriculture.

## PROMOTING PARTNERSHIPS

**Mr. Speaker**, it is clear that to reverse the fortunes of agriculture and to position the sector to further drive economic growth, rural development and overall prosperity, we need to promote partnerships.





Clearly, there are things that Government must do, such as the provision of public goods and facilitation, but we need the engagement of the private sector in a bigger way and they have to work in partnership with the over 220,000 small farmers to achieve our goals.

**Mr. Speaker**, I am heartened by the level of investment by the private sector in the agriculture and manufacturing sectors as previously highlighted. This is a very auspicious beginning, which augurs well for the new path in agriculture that I am here promoting.

**Mr. Speaker**, we believe that Jamaica can sustainably and competitively substitute at least 12% of our food import bill, and this constitutes a significant incentive for investment. But, in addition to cutting our food import bill, we must aggressively target export markets for fresh food and manufactured goods, starting with markets in the Caribbean, most of which import the vast majority of their food and beverage.

This Government commits to provide the enabling environment to encourage investment in this import substitution endeavour. We have taken that approach with Irish potato, converting former distributors to producers and contractual buyers of Irish potatoes from farmers. Supported by our import policy, they have been able to move the self-sufficiency rate from 32% in 2008/2009 to approximately 88% last year.

**Mr. Speaker** we intend to replicate this approach across critical and strategic crops and livestock. For instance, Mr. Speaker, through a tripartite partnership between hoteliers, farmers and the Ministry/ RADA, we are in the process of rolling out a National Strawberry Production Programme that, within three years, will see the total elimination of the importation of strawberries. We can do the same for mushroom, ginger and other select crops.



## PROMOTING FULLER UTILIZATION OF GOVERNMENT LANDS

**Mr. Speaker**, both this Government and the previous one have spent significant resources on our agro-parks, outfitting some 1,298 hectares of land with the requisite infrastructure to ensure profitable and sustainable production.

On the positive side, we can report that the two agro-parks, namely New Forest/Duff House and Yallahs that are managed under the Agricultural Competitiveness Programme have over 95% of the land under production.

Sadly, however, at those agro-parks managed by the AIC, namely Ebony Park, Spring Plain, Amity Hall and Plantain Garden River, only approximately 27% of the land, although leased, is under production.



*Ebony Park Agro-Park in Clarendon*

**Mr. Speaker**, the Government will revisit the leases in these agro-parks to make sure that we put the lands into the hands of people with the financial capability, agricultural know-how and the business acumen to effectively engage these lands.

Those with leases in these agro-parks need to get into production or these lands will have to be reallocated.

Part of our programme is to establish two agro-parks this year - Hounslow in St. Elizabeth, where we have so far spent \$118 million, and Spring Garden in Portland, where we have spent \$85 million to bring a total of 82 hectares into production.

We are determined that having spent these resources, the lands must go into the hands of serious investors and farmers. In the case of Hounslow, we are partnering with GraceKennedy to provide direct support to the packing house built by the Government and being operated under lease by Grace Kennedy.

In the case of Spring Garden, we are highly optimistic about the prospect of engaging serious banana farmers, as we have opened export markets for banana into the United Kingdom, Trinidad and Tobago, the Cayman Islands and Turks and Caicos. There is also an increasing demand from other countries.



## **PUTTING OUR LANDS TO USE**

**Mr. Speaker**, last year the Ministry was successful in negotiating with the Pan-Caribbean Sugar Company a return of over 18,000 hectares of leased land.

Moving forward, the Ministry is now pursuing a model where Pan-Caribbean will focus on factory operations and cane farmers will engage in the production of sugar cane. However, **Mr. Speaker**, the Monymusk factory only requires 7,500 hectares of these lands to be engaged in order to optimize its productive capacity.

Therefore, **Mr. Speaker**, it is the Ministry's intention to strategically develop the remaining 10,500 hectares of lands for high-yielding, highly profitable production of non-sugar crops and livestock.

**Mr. Speaker**, the Prime Minister has already alluded to the development of the first 2,000 hectares of lands in Bernard Lodge for an urban community as part of the wider framework of the Bernard Lodge Land Use Master Plan.

Going forward, the Ministry intends to restructure the SCJ Holdings Limited, the owners of these lands, to transition from being a mere landlord collecting leases to an active promoter of investments in these lands within the overarching development framework articulated by the Ministry. In this regard, JAMPRO will play a pivotal role.

Already, **Mr. Speaker**, I have met with the SCJ Holdings, JAMPRO, the National Irrigation Commission and Agro-Investment Corporation, the managers of the agro-parks, and I have issued instructions for this master plan to be developed quickly - to quantify the available lands, profile these lands based on capabilities and availability of irrigation and to package them for divestment. I have been assured that this inventory will be ready for my consideration by the end of the month. We have no time to lose. Much of these lands that are idle are already irrigated.

**Mr. Speaker**, these 18, 000 hectares of highly fertile, alluvial, flat and mechanizable lands represent the largest contiguous area of lands in Jamaica, suitable and ideal for this agricultural revolution.

It is to these lands that we will actively promote large investors to engage in onion production, fruit tree orchards and exotic crops, whose production can make a qualitative difference.

Significantly, within this area, we will also appropriately designate areas for the development of industry that will ensure a seamless move along the value chain from primary production to processing. We will also have enterprises with Special Employment Zone status in this area.

**Mr. Speaker**, if we keep pursuing the same strategy year after year, decade after decade, century after century, we will continue to maintain the same mediocre results.



We need to do more to move agriculture into the league of big business, appropriately integrated with industry and tourism.

## PROMOTING THE MOTHER/SATELLITE FARM CONCEPT

In this thrust, **Mr. Speaker**, it is not our intention to leave behind the small farmer who has always been there, through thick and thin, but who is, sadly, operating at a subsistence level. Sustainable growth must include everyone.

In this regard, **Mr. Speaker**, the Ministry intends to continue to promote the concept of the mother and satellite farms. This was an important programme for the former Minister and we do not have to go far to see the success of this model. Without much fanfare, both the Jamaica Broilers Group and the Caribbean Broilers Group have been championing this model.

We have been able to achieve self-sufficiency in poultry through an organic link between these broiler companies as the “mother farm”, providing guaranteed markets through contracts and technical advisory services to a network of smaller farms.

This has been successful to the extent that supplies from these satellite farms in 2017 accounted for 65% of broiler production, the other 35% being supplied by independent broiler producers.

**Mr. Speaker**, the over 300-year-old sugar industry, though limping now, has been organized on this basis, where up to last year some 40% of cane was produced by small farmers.

In recent times, **Mr. Speaker**, we have been heartened to see Red Stripe and Seprod embracing this model.

I am even more excited to learn of Seprod's plan to establish a palm oil industry in Jamaica with the primary production totally controlled by independent farmers, with Seprod focusing on the processing. **Mr. Speaker**, any other new initiative in this regard will receive the enthusiastic support of my Ministry.



*Touring Seprod Group's Jamaica Grain and Cereals Limited with GM Jeffrey Moss-Solomon*

**Mr. Speaker**, in the area of supplying the demand of the tourism sector for fruits and vegetables, we believe that the farmers can be successfully mobilized to engage production. We will continue to



encourage large distributors to provide the necessary contracts, pre-financing and logistics support to move produce to the hotels.

In our major vegetable production zones in St. Elizabeth, Manchester, St. Ann, Clarendon, etc., we would like to see big distributors putting in the requisite investments to move products from the farm to the tourist's fork in the hotel.

## PROMOTING EXPORTS

**Mr. Speaker**, we cannot ignore exports. While Jamaica does not have the scale which would guarantee our efficiency and competitiveness, we do, however, have some comparative advantage in some products based on superior quality, taste and branding to be able to position ourselves in niche markets.

**Mr. Speaker**, the establishment of the Jamaica Agricultural Commodities Regulatory Authority (JACRA), with the repealing of Government's monopoly position on cocoa, will provide considerable impetus for new investments in cocoa to satisfy an almost limitless market for which our fine-flavoured cocoa is renowned.



*Papayas for export*

We are not even scratching the surface with the export of spices such as pimento, ginger and turmeric. Exotic fruits, such as mango and papaya, as well as yam, sweet potato, dasheen and coco, have tremendous potential in export markets.

**Mr. Speaker**, the Ministry has been doing a mammoth job in facilitating the exports of agricultural produce through a robust quality infrastructure comprising certified labs at the Vet Services Division and the Bureau of Standards; robust traceability systems that meet international standards and the facilitation provided by our USDA-approved pre clearance facility at the Donald Sangster and Norman Manley airports. Through these two facilities, over US\$25.5m of produce was exported last year.

**Mr. Speaker**, The Banana Board is to be commended for successfully implementing the Global Gap Certification Programme, under which 52 farms were certified, facilitating 30% of new exports last year.

**Mr. Speaker**, it is my belief that Jamaica should adopt an aggressive posture in relation to exports into CARICOM. Our Irish potato and other tubers and select vegetables, as well as packaged sugar, have the potential to do well in CARICOM, and the Ministry is committing itself to provide whatever support is necessary to our farmers, manufacturers and exporters to tap into these markets. The gains we have made in banana exports is only the beginning as we now have access for pork and chicken into CARICOM.

It is time our fresh and preserved foods and manufacturing sector begin to reap the benefits of exports to CARICOM under the preferential terms of the Common External Tariff.

## FARM ROADS

**Mr. Speaker**, I have already identified poor infrastructure as a critical binding constraint that needs to be addressed.

**Mr. Speaker**, simple things can make a significant difference to a farmer's productivity. One of these is proper farm roads.

In the 2017/18 fiscal year, the Ministry was allocated some \$380 million for the repair of farm roads. So far, 46 roads, comprising 77 km, have been repaired with work on another 17 roads, comprising 25 km in progress.

**Mr. Speaker**, so as to ensure that this was not a one-off activity, in the existing 2018/19 Budget, a whopping \$800 million has been allocated for farm roads. This, **Mr. Speaker**, is game changing. The Ministry has put in place an Implementing Unit to drive this programme and we expect an appropriate allocation over the next five years to rehabilitate every farm road in this country.

## RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Speaker**, the Ministry, last year, commenced the redevelopment of our agriculture research station at Bodles. With an allocation of \$50 million, we have overhauled the feeding systems at the dairy unit to improve nutrition and productivity.

We have completed the first phase of the refurbishment and expansion of the existing dairy facilities to enhance quality standards and food safety and we have started preconstruction activities for the next phase of work.



*General Manager of The Banana Board, Janet Conie, providing infrastructural support to farmers*





*Bodles Research Centre, St. Catherine*

**Mr. Speaker**, we are not stopping there. This year, we have an allocation of \$300 million, which will expand and upgrade the infrastructure at Bodles. We will improve the road network, farm buildings, water supply and irrigation systems as well as our pastures, greenhouse and seed and post-harvest facilities.

However, **Mr. Speaker**, the transformation of our research station will not only be physical. We are looking at restructuring the entire Research and Development Division to attract and retain highly skilled personnel to the research and innovation agenda, particularly in the area of clean seeds and planting material and genetic and local breeds, and our capacity to combat plant and animal diseases.

## **EXPANSION OF THE 4-H CLUBS IN SCHOOLS**

**Mr. Speaker**, we have, as a nation, far departed from many of the customs and norms that have guided us as a people. As adults, we have neglected to instill some of the values that once guided our own upbringing or, have not been as strident in the reinforcement of these values in our young people.

In this regard, we want to play our part in helping to position our younger generation on the path to recognizing and appreciating the vast natural resources with which we are blessed by significantly expanding the Jamaica 4-H Clubs in all our nation's schools.

The Jamaica 4-H Clubs, established in April 1940 as a merger between the juvenile arm of the Jamaica Agricultural Society (JAS) and the Jamaica Welfare Limited, now known as the Social Development Commission (SDC), has as its mission, mobilizing, educating and training youth in leadership skills and vocations, utilizing adaptive technologies, to influence the development of sustainable livelihoods so our young people can become positive contributors to national development.

**Mr. Speaker**, the Jamaica 4-H Clubs therefore presents the perfect platform to be leveraged for the advancement of our youth.

As it now stands, the national 4-H Clubs operate in over 1,100 schools. However, not all of our schools are either a part of the programme or have an active 4-H Club in operation.

It is our intention therefore, **Mr. Speaker**, to embark on an expansion and revitalization plan, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information.

Our children must be encouraged and nurtured to develop a greater awareness of the need to appreciate the inherent beauty and wealth that is wrapped up in our natural resources including our land, which encompasses a diverse mixture of micro-climatic conditions that provide a unique opportunity for wealth creation and that includes planting long-term tree crops with the added benefit of bolstering both our local and export market as well as incrementally helping to rebuild our watershed areas.

This programme will further improve soil and air quality and increase rainfall, thereby reducing our carbon footprint; bolster community togetherness while providing a healthy alternative food source for many Jamaicans.

**Mr. Speaker**, we may even serve to reduce praedial larceny of fruits planted for sale in the local and export market through this programme, because we will be removing the vast amount of idle hands that currently exist.

The Greening of Jamaica Programme will further be supported by a refurbishing of our local markets in order to stimulate greater interest in purchasing locally produced fruits, tubers, and vegetables. The government will embark on a major programme of refurbishing our markets islandwide so that our citizens can enjoy shopping in our traditional markets in a convenient manner.

## **GREENING OF JAMAICA**

**Mr. Speaker**, there is a famous Chinese proverb which states: The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago, the second best time is now!

We would do well as a country to put this proverb into practice. We are so blessed with vast amounts of lands that even some of our own backyards lay idle.

**Mr. Speaker**, we must get back to instilling in our youth the practice of planting today for our future tomorrow, literally!

In this regard, **Mr. Speaker**, another element of the renewed focus on our natural resources and our youth, which adds to our economic and social improvement, is increasing the number of fruit trees grown in our own backyards.

Gone are the days when families planted a tree to celebrate the birth of a child! This practice, once embraced by so many Jamaican families, saw each child 'owning a tree on the family land' even if this piece of land was not the immediate home of the family.



So, **Mr. Speaker**, the first child may have gotten a breadfruit tree with the second child getting a coconut tree and the third, a mango tree, etc. Every child had the pride and privilege of boasting of owning his/her own tree, caring and nurturing his/her own tree and, eventually, reaping the fruits of his/her own tree.

Many of us can recall the joy and pride-of-place felt by a generation when they stood beside their tree that was planted to commemorate his/her birth and then eating of that tree after watching that tree grow as they grew!

**Mr. Speaker**, sadly, there are so many young people today who did not have this experience and therefore were not taught the lesson of leaving a tree here on earth or using their hands to nurture life from mother earth so that they may eat tomorrow.

But, **Mr. Speaker**, imagine if we went back to this. Imagine if every family planted at least three fruit trees in their yards. The social and economic value that would redound would be immeasurable!

We can use this, **Mr. Speaker**, to once again instill in our young people the value of not just nurturing the earth but also planning for the future.

**Mr. Speaker**, to this end, we intend to craft a Private/Public Partnership Agreement to support the Fruiting of Jamaica with a target of planting 5 million fruit trees over five years across the backyards of Jamaica.

In order to stimulate greater interest in purchasing locally produced fruits, tubers, and vegetables, the Government will embark on a major programme of refurbishing our markets islandwide so that our citizens can enjoy shopping in our traditional markets in a convenient manner.

## **INTER-SECTORAL LINKAGES**

**Mr. Speaker**, the Ministry that I have the privilege of leading represents the joining of productive forces in a single and cohesive policy framework, as we seek to increase output and grow our way into prosperity.

In the few weeks since assuming responsibility for the Ministry, I have noted that the need for building strong linkages across the portfolio has been brought into sharper focus. Agriculture is a significant input into Industry and Commerce and this informed the Prime Minister's decision to cluster the subjects in one Ministry. However, it is a two way street, it is not just what agriculture can do for industry but, also, what industry can do for agriculture. The Prime Minister's decision was also informed by the clear need for business acumen and business principles to shape Jamaica's future in agriculture. The sectors are complementary, they are not competing.

The link between agriculture and industry is already very real, **Mr. Speaker**. The processing of agricultural products, whether local or imported, is captured in our national accounts under 'manufacturing'. And according to the custodians of this data, agri-based processing accounts for approximately 41% of manufacturing in national accounts. Agriculture and manufacturing are inextricably linked in the vertical integration chain.

The link between agriculture and commerce (or the distributive trade) is equally strong. If we examine the tangible goods in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) basket, that is, if we exclude services, agriculture-based products account for approximately 73% of the value of the tangible goods we purchase as consumers.

Having established these facts, **Mr. Speaker**, it is also a fact that as we grow and diversify Jamaica's economy there are other opportunities in manufacturing and distribution. My Ministry will continue to forge strong linkages across other Ministries to grow the sectors. Tourism, Construction, and Mining come to mind as we use our natural resources and our entrepreneurial talent to capitalise on these opportunities for Jamaican goods and services.

## **LINKAGES WITH TOURISM**

**Mr. Speaker**, our ever-expanding tourism industry must be the target for increased local production to supply the demand there. There are enormous, but, unfortunately, underutilised opportunities for sustainable agricultural growth and improved livelihoods for our farmers.

I am happy for the work being done through the tourism linkages hub and the collaboration between some hotel chains and local farmers but there is room for exponential growth in this supply chain and we intend to pursue this vigorously.

## **MANUFACTURING**

Over the past five years, the manufacturing sector has steadily contributed an average of 8.5% of GDP. The sector has done very well this last Fiscal Year as it registered growth in three of four quarters. We expect the overall growth in manufacturing to be in the region of 1.5% at the end of the 2017/18 FY.

I want to use this opportunity to encourage overseas hotel chains operating in Jamaica to buy Jamaican and help build a genuine and sustainable partnership with our local productive sector.

**Mr. Speaker**, as pleased as we are with the estimated 1.5% growth in manufacturing, it is simply not enough. We can do a lot better - and we will. Our mission is to restore the primacy of the manufacturing sector to the place it occupied when its contribution to GDP was in the range of 15-20%. We are settling for mediocrity if we target anything less.

**Mr. Speaker**, based on the level of investments I outlined earlier, the explosion in the production of agricultural raw material to come pursuant to our land utilization policy, the tightening of inter-sectoral linkages, our strides in port development and logistics; the positive macroeconomic framework, including the lowering of interest rates; combined with our strategic use of trade tools and targeted investment promotion, it is an entirely reasonable expectation that the manufacturing sector will be restored.

In this regard, my Ministry is now working with the JMEA and JAMPRO on the development of a Five Year Manufacturing Strategy and it will be my pleasure to table the strategy in this Honourable House shortly as soon as it is approved by Cabinet.



This strategy must address the lingering issues of high energy costs, further lowering of interest rates and the seamless linking of the manufacturing sector with primary agricultural production in a deliberate way for maximizing growth along the entire value chain.

Manufacturing, therefore, will stretch backwards into agriculture and forward into the domestic market through the distributive trade and into exports through the tourism sector and external trade.

Put otherwise, manufacturing lies at the centre of value addition to create wealth. The Ministry is not an active producer but will use policy and the instruments available to us, especially our trade policy, to support this effort.

I wish to use this opportunity to congratulate the JMA and the JEA on another record breaking Expo. The event grows with each staging. It was truly impressive and I was able to meet with several of the country delegations who attended. I can assure the country that Expo Jamaica meets its objective as both a business and consumer event. This is not an easy task but over the years it has now been honed to an art with the support of JAMPRO and other partners.

Expo Jamaica 2018 was the epitome of innovation, showcasing the creative talent and entrepreneurial spirit of Jamaicans especially our young entrepreneurs. At the Jamaica Emerging Manufacturers and Services (JEMS) Village, there were several examples of a renewed spirit of entrepreneurship. We saw three (3) PhD graduates from UWI who decided to put their knowledge to work and develop new and competitive nutraceutical products, utilizing natural Jamaican materials. We saw packaging innovations in the coffee industry which will allow consumers to have a coffee percolator in a bag (***and it is not a plastic bag!***).

Butch Hendrickson must also be commended for his "Bold Ones" project that provides mentorship and support to micro and small businesses to go to the next level of commercial viability. One of these companies actually closed an order for one (1) container right there on the Expo floor and another one is getting ready to list on the Junior Stock Exchange!

It was an atmosphere of excitement amongst the almost 600 buyers, 250 of whom were from 26 countries. Feedback from the participants is that the level of professionalism and "first world" presentation was unprecedented. In the past, there was a lot of exchange of contact information and deals would have been made over the next few weeks and months; NOT this year! Deals were cut right there on the Expo floor! One major manufacturer closed deals for six (6) containers - all new business.

There were many examples of indigenous raw material utilized as the product base for cosmetics, nutraceuticals, beverages, food products and processed food, exemplifying the strong linkages between agriculture and manufacturing that must be nurtured and developed to deliver the growth agenda.

Expo Jamaica was a resounding success because it created excitement amongst buyers, consumers and entrepreneurs who saw authentic Jamaican products being made using material grown from our soils, processed by our people in Jamaica and yet looking and performing at a world class level.



*Sampling Instaperk coffee at Expo Jamaica 2018*

I want our small manufacturers who reached out to me at Expo Jamaica 2018 for low cost funding and more factory space to know that help is on the way. We are working with the EXIM Bank, the DBJ and the Factories Corporation of Jamaica to find solutions, in order to continue to spur their considerable initiatives and enterprise showcased at Expo 2018. **Truly inspiring!**

The JMEA, JAMPRO and all exhibitors must be congratulated.

At the same time, **Mr. Speaker**, the Ministry has to continuously scan the environment to identify new and emerging industries that can create wealth and in which we can be competitive. In this regard, we cannot ignore the cannabis industry.

## **THE EMERGING MEDICAL CANNABIS INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Speaker**, the fledgling medical cannabis industry requires concentrated focus if we are to unleash its potential for growth. Amending the Dangerous Drugs Act and setting up the Cannabis Licensing Authority are necessary steps but clearly not sufficient. We need an all-of-government approach in order to develop this industry, having regard to the splintering of the current regulatory and approvals architecture involving the CLA the Ministry of Health and the Bureau of Standards. I have already met with the Minister of Health in this regard. We are aware of the continued classification of cannabis as a dangerous drug internationally and, particularly, by the Federal Government in the USA. This poses a



serious handicap to the development of the industry as regards access to financing. **Mr. Speaker**, this is a delicate issue, but we have to face it head on through continuous engagement with our financial institutions and the US government.

The potential of this industry to create jobs and create wealth is worth every effort to overcome these obstacles. I think in this matter, I have the support of both sides of this House. I have already spoken to the strategic use of our lands in Clarendon and St. Catherine to develop new industries. Cannabis is definitely one of these industries and so that our small players are not left behind, the Ministry intends to roll out a pilot of an 'Alternative Development' Programme during this fiscal year to assist and position our small farmers to benefit from this industry.

## **OTHER INDUSTRIES**

**Mr. Speaker**, the configuration of the economy has changed considerably in the last 40 years. We no longer enjoy preferential markets for our traditional agricultural commodities. We have therefore lost ground in sugar and banana. For other reasons, we have seen declines in coconut, spices, cocoa and coffee.

These commodities are however still in very high demand globally. We therefore have to work on reshaping those sectors by creating new industries with new value-added products. It is clear that the sugar industry, which commanded the giant share of our lands, will have to be right-sized. The lands that will be released must now be directed at new industries – castor bean, other feed stock for bio-fuel, sorghum, peanuts, pineapple, orchard crops for agro-processing and export, onions, etc. Industrial hemp is also on our radar.

**Mr. Speaker**, even whilst we will be focussing on allocating lands for the primary production of these crops I wish to again assure manufacturers that we will reserve lands proximate to these production areas for manufacturing and industrial parks.

**Mr. Speaker**, I am fully convinced that the future of our prosperity lies in skilful and creative use of our God given soil and God given talent.

**Mr. Speaker**, I am advised by the Ministry that much of what MICAF has been able to accomplish over the last year and what we plan to accomplish this financial year is based on support from the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service (MOFPS). The two Ministries have enjoyed a close working relationship as they approach growth from different but complementary angles. I wish to acknowledge my predecessor, the Hon. Karl Samuda, for his efforts in building that relationship, not knowing at the time that I would shortly receive the baton from him. I have been asked by the Ministry's senior management team to publicly thank the staff of the MOFPS and, of course, that strong working relationship will continue.

As the former Finance Minister, I ensured that strong support was given to initiatives aimed at boosting economic growth. We all recognize the obvious – if Jamaica does not produce, Jamaica will not grow.

While the management of the fiscal economy is critical, Jamaica cannot grow unless total domestic production, as captured by GDP, grows and this, Mr. Speaker requires an all-of-government effort. The macroeconomy and the microeconomy working hand in hand.

## MSMES AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The partnership between the Finance and the Public Service Ministry, MICA and the private sector, working with the JMA, the SBAJ and the MSME Alliance, allowed Jamaica to reach a watershed agreement this fiscal year on the Government's Procurement Regulations. These will now be called the Special and Differential Regulations under the Public Procurement Act and these Regulations will carve out a part of the Government's procurement dollar for MSMEs and domestic producers. In fact, the Regulations were recently laid in this Honourable House by the new Finance and Public Service Minister. This, **Mr. Speaker**, is an example of policy partnership across Ministries and across the public and private sectors.

**Mr. Speaker**, we must also note the support of the MOF of our proposal for the development of the Small Business Development Centre (SBDC) model in Jamaica. The Finance and Public Service Ministry has now allocated a \$30-million vote in the Jamaica Business Development Corporation (JBDC) budget this fiscal year to finally get the SBDC network up and running in 2018/19.

What does this mean, **Mr. Speaker**? It simply means that we will be able to leverage the resources in existing business support entities in a hub-and-spoke type relationship with the JBDC. Rather than the Government setting up more JBDC offices all over Jamaica, we will use existing entities (the spokes) to provide business counselling; the JBDC will be the hub managing and standardizing the process with tailored software to measure the impact of islandwide business counsellors. We will have more to say on this during the fiscal year as we roll out the programme.

**Mr. Speaker**, the updated MSME and Entrepreneurship Policy is on its way to Cabinet. This document is an agreed policy framework for the sector over the next three to five years. We have already started to implement several of the initiatives and I would like to thank the members of the MSME Thematic Working Group (TWG) who have given willingly of their time and intellect in achieving this milestone. However, I wish to put the MSME TWG on notice that the reward for good work is more work, as they will now become the guardians of the policy to ensure timely implementation.

**Mr. Speaker**, time will not allow me to highlight all the excellent work being done in the MSME sector by JBDC at the operational level and the Ministry's MSME Office at the policy level but I must update the nation as follows:

In FY 2107/18 we secured support from the International Finance Corporation, a subsidiary of the World Bank to ensure improvements in our Secured Transactions Regime.





*Home furnishings manufactured by Jamaican craftsmen*

**Mr. Speaker**, when we were in Opposition, we were vocal in our concerns when the underpinning legislation was passed in this House some four years ago. These concerns have now been validated as our in-house operational review concluded that the regime has had little demonstrable impact on access to capital for MSMEs.

So, **Mr. Speaker**, we are now in a ‘fixing’ mode to ensure that we have legislation that can truly release the non-traditional collateral in the MSME sector to improve access to financing. This happens in other jurisdictions and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) is confident that with some adjustments, we can see the benefits of the Regime in Jamaica as well. The work by the IFC, in collaboration with MICAFA, the BOJ and the private sector, is now under way and at the end of the contract with the IFC in September of this year, we will be well on our way to an enhanced regime.

**Mr. Speaker**, I understand the importance of accessible and affordable financing to the productive sectors. As the Minister of Finance and the Public Service, I was vocal and proactive on this issue and we see the rates trending down, but we have more to do. I will continue to be a strident policymaker and advocate on behalf of the productive sector in the area of financing.

**Mr. Speaker**, let me explain in simple terms, a farmer and a manufacturer both have long production-to-sales cycles. It takes time for crops to grow and it takes time to manufacture, sell and collect goods. The farmer and the manufacturer must have access to affordable financing to lubricate and support

their production cycles. Not to address this issue is to relegate us to the margins of production, to relegate us to being a nation of traders. Without appropriate access to financing, we will not be able to produce more and grow our economy.

## **MSME PRODUCTION FUND**

To the productive sectors, I wish to put them on notice that the Government is aggressively pursuing the use of unclaimed funds in the banking sector to create a special purpose fund to provide access to affordable financing. And, yes, we could call this an MSME Production Fund as I am advised that 97.6% of our registered and classified taxpayers are MSMEs. I am also aware that large businesses are able to secure very attractive financing terms and can effectively mobilise equity financing. So our initiatives are about creating a level playing field for the MSMEs in production.

As a pilot for the MSME Production Fund, I am pleased to announce that plans are well advanced for the establishment of a \$400 million special window for micro and small firms. The retail rate will be attractive, single digit. It will be made available to productive MSMEs. The special window will be designed to ensure that participants are receiving the appropriate business development support services. This is another bold initiative that seeks to tie finance and business support together in a user friendly package. I will announce further details of this programme in May. Look out for it!

In the area of equity financing, another bold initiative will be the Micro Stock Exchange. This is a strategy under the MSME Policy tabled today and since I feel a level of paternity for the initiative, the Minister of Finance and the Public Service will forgive my exuberance in highlighting the programme. **Mr. Speaker**, the record of the Junior Stock Exchange speaks for itself: since its formation, over \$8 billion in capital has been raised; 35 companies listed and 12 more companies are to be listed this year.

This Administration is putting the world on notice that we are not pulling away from the Junior Stock Exchange; we are expanding the model, and will replicate its success to fuel the growth of smaller firms. As the Minister responsible for small business development my advocacy and support will continue for this milestone initiative. **Mr. Speaker**, the Government of Jamaica asks its private sector to innovate. No lesser standard can be applied to the Government. We must be novel and we must be bold on this path for growth. This is a vital partnership plan.

## **FINANCING ENHANCEMENTS**

I will also be meeting with the DBJ and the EXIM Bank to discuss the need for the enhancement of funds at attractive interest rates to be made available to the MSME sector, including the expansion of the Partial Credit Guarantee Schemes supported by the IDB and the World Bank.



## **INVESTMENT TARGETING AND PROMOTION**

**Mr. Speaker**, our Administration has a vision for Jamaica. And because of this vision, the Prime Minister has seen it fit to assign JAMPRO, the EXIM Bank, the AIC and the NIC to this Ministry. Through these agencies the Ministry has been provided with additional tools to stimulate, promote and secure tangible investments.

**Mr. Speaker**, as many in this Honourable House would be aware, the work of JAMPRO is not new to me. Investment promotion is a part of my DNA. I have had a full briefing from JAMPRO and the score-card is good but **Mr. Speaker**, the prospects are even better. The unaudited results indicate that we have exceeded our target on capital expenditure by JAMPRO assisted projects. The early report for 2017/18 is that we achieved US\$604 million in capital expenditure with 13,274 new jobs.

Going forward, we have US\$100 million of capital expenditure expected in the area of Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) with 6,000 more jobs to be created.

In Tourism, the current investments will add 2,100 more rooms and create over 7,900 jobs with an expected capital expenditure of US\$850 million.

In May I will reopen a JAMPRO Office in New York and meet with key investors. Jamaica is open for business, **Mr. Speaker**.

In June of this year, **Mr. Speaker**, we will again host the Jamaica Investment Forum in Montego Bay, where we will host 200 international investors.

Jamaica is open for business, **Mr. Speaker**.

## **BUSINESS AND TRADE FACILITATION PROVIDE CROSS-CUTTING SUPPORT**

**Mr. Speaker**, in my meetings with the private sector since assuming responsibility for the portfolio, representatives of the sector have stressed the important role of the Government in making it easier to do business in Jamaica. They have stressed that simplicity, predictability and transparency are key ingredients for a country that wishes to attract and retain both local and foreign investment. They are right **Mr. Speaker**. They are 100% correct.

Jamaica must compete with other destinations and we must keep improving our business processes. Yes, we must regulate, but we need to be efficient and customer friendly. These cross-cutting support measures are an important part of my Ministry and our focus will continue. It is not just about moving up on the ranking in the Doing Business Report. While that is useful, it is about seeing our investors and companies as our clients and engaging in the ISO principle of 'continuous improvement' to delight our clients.

## ELECTRONIC BUSINESS NAME REGISTRATION

In this regard, I would like to announce the implementation of another and far-reaching business facilitation initiative, that is, the Electronic Business Name Registration. I was able to see a demonstration of this service myself at the Companies Office of Jamaica (COJ's), shortly after the service went live and online on April 3. The COJ pulled a random client from its waiting area, Ms Sania McDonald, who was at the COJ to register "Lola's Snack Shop" as a business name. Incidentally, the snack shop is named after Ms McDonald's two year old daughter, Lola. COJ demonstrated how to use the online registration portal



*At Company's Office of Jamaica with entrepreneur Sania McDonald*

and within five minutes "Lola's Snack Shop" was reserved as a business name and within another fifteen minutes the online registration was complete. It was impressive.

I wish to further announce that online registration with the COJ will result in savings of \$3,250 to those persons who use the system to register a business name.

**Mr. Speaker**, entrepreneurs can now reserve and register a business name for a sole proprietor, partnership and corporate sole proprietor in the comfort of their home using the online service. The registration of sole proprietors represents 77% of all COJ's enterprise registration. This is good, **Mr. Speaker**, but using the ISO principle of 'continuous improvement', this is not enough. **Mr. Speaker**, we are insistent that we must achieve 100% online enterprise registration. We are now heading for online reservation and registration under the Companies Act. This will be rolled out later in the fiscal year.

**Mr. Speaker**, across Ministries, this Administration views facilitation as serious business. We understand that Jamaica has to be innovative and bold if we are to be attractive as an investment and business location. During the 2017-2018 FY, Cabinet approved a National Trade Portal for Jamaica under our Trade Facilitation Initiative. The portal will be funded by way of a grant from the World Bank. We have already signed the contract and procurement of the specialists is now under way. The Trade Facilitation Portal will be a precursor to the Electronic Single Window, another component of the Trade Facilitation Initiative.



In addition, JAMPRO is well advanced in the establishment of a National Business Portal which will be the central point through which all investments are routed, giving access to stakeholders and providing greater levels of transparency. **Mr. Speaker**, we mean business.

## **CONSUMER PROTECTION**

Also falling under the wide mantle of the Ministry is our duty to our consumers to provide protection and to promote consumer empowerment. The Consumer Affairs Commission continues to lead as our consumer protection agency, but the consumer is also at the heart of the work performed by the Bureau of Standards, the National Compliance Regulatory Authority, the Fair Trading Commission, the Plant Quarantine Division, and the Veterinary Services Division.

I am pleased to advise that, this year, we will commence and complete work on a long overdue Consumer Policy. Our consumers remain at the centre of my Ministry.

During the last fiscal year, we tackled the thorny issue of sugar sold at retail and introduced mandatory requirements for the pre-packaging of sugar in certified facilities.

Many told the former Minister, it could not be done. Well, it has been done! The latest report from the NCRA is that we have 80% compliance in the retail outlets surveyed across the island. But, **Mr. Speaker**, we need full compliance and the NCRA has been instructed to ensure that this target is achieved.

Sugar is the beginning, **Mr. Speaker**, as we will be moving to add other bulk commodities such as rice, flour and cornmeal. We must ensure that our consumers are getting wholesome products, packaged in approved hygienic facilities.

Another consumer initiative, which was implemented in the last FY, was the pre inspection of motor vehicles – primarily to ensure that there is NO odometer tampering. Once again, **Mr. Speaker**, the former Minister was told by the naysayers that this was impossible to implement in Jamaica. Well, it was implemented February 1, 2018. Our office doors remain open to the dealers as we work through the new system together. In fact, **Mr. Speaker**, some dealers have been pleasantly surprised that it has strengthened their negotiations with exporters in Japan.

## CONCLUSION

**Mr. Speaker**, this Government means business. This Government believes in creating jobs. This Government believes in making Jamaica and Jamaicans more productive and prosperous.

The Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries understands this.

The Ministry of Industry Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries understands our role to be that of enabler and facilitator for achievement of the growth necessary to achieve prosperity.

The decision by the Most Hon. Prime Minister to add JAMPRO, EXIM Bank and the National Irrigation Commission and Agro-Invest to MICAF's portfolio is a vital step in ensuring policy coordination and alignment to achieve objectives of aggressively fostering Industry, Investment, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries.

We understand that the best way to do this is through the work of our micro, small and medium enterprises.

The best way to achieve growth is through the work of our farmers, small and large, who are committed to providing the produce for local consumption, for export and for use as raw material in the expansion of manufacturing and value-added commodities.

Jamaica's future is our duty, **Mr. Speaker**, and for that reason we will continue to build the resilience of the sector.

We will build resilience through enabling legislation.

We will build resilience through climate-smart practices.

We will build resilience through investor confidence.

We will build resilience by nurturing a spirit of innovation, initiative and enterprise.

We will build resilience through linkages with other economic sectors such as tourism and manufacturing.

We will build resilience as we continue to secure the future of Jamaica and to pursue prosperity for all Jamaicans.

May God give us the courage to make Jamaica productive, peaceful and prosperous and make us the place of choice to live, work, do business and raise families.



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