

Address

The Hon. Anthony Hylton, MP
Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce

Event : The Semi-annual Meeting of
the International Association of
University Presidents (IAUP)

Date : Friday January 30, 2014

Time : 1.00 p.m.

Theme : Human Capital Formation :Key to
Global Competitiveness

Venue: Hilton Rose Hall, Montego Bay

Salutations:

Opening Pleasantries & Preamble:

- The Hon. Professor Errol Morrison;
- Dr Neal King, President of the International Association of University Presidents, the IAUP;
- Distinguished delegates to this semi-annual meeting of the IAUP
- Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour to represent the Prime Minister of Jamaica, the Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller at this important gathering of the IAUP.

This gathering represents the finest expression of leadership of universities at the global level. Indeed it represents a global forum that affords multiculturally rigorous discussion and dynamic networking among the leading minds in higher education in the world today.

On behalf of the Government, I welcome you to Jamaica, a place where it never snows, notwithstanding the vicissitudes of global warming and the attendant manifestations of bizarre weather, such as we have recently witnessed in the Deep South of the United States.

I do hope that amidst your heavy conference schedule, Professor Morrison and the local organizing team have arranged a social programme that will afford you some exposure to the island, allowing you to experience the warmth and hospitality of our people.

As distinguished leaders and thinkers in higher education, your presence in Jamaica this weekend is significant. We like to think of ourselves as an exceptional place. As the third largest English speaking nation in the Western Hemisphere behind the United States and Canada, Jamaica is of major cultural and geo-political relevance.

Whether through the exploits of our world-class athletes, artists, musician or scholars, Jamaica is one of the most popular island-nations in the world; and we have often been described as “a little island punching well above its weight class.”

Our Government, as a matter of philosophy, policy and practice, regards our people as participants, located at the centre of any strategy for social and economic development, even more so within the context of our current globalized world.

The present era is no longer defined and driven by the age-old technologies of **Production** and **Transportation**, but now by the key drivers of **Information, Communications, Collaboration and Logistics**. These technologies are transforming the nature of business and relationships everywhere in the world, directly and indirectly!

We now live in a world where the global currency of trade and business cannot just be seen in denominations of gold, dollars or commodities, but also in intellectual capital. I believe that this group, more than most, can appreciate the primacy of intellectual capital to every human or commercial endeavor in our complex, technology-driven world, and that the defining value of our times is the deployment and exchange of intellectual products and services. This is a truth with which Jamaica has decidedly come to terms, even as we currently strategize and implement actions to position our island to become a major asset to the global supply chain network.

Jamaica is readying itself to compete in a world where global trade patterns and regimes have radically shifted:-

- The emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, the so called (BRICS) countries, along with the rest of Southeast Asia

are now the major production houses of the world.

- These emerging economies are also fast becoming major markets in and of themselves. China is now the major trading country in world trade.
- The expansion of the Panama Canal is in response to this trend; and Jamaica stands to benefit by virtue of its strategic geographic position on major sea lanes and air routes to North and South America as well as to Europe, Southeast Asia and Africa.
- Our goal is to become the fourth node in the global supply and value chain, joining Rotterdam, Singapore and Dubai offering near-shore advantages to the markets of North and South America from China and the rest of Asia.
- Jamaica sits astride the trade routes in the Windward Passage with access to the 800 million-person market of North, Central and South America, with the best natural harbour in

the region, world-class ICT infrastructure and a strong 1.2 million person workforce



Ladies and gentlemen, the nature of Education is changing in this highly globalized environment and the challenge we face as educators and policy makers is how to move the construct of Education from knowledge-based to competency-based and from teacher-centred to learner-centred. As a university with a long and strong tradition of academic excellence, you are no longer competing with the physical university, but with cyberspace.

The largest university in the world, the University of Phoenix, which currently has over 20 million students in its various programmes, does not have classrooms ... learning is virtual. In the new paradigm, we are called upon to work smarter,

not harder, and people now have the opportunity to teach themselves.

In March 2010, US President Barack Obama addressed a gathering at a University in Pennsylvania where he challenged academic institutions to ‘do more with less.’ This is the direction which we must embrace in order to guarantee the relevance of our institutions.

Let us look back at history. In 1893 President of Harvard Charles Ellion, formed the National Education Association, (NEA) which instituted the credit system : one hour per week for 12 - 14 weeks per semester was equivalent to one credit. In other word, education was based on the amount of time you spent sitting in a classroom. The world has changed and the demands of globalization are challenging these constructs. No longer are you judged on ‘seat time’ but rather you are judged on competence.

Globalization is whittling away borders and barriers and it is in our best interest to strengthen our level of collaboration. Professor Morrison, I would be open to your ideas as to how we can achieve a functional partnership with the IAUP in order to tap into the wealth of knowledge and experience to sharpen our human capital development strategies. By networking and sharing ideas, I believe we can arrive at novel ways to harness our human capital for integration into the global value and supply chains.

I often reflect on the Irish experience in rebuilding their economy from a reality framed in sectarian violence, political instability, domestic terrorism and national insecurity. Ireland today has:

- Over 1,000 foreign owned companies directly employing more than 135,000 people, which in turn support many thousands of additional jobs.
- Foreign direct investment companies spending well over 5.7 billion Euros on payrolls, 5.7 billion

Euros on Irish services, 3.4 billion on Irish materials, while investing 2.6 billion Euros in fixed assets and some 2.8 billion Euros on corporation taxes.

And, as we consider Ireland's success, we concede that none of their achievements would have been possible without *appropriately inspired, educated and trained people*.

Jamaica's Growth and Competitiveness Agenda is premised on:-

- Creating a confident, educated Jamaican population and to complete the reformation of the education system.
- Construct a world-class Jamaican workforce driven by creativity and innovation to drive a logistics-centred economy;
- Systematically reversing the brain drain and attracting skilled Jamaicans from our Diaspora,

spread across global cities, and which is at least twice the size of our 2.7 million population

- And then, we position the culture, creativity, competence and innovation of our people as the basis for attracting, absorbing, creating and retaining wealth.

Over the last 30 years, the external forces of globalization have radically transformed Caribbean island states from agriculture-based economies to service- based economies, significantly altering West Indian Society's conceptual thoughts, approaches and methods of delivery of education.

Educational credentials in post-colonial West Indian Society have been traditionally prized for the social status bestowed on the holder, rather than as testimony of the credential holder's knowledge, competence and ability to create value.

The biggest education challenge now facing the nations of the region, is how to narrow and close the huge gap between what the educational systems of the Caribbean are producing and what the emerging globally competitive services based economies of the region are demanding of our citizens in the region.

Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) meeting in 1997 in this city Montego Bay, discussed the complexity and urgency of this state of affairs. Together, they issued a declaration promulgating the Profile of the 'Ideal Caricom Citizen Worker' who will

- Be capable of seizing the economic opportunities presented by the global
- Demonstrate multiple literacies, including foreign language skills
- Be independent and capable of critical thinking
- Possess the capacity to create and take advantage of opportunities to control, improve,

- maintain and promote physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being and contribute to the health and welfare of the community and country.
- Inculcate in him/herself and in others, the full development of each person's potential without gender stereotyping
 - Have an informed respect for our cultural heritage as well as that of others.

The way forward for Jamaica, indeed all the islands of the Caribbean, requires that education policy and practice remain relevant to the changing needs of the global economy. My own position is that the outcome of the education process in the Caribbean must:

- Affirm the Caribbean personhood and the legitimate authenticity of our culture as the central part of our identity for all our students and their parents and our people
- Establish as a working ideology, that Caribbean education is about empowering and enabling Caribbean people to create value, and to be

active participants in the creation of wealth in a highly competitive global, borderless world.

- In reforming our methods to enable a higher qualitative outcome of human capital to meet the global challenges, we should acknowledge and accept that the impact and meaning of globalization for the individual is that every worker in whatever sphere is competing with persons around the world who are engaged in similar types of work. The same holds true for every Jamaican firm and industry.

We acknowledge that the evolution of our economy over the last 20 years from a Primary Agricultural Commodity Producer to a predominantly Services based Provider, requires that we build a competitive advantage for Jamaican goods and services on the platform of culturally inspired creativity and innovation.

Achieving a competitive advantage means that there has to be an effective distinction and differentiation of our products or services from others in the market place. In that equation, **culture** is the only differentiating and distinguishing factor remaining in this globalized, heterogenous world in which we live.

The culture springs from the people! It is the people who by virtue of their creativity inspire the creation of unique products and services.

As a Government, our position is that the fruits of the creative intellect and expression of the Jamaican people hold the key to driving economic growth and unlocking national wealth and prosperity.

In the context of globalization, in order to achieve a competitive advantage paradigm, leveraging our people's culture into high-value, globally competitive niche products and services for economic wellbeing

and sustained prosperity, represents the next economic frontier for the New Jamaican Economy.

In the World Bank's 2005 Publication, "A Time to Choose: Caribbean Development in the 21st Century", the personality and potential of the Jamaican People were described as follows:-

"Jamaican People, due to a multiplicity of historical, sociological, psychological and political factors, are relatively open, animated and hospitable, tolerant of diverse cultures, ambitious for opportunities for social and economic advancement, inquisitive, creative and energetic, and generally, do well when placed in a context where reward and advancement is based on merit. These characteristics represent the single most important basis for selecting the area of economic activity with the greatest potential for forging globally-competitive advantage and a niche compatible with our people's innate qualities and abilities."

Ladies and gentlemen, we agree with this perspective that puts the people at the heart of the strategy for economic development, wealth creation and prosperity.

Jamaica is on the move. We are taking firm and definitive steps to be active participants in the building of a vibrant global economy. We have much to contribute to the world. We believe our best days are ahead of us. We are counting on your support and partnership in our journey.

I wish for you an enriching and productive conference.

I thank you.