

Remarks

**Senator the Honourable Aubyn Hill
Minister of Industry, Investment and
Commerce**

**Systematic Land Registration - Land
Titling Ceremony**

**On
Wednesday, February 23, 2022**

10:00am

**At
Newell High School,
Watchwell P.A., St. Elizabeth**

Salutations

- **Prime Minister of Jamaica-** *The Most Honourable Andrew Holness, ON, PC, MP*
- **Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation-** *The Honourable Robert Montague, MP*
- **Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation-** *Mrs. Audrey Sewell, CD, JP*
- **Custos Rotulorum of St. Elizabeth-** *The Honourable Beryl Rochester, CD*
- **Chief of State Protocol-** *Ambassador Sandra Grant-Griffith, CD, JP*
- **Chairman of the St. Elizabeth Adjudication Committee-** Mr. Jeremy Palmer
- **Chief Executive Officer of GeoLand-** *Mr. Garfield Knight*
- **Principal of Newell High School-** **Mrs. Audrey Ellington**
- **Pastor of Newell New Testament Church of God-** *Reverend Andrew Vassell*
- **Moderator-** *Mr. Dervan Malcolm*
- Senior Directors of the National Land Agency
- Staff of the National Land Agency
- Title recipients
- Members of the media
- Other distinguished guests

Good Morning!

It is indeed an honour and pleasure to be invited to speak at the National Land Agency's **Systematic Land Registration Titling Ceremony**. I am overjoyed that the objectives of the programme were fulfilled, and as such, culminated in this event today where we can celebrate with landowners as they receive their Certificates of Title.

In Jamaica, there are approximately 350,000 parcels of unregistered land. This accounts for forty percent (40%) of the total number of land parcels in Jamaica, and is estimated to value in excess

of Two Hundred Billion Jamaican Dollars (J\$200 billion). The parishes with the highest rates of unregistered land are right here in St. Elizabeth, and in the eastern parish of Portland.

During my tenure as the Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, I was determined to effect significant change in this area, as I realised it was an opportunity for our citizens to enjoy security of tenure specifically as it relates to securing their rights over land. This was also an untapped area for economic growth and development, and as such, required urgent attention.

I was therefore very pleased to lend my very strong support and participation in the Senate on May 8, 2020 when Registration of Titles Cadastral Mapping and Tenure Classification (Provisions) (Amendment) Act, 2020 was on the floor debate – that long title is what the bill is called!

The Systematic Land Registration Programme was thus developed to assist persons who have been in open, undisputed, and undisturbed possession of land for twelve (12) years or more to secure ownership of that land. There are many benefits to be derived from a Programme of this nature including:

- Assuring landowners that they are in legal possession of their land with the resultant effects of boosting self-esteem and self-confidence.
- There is also the safeguard of mitigating against fraudulent dealings with land;
- As well as boosting economic growth when these newly registered lands are used as collateral for loans.

We therefore decided to prioritise St. Elizabeth and other parishes with low land registration rates to kick-start the Systematic Land Registration Programme. With the support from the Most Honourable Prime Minister, Andrew Holness, several communities were declared **Systematic Adjudication Areas**. The hard-working and dedicated team from the Adjudication Services Division of the National Land Agency brought this service to the doorsteps of landowners.

They were out in the field on a daily basis conducting interviews and collecting information from landowners about their status, and how they came in possession of the land. I would also like to acknowledge the team of surveyors from Geoland Title Limited who forged a strong public-private partnership with the NLA to prepare the cadastral map of all the parcels in the declared Systematic Adjudication Areas.

Even though I am now reassigned as the new Minister for the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, I am however honoured to have sown the seeds that have now sprouted into a glorious tree for today's titling ceremony for the Systematic Land Registration Programme. I am also grateful to the team at the NLA for assisting me to further realise the goal of developing an efficient and transparent land titling system that guarantees security of tenure.

I am confident that my colleague, The Honourable Robert Montague who has taken over the stewardship of the programme, is equally as passionate and vibrant, and will continue to build on, improve, and present new ideas on how we can more efficiently serve the nation in this respect.

I congratulate all title recipients who are here today, and encourage others who currently possess land to learn of benefits and use the Systematic Land Registration Programme to get their land titles. Today's event is proof that the programme does work, and that the Government remains committed to increasing the opportunities for the acquisition of land to develop and produce personal and commercial gains.

Thank you.

Aubyn Hill
Minister of Industry, Investment & Commerce