



GREETINGS

DR THE HONOURABLE NORMAN DUNN

MINISTER OF STATE

CMU INDUSTRY CONFERENCE

“END TO END LOGISTICS: OPPORTUNITIES IN AN ERA OF UNCERTAINTY”

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2022

Salutations

- **Dr Evette Smith -Johnson**, Master of Ceremonies
- **The Honourable Fayval Williams**, Minister of Education and Youth.
- **His Excellency Olivier Guyonvarch**, French Ambassador to Jamaica
([Oliviyeah Gu-yon-var](#))
- **Rear Admiral (Ret'd) Peter Brady**, Director General, Maritime Authority of Jamaica
- **Professor Andrew Spencer**, CMU President
- **Professor Ibrahim Ajagunna**, Deputy President, CMU, and Conference Co-chair, and other members of the CMU fraternity ([I-bra-him A-ja-gunna](#))
- **Dr Geneive Brown – Metzger**, President & Executive Director, American-Caribbean Maritime Foundation, ([Geneeve Brown -Metz-gah](#))

- **Mr Darwin Telemaque**, Chief Executive Officer, Antigua Port Authority & Chairman, Port Management Association of the Caribbean ([Telemack](#))
- Stakeholders in the Maritime, Logistics and related industries
- Members of the media
- Distinguished ladies and gentlemen

Good morning.

I am pleased to represent the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce at today's conference. This discussion on "*End to End Logistics: Opportunities in an Era of Uncertainty*" is well-timed, and I commend the leadership of the CMU for their responsiveness to the prevailing conditions which informed the theme.

Economic activity in Jamaica, and other nations of the world, is regaining its vibrancy, as we use the lessons learned from the pandemic, the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, supply chain disruptions, and other global events, to shape how we conduct economic activity locally, and beyond our borders.

The stability now evident in the Jamaica economy is, without exaggeration, an enviable one. Strong fiscal policies have ensured that we are emerging confidently from the pandemic years. In March this year, rating agency Fitch affirmed our B+ rating and declared that our economic outlook is stable. Tourism, our highest foreign exchange earner, is projecting around 2.5 million visitor arrivals, with expected visitor spend of around \$2.9 billion and earnings in excess of US\$4 billion this year.

Reports from the Statistical Institute of Jamaica are that, since January 2022, we have the lowest ever unemployment of 6 %, and the Companies Office of Jamaica has reported that it expects a record number of business registrations this year.

Jamaica has attracted solid investments. Our Outsourcing sector leads as the fastest growing in the region, accounting for over US\$1 billion in earnings, with more than 75 companies operating in Global Services Sector. Just last week, the Ministry was invited to witness the opening of the newest arrival, Intelcia, in the New Kingston business district, which is now employing 600 of our young people, with more projected in the medium term.

As a representative of the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, I applaud all stakeholders in the logistics, maritime and related industries, for the resilience and agility demonstrated during the past two years. The supply chain disruptions have been particularly challenging for this industry, but we noted the innovative thinking that allowed you to continue to operate and respond to the needs of our Jamaicans, especially in the delivery of health supplies as we battled the pandemic.

Jamaica has been making significant strides in the Logistics industry, which researchers believe, represents approximately 10-15% of global GDP. We have the perfect geographical location, within a four-hour flight radius to over half a billion of the world's population in the Western Hemisphere. We are connected to over 140 ports across the world. We are the number one trans-shipment port in the region, with modern warehousing and distribution hubs, attractive Special Economic Zone incentive legislation, and preferential trade agreements.

We also have a robust telecommunications infrastructure, which has built-in redundancy to ensure service continuity.

However, we must continue to leverage our natural advantages and employ the available technologies to grow the industry into one where our offerings are sought after worldwide.

Globally, the pandemic spurred an increased reliance on technology to drive commercial activity. Companies improved supply chain performance and enhanced customer experience with technologies such as blockchain, artificial intelligence and automation. Amazon for instance, has introduced robots to its warehouses to focus on repetitive tasks such as emptying items from shelves, leaving humans to undertake activities that require critical thinking.

Jamaica is ranked 6th globally by the World Bank for our ease of starting a business. As we solidify our positioning as the Logistics destination of choice, the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce is placing particular emphasis on digital transformation as a key tool to improve the ease of doing business, through initiatives such as the National Business Portal, the JSWIFT and ASYCUDA platforms, as well as the Jamaica Trade Information Portal.

At the same time, we are also positioning ourselves to take advantage of the opportunities created by the expansion of the Panama Canal, which has opened avenues for new and innovative commercial ventures with Jamaica. Through the efforts of our agencies, JAMPRO and the JSEZA, as well as other agents of

government, we are strategically positioning Jamaica to be a major player in the international logistics global supply chain, to join the giants in the industry - Rotterdam, Dubai, and Singapore.

Along with this expansion of the Panama Canal comes not only an increased demand for logistics support; we are also looking to take advantage of what should be an increased need for bunkering or fuel supply, as well as for more industry workers, such as marine pilots, ship repair technicians, electro-technical officers, stevedores, cargo brokers and logisticians.

Our manufacturers, distributors, and skills-building institutions must position and equip themselves to benefit from these economic opportunities. The stories of highly profitable logistics companies, such as UPS, FedEx and J B Hunt, show that success in this industry, as with others, requires constant readjustments to finesse your procedures in line with changing demands. For instance, lessons learned from the disruptions to the global supply chain are that the supply chain has to be shortened to avoid excessive shipping and freighting rates, space shortages and long wait times. This presents yet another opportunity for us, as a near-shore destination, especially to the North American market where we share a similar time zone and language.

The Government of Jamaica is committed to embracing the current uncertainties to ensure that our citizens are equipped to benefit from the opportunities presented in this new era. We are expanding our digital footprint across the island, upskilling our workforce with the associated skills through our National

Coding in Schools Programme, and digitalizing across government service touchpoints to ensure that we participate fully in the digital economy, where end to end is made easy and results in a thriving economy.

As the arm of Government mandated to grow industries, the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce looks forward to continuing our engagement with the stakeholders in Logistics to ensure that the right climate is created to grow and sustain your businesses.

As I close, I congratulate the leadership of the CMU for the sterling work you been undertaking to prepare young people from Jamaica, and further afield, for the Logistics and related industries. This institution has become a highly desired place of higher learning, and the economic landscape in Jamaica and the wider Caribbean are benefiting from the skills they bring to the marketplace.

I wish for you all a very productive two days of deliberations at this conference.

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.