



Ministry of Industry, Investment & Commerce

SPONSOR'S REMARKS

**Senator The Honourable Aubyn Hill
Minister of Industry Investment & Commerce**

**OPENING CEREMONY - EXPO JAMAICA
“CONNECTING THE WORLD TO JAMAICA”**

THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 2023

5:30 P.M.

**NATIONAL INDOOR SPORTS CENTRE
KINGSTON**



Salutations:

- **Ms. Debbie Bisoon** – Master of Ceremony
- **The Most Honourable Andrew Holness** – Prime Minister of Jamaica
- **Cabinet Ministers**
- **Parliamentarians**
- **Members of the Diplomatic & Consular Core**
- **Hon. Dr. Norman Dunn** – Minister of State, Ministry of Industry, Investment & Commerce (MIIC)
- **Mr. John Mahfood** – President, Jamaica Manufacturers and Exporters Association (JMEA)
- **Mrs. Sancia Bennett Templer** – Permanent Secretary, MIIC
- **Mrs. Kamesha Blake** – Executive Director, JMEA
- **Mr. Aswad Morgan** – Chairman, Expo Jamaica Committee and a Prominent Exhibitor
- **Mr. Alvin Campbell** – Former Show Manager, Expo Jamaica
- Fellow Sponsors
- Buyers
- Exhibitors
- Media Practitioners
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased, as Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce, *Jamaica's Business Ministry*, to join with the speakers before me, in welcoming you all to **Expo Jamaica 2023**. Expo Jamaica is back, and Jamaica's Business Ministry is happy to be the **Title Sponsor of this 48th staging** of the largest exposition and trade show in the English-speaking Caribbean.

This is a happy day in Jamaica – for exhibitors, buyers, prospective investors and all Jamaicans who planned, executed these exhibits and the thousands who will visit and buy!

My Ministry is happy to partner with the **Jamaica Manufacturers and Exporters Association (JMEA)**

and its other sponsors in bringing **Expo Jamaica** to our exhibitors, buyers and consumers. Expo Jamaica represents the best of us in Jamaica and our sponsorship underscores the Government's commitment to give its fulsome support to the entire business sector.

This is the **first in the Expo's 48-year history that a Government Ministry has led as a Title Sponsor.** **Jamaica's Business Ministry** and our 20 agencies are committed to create an **enabling** environment that will see **us grow exports** and increase local and foreign direct investments into our country.

Every single agency of the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, **Jamaica's Business**

Ministry, is here for these four days, ready to engage with you, to explain our services and to engage with visitors and players in the various sectors as we listen to your concerns and recommendations.

I thank the team at the Ministry, led by our Permanent Secretary, **Mrs. Sancia Bennett Templer** and Chief Technical Director, **Ms. Michelle Parkins**, for their efforts to ensure the Ministry's full participation. **This sponsorship has energized our staff members in the Ministry and the Agencies and our staff members are ready to serve you over these four days.**

Heartiest congratulations to **John Mahfood**, Aswad Morgan, Kamesha Blake and the entire team at the JMEA

for your hard work in ensuring that Expo Jamaica returns to the National Arena and the National Indoor Sports Centre.

This is the first time since the Covid-19 pandemic started in March 2020 in Jamaica that the JMEA is able to stage this premier event and I know that the business community welcomes its return.

The Andrew Holness Administration led us well through COVID-19 to this wonderful event today.

We have **250** exhibitors, **650** registered buyers (there are unregistered ones) – **350** from Jamaica, and **300** from 30 other countries.

The opportunities provided by the Expo in “**Connecting the World to Jamaica**” are many. They are on show here and wherever our visitors visit. Welcome to all of our **Buyers** and a special welcome to the **Delegation from the Republic of Guyana**. I am happy that the Guyanese are here with us. I have led two Trade Missions to Guyana over the last six months and the response to these missions has been outstanding good – by the Jamaican business persons who accompanied me, and by the Guyanese. Members of both delegations have been able to enter into business arrangements that they had not previously contemplated. I know there are also persons from the other countries to which I have led trade missions recently.

I will continue to lead the charge to expand existing and find new markets for Jamaican goods and services by taking business delegations to different cities and countries.

So I have this charge for you: **We must grow our exports exponentially.**



❖ In 61 years between 1960 and 2021 – we have had one single year with a positive trade balance. A long time ago in 1966!

❖ We have a perennially large negative trade balance.

In 2021 it was US\$4.534N

- ❖ We have limited land space which we cannot expand.

- ❖ We have a population of only 3 million with a low per capita GDP by Caricom standards.

- ❖ We will not become a wealthy country by selling to only these 3 million Jamaicans.

- ❖ So to expand our markets, our companies and people must export to markets which can afford our quality goods and services.

So now to understand why **Jamaica's Business Ministry** is the main sponsor for this event and will be relentless in pushing the export of Jamaica's goods and services.

We have simply no choice!

We are happy to sponsor **Expo Jamaica 2023** and support the JMEA's thrust to *connect the world to Jamaica*. **Have a grand time!**

Thank you.

Aubyn Hill

