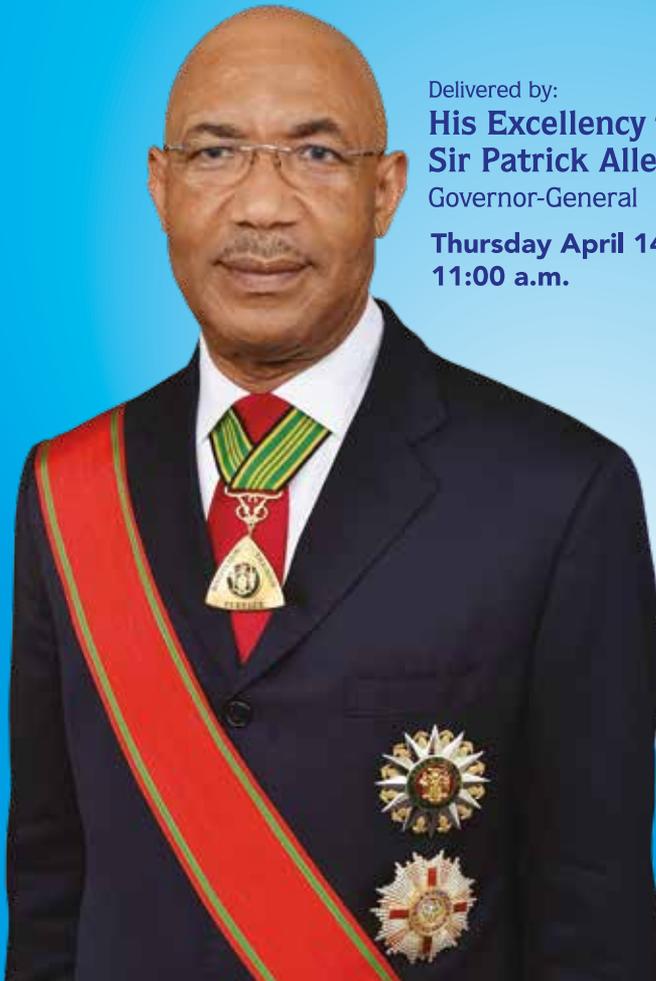




Throne Speech 2016

Building a Partnership for Prosperity



Delivered by:

**His Excellency the Most Hon.
Sir Patrick Allen, ON, GCMG, CD, KSt.J**
Governor-General

**Thursday April 14, 2016
11:00 a.m.**



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“BUILDING A PARTNERSHIP
For Prosperity”

Honourable Members:

 Today we meet at a juncture of new beginnings: a new Parliamentary year, a new Administration with a newly elected Prime Minister. Jamaicans also have a new hope for prosperity. **It is this new hope that forms the foundation for building a partnership for prosperity.**

We have demonstrated yet again, in our recent elections, that we can transfer power seamlessly. This must not be taken for granted. Our democratic tradition is one of those things of which we all can be justly proud.

It is a tribute to both sides of this Honourable House that an election could have been so vigorously contested and closely decided but when the results were in, they were accepted.

Members of this new Administration as well as the Opposition must be commended by all Jamaicans for again showing the world that we value democracy; that despite the cut and thrust of our democratic system, when it is all over, we accept the will of the people and move on with the business of the people.

Our democratic tradition is one of those things of which we all can be justly proud.

Jamaica, through bipartisan cooperation and commitment, developed an electoral system that is the envy of the world!
We must acknowledge our collective progress.

We must continue to do everything to strengthen our people's confidence in our institutions as this is the best way to encourage more Jamaicans to engage in the democratic process.

Our institutions must work for the people, and citizens must feel that they exist to serve them; to facilitate and empower them.

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Honourable Members, there is an urgent need in Jamaica today to build trust. It is important that commitments to the people be kept because their own commitment to an investment in good citizenship is dependent on our keeping faith with them. We must never squander the goodwill and trust of our people. **The restoration of trust in Government is a key ingredient in building a partnership for prosperity.**

You all have an obligation to conduct yourselves both inside and outside the House in such a way that it commands the respect of all.

We must never squander the goodwill and trust of our people.

The Jamaican people have a right to demand quality service from their Government. In this regard, this new Administration will be accelerating efforts to strengthen public sector efficiency and responsiveness.

This Prime Minister must ensure that the Members of Parliament are accountable to the people of their constituencies.

The first step to building an accountable Government is transforming the efficiency and effectiveness of Government. The restructured and smaller Cabinet sends a strong signal of the intention of the Administration to extend and evolve the reform of the governance system.

The Government will continue the Public Sector Transformation and Modernisation Programme which is built on three pillars:

1. **Trade and Investment Facilitation**, with the aim of improving Jamaica’s trade and investment position;
2. **Managing Public Sector Costs**, which places a focus on increasing efficiency in Government expenditure; and
3. **Government Efficiency and Service Delivery**, which targets the capacity of Government to sustain the efficient and effective delivery of results-focussed, customer-centric public services.

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Honourable Members, in this fiscal year, the following initiatives will be pursued:

- The implementation of an **Electronic Business Registration System** which is a One-Stop-Shop for Business Registration allowing online registration of businesses.
- Roll-out of the **Trade Facilitation Programme**, creating a single electronic window to simplify and automate import and export processes.
- Roll-out of the **ICT programme** starting with the setting up of the Council responsible for approving priority activities.
- Implementing the **Human Capital Management Enterprise System**, which will be used to make projections in training, availability of skills, compensation and pensions. This system, importantly, will also ensure that we meet our goals of fairness in the areas of gender and persons with special needs.
- Government will also accelerate digitisation and public records management through its **Records and Information Policy**.

DRIVING THE GROWTH AGENDA

The Government will continue to drive the growth and job creation agenda through:

- Debt management
- Tax reform
- Pension reform
- Financial sector reform
- Monetary policy
- Implementation of reforms to Development Applications Process
- Implementation of a new Special Economic Zones regime
- Trade facilitation

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- Expansion of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise financing and capacity development
- Labour market reform
- Land titling initiatives
- Implementation of a strategic plan for the outsourcing industry

IMPROVING GENERAL WELL-BEING

Honourable Members, the new Administration takes very seriously the matter of improving the general well-being of the people. It is an important part of restoring trust in Government. In this regard, the Government will focus its attention on modernising the operations of the National Insurance Scheme.

NATIONAL INSURANCE SCHEME

- ***The need to modernise the operation of the scheme***
The Ministry of Labour and Social Security will reduce pension processing times and will introduce more efficient methods of payment to pensioners. This year there will be the introduction of direct deposits for new pensioners.
- ***Greater compliance by employers***
A public education programme will be launched to foster greater compliance in the payment of NIS benefits.
- ***There will be a comprehensive review of the NIS Act, 1966***
This will address outdated practices and provisions, benefit rates and contributions to improve coverage and compliance, and to close loopholes. Drafting instructions will be sent to the Chief Parliamentary Counsel by the end of the fourth quarter of this fiscal year.
- The **Disabilities Act** will be fully implemented this year through the:
 - a. Development of the Regulations and Codes of Practice

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- b. Establishment of the Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities as a Body Corporate, and
- c. Establishment of the Disabilities Rights Tribunal

PROGRAMME OF ADVANCEMENT THROUGH HEALTH AND EDUCATION (PATH)

- ***There will be a review of the benefits under the PATH***
There needs to be greater alignment of PATH with the social needs of the people.

The Public Assistance Division of the Ministry will be restructured to deliver more effectively its range of programmes such as emergency assistance, compassionate grants, social housing, transportation and post-secondary grants to PATH beneficiaries and Steps to Work participants.

OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME

There will be an expansion of the Overseas Employment Programme to include non-traditional markets.

The Occupational Safety and Health Bill will be pursued vigorously this year.

The proposed legislation will enable Jamaica’s ratification of approximately thirty-four (34) Conventions, Protocols and Recommendations of the International Labour Organization.

INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES TRIBUNAL

An office of the Industrial Disputes Tribunal will be established in Montego Bay, and consideration will be given to adding other regional offices in Manchester and St. Ann.

HEALTH AND EDUCATION

Honourable Members, education and health are two major areas affecting general well-being. There are several challenges in these two sectors, but the Government is determined to

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work assiduously during the first year of its Administration to tackle them.

HEALTH

Primary health care will be a major focus, with the Administration expanding the public/private partnership approach to various services. Government will also seek to expand infrastructural development as well as access to health care. The health sector will benefit from the crafting of a new ten-year strategic development plan.

Government will continue to stress the importance of partnership and community mobilisation in promoting and protecting the health of our people.

Government will continue to stress the importance of partnership and community mobilisation in promoting and protecting the health of our people and will be taking steps to improve its capacity to identify and respond to public health issues.

EDUCATION

A major thrust in education this year will be the implementation of the Alternative Pathways to Secondary Education/Career Advancement Programme (CAP).

This Alternative Pathways to Secondary Education will ensure that every student is given the opportunity to progress through their secondary education dependent on their aptitude, needs, and potential. The CAP will extend its reach in rescuing and providing a lifeline to many young people who would otherwise become a part of the growing number in the unattached category.

There will be a raft of interventions to support students with behavioural problems. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Information will also have a major focus on parenting education, conducting parenting classes in communities across Jamaica.

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EXPANDED ASSISTANCE THROUGH JAMVAT

The Ministry will invest more in the **Jamaica Values and Attitudes Programme for Tertiary Students (JAMVAT)** to assist needy students to access tertiary education.

This programme is also about the students doing voluntary service and contributing positively to the community.

WATER

Honourable Members, the availability of water is critical to the well-being of a people but it is also one of the pillars that supports economic growth and prosperity.

The Government, through the National Water Commission, will engage the Planning Institute of Jamaica, the Development Bank of Jamaica and international development partners to examine the investment opportunities and develop a schedule of investments through public/private partnerships.

Particular focus will be on the following:

- 1. The Rio Cobre Water Treatment Plant Development**
- 2. The Rio Bueno Water Treatment Plant Development**
- 3. The Soapberry Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion**

The development of the Rio Cobre fifteen million gallons per day (15 mgd) Water Treatment Plant at Content District in St. Catherine is intended to augment water supplies to the Kingston Metropolitan Area (KMA).

The Rio Bueno Project will include the development of a Water Treatment Plant and associated Transmission Mains, with a source capacity of 15-20 mgd. This Plant is designed to meet the resort development plans for Trelawny, St. Ann and St. Mary. The project will form a part of the larger North Eastern Parishes Water Supply Improvement Project.

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The Soapberry Project involves the expansion of wastewater treatment capacity to accommodate future flows from Kingston and St. Andrew, Caymanas Estate and South East St. Catherine.

There will also be a thrust towards developing a modernised Kingston Sewer Collection System and an expanded non-revenue water programme.

HOUSING

Honourable Members, the provision of affordable housing is a major priority of this new Administration. Accordingly, focus will be given to various construction projects during the year:

1. **Bernard Lodge in St. Catherine** - For this project, the Government will, in collaboration with the private partner, conduct a comprehensive review of the proposed project design to eliminate unnecessary costs and delays.
2. **Reid's Pen, Portmore, St. Catherine** - Construction of this project will commence during the fiscal year and, when completed, will see the delivery of some 148 two-bedroom townhouses for the middle income market.
3. **Shooter's Hill, Portmore, St. Catherine** - It is expected that construction of 200 studio housing units (priced at \$4-5M) will commence during the fiscal year.
4. **Vernon's Drive, Montego Bay, St. James** - 90 one and two-bedroom townhouses are slated for this area.

Other priority sites have been identified at Ebony Vale and Angel's Pen in St. Catherine; Hopewell Farms in Hanover; Bottom Pen in St. James and at several smaller sites across the Corporate Area.

At Grange Pen and Ironshore in St. James, housing solutions geared primarily for workers and middle managers in the tourism sector will be constructed.

NSWMA's WASTE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

The management of waste in major towns and communities across the island has led to serious infestations.

Two hundred and fifty million dollars has been provided in the Budget to purchase additional waste disposal trucks.

The NSWMA has also identified four priority areas for immediate action regarding the management of the Authority and the Riverton Disposal Site:

These are:

1. ***The enhancement of the speed with which contemporary financial controls are implemented***, to ensure accountability, efficiency and compliance with all standards of financial reporting and the requirements of all statutes governing the Authority.
2. ***The enhancement of the Authority's levels of service delivery***, with special emphasis on its waste collection and waste disposal responsibilities.
3. ***The completion of ongoing consultations with the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA)***, and the satisfaction of compliance requirements in order to obtain and maintain environmental certification for the operation of Riverton, as well as the other Disposal Sites managed by the NSWMA.
4. ***The improvement in the security of the Riverton Disposal Site*** through the addition of electronic surveillance mechanisms to the system of patrols, which help to prevent unauthorised access to the facility.

These efforts will also serve to address some of the major concerns raised in the recent investigative report by the Public Defender.

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We must take personal responsibility for the management of our waste. The Government must partner with citizens to build a culture of cleanliness and responsible waste disposal.

TOURISM

The Ministry of Tourism will reposition tourism to generate higher growth rates in job creation, visitor arrivals and earnings.

The Ministry will pursue the development of a Hospitality College and a Craft Institute. This Hospitality College will train persons at all levels of the tourism sector.

Collaboration with HEART Trust/NTA, and existing education and training institutions will be reinforced to cater to the training needs of the workforce.

The Ministry of Tourism will reposition tourism to generate higher growth rates in job creation, visitor arrivals and earnings.

The Tourism Linkages Hub will be strengthened to create pathways and opportunities to facilitate strong economic linkages between tourism and other sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture and entertainment.

Tourism Workers’ Pension Scheme - Legislation is being developed to create a Tourism Workers’ Pension Scheme. This pension scheme will be tailored to deal with issues of seasonality, self-employment and contract work in the tourism industry.

INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE

The portfolios of agriculture and industry and commerce were brought under the same Ministry to positively exploit the synergies between agriculture and industry. **The Government will transform the agro park concept to that of an Agro Economic Zone**, emphasising both the expanded production of primary agricultural products and the appropriate infrastructure to move up the value chain.

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In furtherance of this expanded concept, the Government will this year be extending the Hounslow Irrigation System and overhauling farm roads in the Hounslow area to create an Agro Economic Zone; building on the Packing House and the Peppermash Processing facility already established there. A new agro park will also be established in Spring Gardens, Portland.

The severe droughts of the last two years demand that we place greater emphasis on irrigation expansion. **This year, the Government will commence the construction of a brand new irrigation system in Essex Valley in St. Elizabeth, at a cost of US\$10 million.**

Coupled with the New Forest/Duff House Agro Park, the expanded Hounslow system and the Pedro Plain system, South St. Elizabeth, will become one huge Agro Economic Zone.

TRANSPORT AND MINING

This year, the Ministry of Transport and Mining will spearhead the:

- Passing of the new Road Traffic Act
- Establishment of the Land Transport Authority
- Construction of the Portmore Transport Hub
- Development of an Urban/Rural Transport Plan
- Revitalisation of Rail Services
- Privatisation of the Norman Manley International Airport
- Redevelopment of Vernamfield Air Services

In the mining sector we will see the:

- Diversification of the Mining Sector
- Revitalisation of the Bauxite and Alumina Sector
- Establishment of a National Minerals Institute
- Finalisation of the National Minerals Policy

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The road to prosperity is best traversed via integrated transportation systems that are supported by effective, efficient and modern regulations.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade will play an important role in supporting the Administration’s drive towards prosperity, economic growth and job creation.

To this end, the Ministry will place greater emphasis on trade and investment promotion.

The Ministry will:

The road to prosperity is best traversed via integrated transportation systems that are supported by effective, efficient and modern regulations.

- Leverage our Jamaican Diaspora in diplomacy, investment and trade
- Strengthen engagement with the Diaspora to promote their greater involvement in national development
- Help ensure that trade is mainstreamed into national development policies and strategies
- Seek to ensure that future negotiations at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels advance Jamaica’s trade and development interests
- Help to manage and maximise Jamaica’s existing bilateral trade relations as well as relations within CARICOM and between CARICOM and Third States

The demand for more effective consular services is growing and in this regard, the Ministry will seek approval for a National Consular Policy.

Honourable Members, the Review, amendment and introduction of legislation and policy in keeping with the Government’s commitment to international human rights agreements, including

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the National Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy, the enactment of Anti-Sexual Harassment Legislation and completing the Parliamentary review of the Sexual Offences Act, are important initiatives that will be pursued this legislative year.

There will also be the completion of the comprehensive plan to eliminate gender-based violence in the form of the National Strategic Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence.

This is intended to protect and ensure the right of individuals to a safe and non-threatening environment free of all forms of gender-based violence.

The Government is conscious of the importance of males in the maintenance of a healthy society. It is to this end that there will be the Establishment of a Service and Programme Desk within the Bureau of Gender Affairs to focus specifically on issues relating to men, especially young males.

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CULTURE, GENDER, ENTERTAINMENT & SPORT

The Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport (MCGES) has targeted:

- Economic Growth and Job Creation
- Human Capital Development
- Social Inclusion and Development

as core tenets of its mandate.

Sport, entertainment, culture and heritage are only a few of the areas that will become even further strengthened as drivers of competitiveness and growth for the Jamaican economy. These are areas that will also allow for a diversified export market, and can provide direct and indirect boosts to other sub-sectors such as manufacturing and agriculture.

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The Government of Jamaica will increase its presence and position in the creative economy through the transformation of our indigenous products and content into cultural capital and the facilitation of entrepreneurship which can position quality and competitive skills, products, and services in local and international markets.

ENVIRONMENT

This Government will review existing environmental laws to implement measures for improved enforcement. The thrust towards sustainable development will require a partnership with all stakeholders such as NGOs, the community, investors and the Government.

The key to national development, with a focus on environmental protection, is the recognition that laws and regulations must be integrated; reconciling the interest of development with the necessity of environmental protection.

THE 2016/2017 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Honourable Members, justice is integral for the improvement of the general well-being and to create a prosperous society. The rule of law must apply to all and we must seek to foster transparency, disclosure and fair play.

You cannot legislate morality, but your legislative framework can send a signal as to your sense of morality. The principles of equality, fairness, natural justice and transparency must be enshrined in our laws and underpin our legislative efforts.

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Among the major action items on our legislative agenda for this year are:

- **Amendment to the INDECOM Act**
- **The Arbitration Bill** which governs the conduct of domestic and international arbitration in Jamaica.
- **A Constitution (Amendment) Bill** to replace Her Majesty The Queen with a Non-Executive President as Head of State.
- **A Constitution (Amendment) Bill** to address the judicial review of the Director of Public Prosecutions.
- **The Criminal Justice (Plea Negotiations & Agreements) (Amendment) Bill** - which provides for reduced sentences on guilty pleas.
- **The Dangerous Drugs Act** - where there will be further amendment to give full legalisation for marijuana to be used for specified purposes.
- **Fixed Election Dates** - Parliament, this year, will see legislation to create fixed election dates and term limits for the Prime Minister.
- **Impeachment Legislation** will provide for impeachment proceedings to be brought against corrupt public officials and Parliamentarians.
- **The Integrity Commission Bill** will establish a Single Anti-Corruption Body.
- **The Judicature (Resident Magistrate) (Amendment) Bill** will provide a right to appeal by the prosecution against manifestly inadequate sentences. This will allow for a retrial where a verdict has been contaminated, for example, by jury tampering. It will also stiffen the penalties for obstructing or perverting the course of justice.
- **Judicial Accountability** legislation will be enacted to ensure judicial accountability for performance and behaviour in office.

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- The **Law Reform (Notice of Alibi) Bill** - new provisions will be made for the notice of alibi in criminal proceedings.
- The **Mutual Assistance (Criminal Matters) (Amendment) Bill** will allow for the introduction of evidence by TV link and video-recorded evidence.
- The **National Human Rights Institute (NHRI)** will be established in law. The Office of the Public Defender will be enhanced to incorporate the NHRI.
- **Trafficking in Persons** - This important piece of legislation amending the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Suppression and Punishment) Act, will enable the courts to prosecute offences under the Act without a Jury.

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CONCLUSION

Honourable Members,

We must build partnerships in order to achieve the success we hope for.

We are partners in the development of Jamaica and all Jamaicans at home and abroad have a critical role to play in securing a prosperous future for our children.

All Jamaicans at home and abroad have a critical role to play in securing a prosperous future for our children.

We must join together in building a partnership for prosperity.

Our united hope summons the strength in all of us.

Jamaicans, a call to action:

A call to greater productivity at the workplace;

For peace and harmony in the home;

For courtesy and discipline on the roads;

For integrity and probity in public life;

For temperance in the Parliament.

To all my brothers and sisters who love Jamaica and wish its success, I join you in prayer for our blessed nation. We can achieve the best wishes we have for our country; building on the sacrifices of our forefathers and the wisdom of our great leaders.

Let us build a partnership for prosperity.

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