



Throne Speech 2020

Delivered by:

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

**TOWARDS A DECADE OF GROWTH
TO ANCHOR OUR PEACE AND PROSPERITY!**

Tuesday February 11, 2020
HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT, GORDON HOUSE
Kingston, Jamaica

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TOWARDS A DECADE OF GROWTH
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Honourable Members,

We are gathered here at the dawn of a new decade. The seeds we have planted in previous years are germinating and we commit to making this new decade one of increased growth, peace and prosperity in our land.

Honourable Members, Jamaica has much to celebrate. Our emphasis on inclusive and sustainable economic growth has paid great dividends for our beloved nation. In recent years, Jamaica has made an extraordinary economic turnaround.

We have experienced nineteen consecutive quarters of positive economic growth.

Our debt-to-GDP ratio is projected to be below 92 per cent by the end of March 2020 from a high of 147 per cent seven years ago.

Lower levels of debt accumulation and servicing have resulted in the State being able to redirect resources to invest in areas that will promote social and infrastructure development.

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Our October 2019 unemployment rate of 7.2 per cent is the lowest in Jamaica's history.

Our regulatory reforms aimed at lessening the time and cost to do business have resulted in Jamaica being ranked as the best economy in the Caribbean for ease of doing business.

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We have trained more than 20,000 persons through the HOPE Programme and the Jamaica National Service Corps and training continues.

Jamaica is at the forefront of global efforts towards positive action on climate change and good environmental stewardship. The Government has implemented a ban on single use plastic and polystyrene, started a programme to plant three million trees (one for each Jamaican), and is continuously transforming our energy and electricity sector to be more sustainable.

Over the last four years, the National Housing Trust (NHT), the Housing Agency of Jamaica (HAJ) and private sector developers would have recorded over 30,000 housing starts.

While we must celebrate and justly be proud of our accomplishments, we must acknowledge that there is no room for complacency in an increasingly connected, but rapidly changing world. Our Government has created a set of plans, policies, programmes and legislation which demonstrates its resolve to make this Jamaica's **Decade of Growth, Peace and Prosperity as we move to fulfill Vision 2030.**

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

Honourable Members, the Office of the Prime Minister has responsibility for the overall performance and effective management of the Government. In 2019/20, the largest merger ever in the history of Jamaica's public sector was completed.

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The Human Employment and Resource Training (HEART) Trust/National Training Agency (NTA), the Jamaica Foundation for Lifelong Learning, and the National Youth Service and

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Apprenticeship Boards were merged to create the HEART/ National Service and Training Agency Trust; a total human capital development institution for Jamaica. In 2017, at the start of the merger, HEART was training 74,000 persons; in 2018/19, 132,000 persons were trained, for 2019/20, HEART is on target to train 152, 600. **Honourable Members**, this is a 106 percent increase.

Under the National Identification Systems (NIDS) Project, the non-NIDS activities have commenced, for example, infrastructure upgrades that are necessary to strengthen Jamaica's cyber-security profile. The Government will also complete implementation of the National Public Key Infrastructure Project and advance the digital transformation of the Registrar General's Department.

The top legislative priorities for the period will include the tabling of a new **NIDS Bill**; amendments to the **Registration of (Births and Deaths) Act**, and the review of the **National Housing Trust Act and Regulations**.

**THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND
THE PUBLIC SERVICE (MOFPS)**

Honourable Members, Jamaica successfully concluded its programme with the International Monetary Fund in November 2019. Over the course of this three-year Precautionary Stand-by Arrangement, the Government of Jamaica met all structural benchmarks, all quantitative performance criteria and all indicative targets.

Our economic achievements based on where we are coming from have been nothing short of extraordinary and have been globally recognised.

We have now had several years of low inflation and record low interest rates. Business and consumer confidence are high.

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Our stock market is among the best performing in the world. International rating agencies, Moody's, Standard and Poor's and Fitch have all recently upgraded the Government of Jamaica's long-term foreign and local currency ratings to their highest levels in decades. Our net international reserves now stand at over US\$3 billion. Economic independence for Jamaica is no longer a dream; it is becoming a reality.

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The Government continues to focus on strengthening public financial administration. Medium Term Results Based Budgeting has been introduced in all Ministries, Departments and Agencies.

The Regulations for the Nomination, Selection and Appointment of Boards in support of transparency were tabled in the Houses of Parliament and affirmed by the House of Representatives in December 2019.

Tax Administration Jamaica advanced its ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System certification, a first for tax administrations across the Caribbean, and has enhanced its business processes, technology and physical infrastructure to effect improvements in the quality and delivery of services.

The legislation to make permanent the abolishment of the minimum business tax, the asset tax for non-financial businesses, and the ad valorem stamp duty on the transfer of property and on financial transactions were all passed during the year. In addition, the transfer tax applicable to transfers of real estate was reduced by 60 per cent during the year.

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The new procurement regime came into existence during the year and regulation was passed to allow Jamaican suppliers, in particular small and medium sized suppliers, preferential access.

Modernisation of the Bank of Jamaica is being advanced through a **Bill to amend the Bank of Jamaica Act**.

The Government will continue its focus on Customs modernisation by advancing the **Customs Act**.

The **Microcredit Bill**, which was tabled during the year, will be amended taking into account feedback from consultation with the sector.

The Government has continued its policy of using the public equity markets as a vehicle for divestment of public assets to allow broad scale ownership of these assets by Jamaicans. In April 2019, history was made when 31,200 Jamaicans invested in the initial public offer (IPO) of Wigton Windfarm Limited. The Government recently launched an offer for sale of shares in Transjamaican Highway Limited. This is expected to be the largest IPO in Jamaica's history and possibly in the entire region; similar divestments are planned for later this year.

Building on the work done in 2019, the Government will be tabling other critical pieces of legislation that will improve Jamaica's economy:

- **An Act to Establish an Independent Fiscal Council** which will strengthen Jamaica's fiscal responsibility regime;
- **The Pension Superannuation Fund and Retirement Schemes Amendment Bill** which is the second phase of private pension reform to deal with portability, vesting, and participation in multiple schemes, among other reforms;

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- **The Amendment to the Financial Services Commission Act** which will facilitate consolidated supervision for non-deposit taking groups.

**MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC GROWTH
AND JOB CREATION**

Honourable Members, the Government continues to foster synergies among its agencies for increased efficiency and effectiveness in improving our infrastructure.

The Government recognises that universal access to safe, potable water is a key development priority. The National Water Sector Policy which will guide the provision of universal access to safe, potable water to all Jamaicans by 2030, was tabled as a White Paper in the Houses of Parliament in July 2019. As part of the policy implementation, the Government convened the Integrated Water Resources Management Council to serve as the advisory body for the management of the island's water resources. This year, our Government will, provide water supply solutions to approximately 180,000 rural residents.

The National Water Sector Policy which will guide the provision of universal access to safe, potable water to all Jamaicans by 2030, was tabled as a White Paper in the Houses of Parliament in July 2019.

Our island is already experiencing the impact of climate variations, with more intense drought and unpredictable weather. As part of Jamaica's strategic response to climate change, the Government recently launched a National Tree Planting Programme targeting the planting of three million trees (one for each Jamaican) over the next three years.

Honourable Members, in January 2020, the first cruise ship with approximately 2,000 visitors docked at the new Port Royal cruise ship terminal. The development of this terminal posed



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special environmental challenges. An innovative floating articulating pier, SeaWalk, was installed without having to dredge or drive piles. This project demonstrated the commitment to making development happen.

This year, the Government will complete the National Squatter Survey to accurately determine the extent of squatting in the country and to provide critical information to guide the completion of the National Squatter Management Policy and Implementation Plan.

The Real Estate Board will merge the Real Estate Board, the Commission of Strata Corporations and the Registrar of Time-shares into the Real Estate Authority of Jamaica.

Honourable Members, housing remains a key priority for the Government. In line with Vision 2030, every Jamaican should have access to safe, sustainable and affordable housing. We need to build enough housing solutions at a rate which will prevent informal settling. Between the NHT and the HAJ, over 10,000 housing starts are slated for this fiscal year with plans to continue to accelerate the delivery of housing solutions in the coming year.

In the Government's continued drive to improve access to loans and support for home ownership, the NHT:

- widened income bands,
- increased its loan limit,
- introduced inter-generational mortgages and;
- reduced mortgage interest rates by one per cent across the board.

The Government's new Social Housing Programme has completed the administrative phase and will commence full roll out.

The coming year will also see continued heavy investment in infrastructure under the Greater Infrastructure Development Programme (GIDP). The GIDP is a multi-year comprehensive

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infrastructure programme which includes not just roads but bridges and structures, street lighting, sidewalks and ramps, traffic lights, water and sewerage, fire hydrants and drainage. We will be building SMART infrastructure with fibre optics, cameras and sensors designed and embedded into our infrastructure assets. Aligned with this, **Honourable Members**, will be the “Lengthman Programme”, a preventative maintenance programme for rural roads and high-trafficked corridors; built on a performance-based system and enabled by technology. This Programme will be executed at the community level by local residents.

The Government’s vision is to create modern, SMART and sustainable urban centres. The aim is to make places that are accessible, secure, clean and connected for the enjoyment of the people and the pride of the nation.

Honourable Members, the next fiscal year will herald the beginning of Jamaica’s first purpose-built Parliament – ‘Out of Many, One People’ – which emerged as the winning design. The new Parliament building and the transformation of the National Heroes Park are part of the master plan to redevelop downtown Kingston.

MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY

Honourable Members, during the 2019/20 legislative year, the Government made considerable strides in advancing its policy agenda to support national crime fighting strategies. This included the passage of the **Proceeds of Crime (Amendment) Act, 2019 and attendant Regulations**, to strengthen local anti-money laundering and counter terrorism financing efforts. The development of Regulations to support the **Major Organised Crime and Anti-Corruption Agency**, amendments to the **Criminal Justice (Suppression of Criminal Organisations) Act** as well as the **Firearms Act** were also achieved. These pieces of legislation are expected to significantly curtail and disrupt the work of organised criminal networks.

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The Government maintains that a whole-of-society approach is required to tackle the issue of crime and violence. Through the infusion of technology and significant capital investment, the Government will continue its multi-agency approach to social intervention efforts.

Building on the work done in 2019, the Government will be seeking to table other critical pieces of legislation that will enable improved security operations:

- **Law Enforcement (Protection of Integrity) Act** will encourage and promote integrity among persons provided with law enforcement powers, thereby strengthening measures for the prevention and detection of acts of corruption and other criminal acts.
- **Corrections (Amendment) Act** will update and strengthen the law and make it more aligned to current trends taking into consideration modern technological advances and increases in existing penalties for breaches.
- **Aliens Act and Immigration Restriction Commonwealth Citizenship Act (Amendments Legislation)** will allow for improved management of current trends in immigration breaches and border security control mechanisms.

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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, YOUTH AND INFORMATION

Honourable Members, the first year of the Primary Exit Profile assessment was successfully administered with a total of 40,423 students sitting the examination in 2019 and 54 per cent being classified as proficient or highly proficient. The implementation of the twinning of schools programme which is geared at the sharing of resources and expertise to benefit

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students from both institutions resulted in 47 schools being twinned so far and another sixteen (16) being considered for this year. Additionally, the breakfast programme has been expanded to benefit 70,000 children in 822 schools across the early childhood and primary levels. The **National Plan of Action for an Integrated Response to Children and Violence** was tabled in Parliament in June 2019 and is now being implemented.

For this year, the focus of the legislative agenda will be on the **Jamaica Teaching Council Bill** which seeks to establish the Jamaica Teaching Council and a system of licensing teachers to improve the status of the teaching profession; the **Higher Education Bill** which will seek to modernise and strengthen

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the legal and regulatory framework for the sector; and Amendments to the **Education Act and Regulations** which will modernise the legal and regulatory framework governing the statutory system of public education.

The Government will continue to focus on infrastructural development to provide adequate school places for children at all levels and advance the process of eliminating the shift system in seven schools and the continued implementation of the seven years of secondary education which includes the mainstreaming of the Career Advancement Programme (CAP) and the National School Leaving Certificate. The Government will also advance plans for the development of new high schools focused on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education.

MINISTRY OF TOURISM

Honourable Members, our tourism sector continues to grow from strength to strength. In 2019, Jamaica welcomed 4.3 million visitors which was made up of 2.7 million stopover visitors and 1.6 million cruise visitors. In this year, the focus will be on broadening our source markets for tourists through aggressive marketing.

The new Port Royal cruise terminal presents tremendous opportunities for tourism to position Port Royal and Kingston as a unique heritage and culture tourism destination in the Caribbean.

Using the power of digital technologies, the Jamaica Tourist Board has adopted a new marketing strategy and brand positioning with the tagline: **JAMAICA, Heartbeat of the World.**

In 2019, a major step towards improving the welfare of tourism workers was achieved when the **Tourism Workers Pension Act** which establishes a defined contributory pension scheme for all tourism workers, whether self-employed, employed or contract workers, was passed.

The legislative programme for the next fiscal year will seek to amend the following pieces of legislation.

- The **Bath of St. Thomas the Apostle (Amendment) Act and Regulation and the Milk River Bath (Amendment) Act** will facilitate the development and modernisation of the facilities through public-private partnerships.
- The **Tourist Board Act amendments** are designed to modernise its provisions and regulations and will strengthen the enforcement provisions.

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- The modernisation of the **Travel Agency Act and Regulations** will take into account contemporary developments that have occurred since it came into force in 1956.

**MINISTRY OF CULTURE, GENDER, ENTERTAINMENT
AND SPORT**

Honourable Members, in 2019 we marked the centenary of the Honourable Louise Bennett Coverley (Miss Lou) with a 100-day celebration throughout Jamaica and the Diaspora, highlighting the significance of her contribution to the shaping of the Jamaican culture, identity, literature, theatre, music, media content and folklore.

We all proudly witnessed the global recognition of Jamaican talent, in the tremendous recent achievements of Miss Toni-Ann Singh who was crowned Miss World 2019 and Miss Mikayla Simpson 'Koffee', who became the youngest artiste and first female solo reggae artiste to win the Grammy Award for Best Reggae Album.

This year, the Government will focus on implementation of the Culture and Creative Industries Policy, which provides for the building of capacity and development of their structure.

In preparation for the arrival of cruise ship passengers in Port Royal, residents were trained in order to create products which reflect its history and heritage.

This year, the Government will focus on implementation of the **Culture and Creative Industries Policy**, which provides for the building of capacity and development of their structure. The Government also plans to introduce **Entertainment, Creative Enterprise and Sport Zones/Museums**.

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The Government continues to increase the number of shelters as part of its approach to support victims of gender based violence with the activation of three (3) shelters.

Key legislative priorities for the Government will include a review of the **Domestic Violence Act**, the **Sexual Harassment Act**, and the development of an **Entertainment Industry Policy/ Act** and amendments to the **Jamaica National Heritage Trust Act**.

**MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY, COMMERCE,
AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES**

Honourable Members, the Government's three main priority initiatives in the areas of industry, commerce and agriculture are:

- Irrigation infrastructure development in response to the lack of a consistent water supply for agricultural production;
- Continuation of the National Trade Facilitation Programme to continue to enhance the ease of doing business in Jamaica and thereby facilitate increased export activity; and
- The development of new industries such as cannabis, bamboo, sea island cotton, and castor beans.

During the 2020/21 fiscal year, the following legislative priorities will be pursued:

- **Jamaica Promotions (Amendment) Bill** to provide for the implementation of a regulatory regime for the film and motion picture industry and to strengthen the local creative industries.
- **Trade Marks Act and Rules (Amendments)** for Jamaica to become a part of the Madrid system and benefit from international registration.

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- **Companies (Amendment) Bill** to strengthen the disclosure of information relating to the beneficial owners of companies while excluding listed public companies.
- **Agro Investment Corporation (Amendment) Act** to ensure focus on investment in the local agriculture sector and management of the Agro-Parks and Agro-Economic Zones.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Honourable Members, decisive steps were taken during the past year to improve the health of Jamaicans. Rehabilitation work on the Cornwall Regional Hospital continued, with Phase 2 of the rehabilitation plan now underway. Construction of the Child and Adolescent Hospital in Western Jamaica was also initiated. In the coming year, rehabilitation and development of infrastructure will continue to be a major focus and with funding support will see the largest spend in over three decades.

The Vector Control Programme was expanded to address the growing concerns about mosquito-borne diseases. Focus was also placed on reducing the risk factors for non-communicable diseases which resulted in the

Rehabilitation and development of infrastructure will continue to be a major focus.

expansion of the “Jamaica Moves” initiative into schools and the reduction of sugar content levels in beverages provided at schools. Furthermore, public patients’ access to select diagnostic services was increased through public-private partnerships.

With the emergence of viruses having the potential to become global health threats, as well as the increased prevalence of certain diseases, Jamaica continues to prepare by training staff, equipping facilities, securing the necessary medical supplies and also making provision for quarantine and isolation

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facilities as necessary. The Government will continue to exercise vigilance and caution to ensure that we are in the best possible position to respond to any eventualities.

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

Honourable Members, with the launch of an ambitious new strategic plan entitled '**Benchmarking the Future: Courting Success**' that will transform the way our courts operate and are managed, the Jamaican judiciary aims to be the best in the Caribbean in three years and one of the best in the world in six years.

Video-link and digital audio recording equipment has been installed in seventy-eight (78) courtrooms across the island. The delivery of the Judicial Case Management System (JCMS) – an end-to-end Case and Electronic Document Management System is far advanced. Both initiatives are complementary to the efforts of the Judiciary and the Court Administration Division and will significantly transform the landscape within which the courts operate by improving court efficiency, user experience and by facilitating enhanced protection for vulnerable and intimidated witnesses.

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The mobile justice initiative, operated by the Legal Aid Council, offers flexibility in the provision of legal services to underserved and high-risk populations and we continue to expand it to increase access.

Major works to expand court infrastructure will also be advanced to develop three (3) regional judicial complexes in the parishes of Manchester, St. Ann and St. James and one (1) Parish Court in St. Catherine.

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Honourable Members, as we continue to create a framework that will support and advance the justice reform programme, the major legislative priorities for 2020/21 are:

- Reform of the Dogs (Liability for Injuries By) Act to provide for criminal liability for an owner of a dog that attacks, injures or causes the death of a person.
- Introduction of a National Mediation Policy and the enactment of legislation to increase the use of and access to mediation as an alternative method of dispute resolution.

MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Honourable Members, for the Financial Year 2019/20, the Government placed over 18,000 workers in jobs both locally and overseas while approximately 2,100 received economic and rehabilitation grants. Persons with disabilities received grants for their own economic empowerment and assistive devices in the amount of \$30M.

Three mobile units that will enhance accessibility to public assistance services to persons in rural and remote areas have been acquired. This, along with the recently launched **Community Engagement Series** will provide additional social and economic support especially in areas where the incidence of poverty is highest. In the coming year, special focus will be placed on the elderly and in particular those without any retirement income.

Greater emphasis has been placed on educating employers and employees about the labour laws; a 28 per cent reduction in industrial disputes that required arbitration was noted.

One of the Government's major priorities which will facilitate growth and increase efficiencies is the development of a **National Policy for Productivity Improvement**. This will require greater emphasis on improving the quality of our

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workforce through skills training, increased investment in new technologies and techniques, smart use of our public infrastructure and productivity friendly policies.

The legislative framework to create a fair and equal society for persons with disabilities is also being advanced and the **Disabilities Act** will come into effect in the coming year. Additionally, the **Disabilities Rights Tribunal** will be established and begin hearings.

**MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Honourable Members, in the Government's continued drive to improve access to basic services for all Jamaicans, a comprehensive parochial road rehabilitation programme will be undertaken to improve the community road network across all parishes.

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The Fire Safety and Protection

Programme will see the construction of three (3) new state-of-the-art fire stations in the parishes of St. Thomas, St. Mary and St. James. Additionally, four (4) fire stations: Black River, Falmouth, Ocho Rios and St. Ann's Bay will be renovated.

Jamaica is the leading country in the region in disaster preparedness and will be staging the **7th Regional Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the Caribbean in July 2020**. The Government in recognising the importance of having youth as part of the discourse and subsequent response to disaster mitigation has for the first time in the history of the Platform added a Youth Forum.

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The Government continues to provide care and assistance to the poor and vulnerable who are outside of the infirmaries; two drop-in centres were completed and handed over to beneficiaries in the parishes of St. Thomas and Trelawny. Forty one (41) indigent houses have also been constructed and handed over and another forty (40) repaired.

In terms of legislative priorities, the **National Solid Waste Management (Amendment) Bill** is expected to be passed to allow the National Solid Waste Management Authority (NSWMA) to participate in the Metropolitan Parks and Markets Pension Plan. Additionally, **Regulations under the new 2018 Building Act** will strengthen specific areas of Service and Enforcement of Notices and Orders, Licensing of Building Practitioners and Rain Water Harvesting.

MINISTRY OF SCIENCE, ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY

Honourable Members, positioning Jamaica as a knowledge-based and digital society is a critical priority of the Government. The establishment of the ICT Authority in 2019 was an important milestone in this journey.

The Government Electrical Regulator is expected to transform the **Government Electrical Inspectorate (GEI)** and will be responsible for the regulation of the electrical inspection process; the licensing of electricians and electrical inspectors including making recommendations for renewal and revocation and monitoring work. When completed, this is expected to further improve Jamaica's standing in the global Doing Business Report.

The Government plans to introduce the **Petroleum Downstream Act** to encourage private investment, diversify fuel choices, and promote competition in the downstream natural gas sector.

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The Government has made significant progress towards achieving its revised target to increase the share of renewables in Jamaica's energy generation mix to 50 per cent by 2030. In October 2019, the largest solar farm in the English-speaking Caribbean was commissioned in Westmoreland.

Increased use of renewables and innovative ideas such as pumped hydro storage plants to provide integrated solutions to our water and energy sectors will lower costs for consumers and contribute to environmental preservation.

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND MINING

Honourable Members, road safety continues to be one of the highest priorities of the Government, as despite our efforts to address the situation; the number of fatalities is at an alarming level. The implementation of the Road Traffic Act and other measures, including the use of technology and increased public education will seek to reduce road fatalities and improve driver behaviour.

Another area of focus is the procurement of new buses for the Jamaica Urban Transit Company (JUTC) fleet to sustain daily bus deployment and to improve service delivery.

The Government is also leveraging technology to help clean up and regulate the public passenger industry. The recently launched Drive Safe app, for example, allows members of the public to report drivers who break the law.

An emerging area that the Government intends to focus on is electric vehicles. The public passenger fleet will be the first area for attention, with the introduction of forty-five (45) electric buses. The projected benefits of implementing this initiative are quite significant, and include energy saving, environmental preservation and the reduction of the national fuel bill.

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Legislative priorities in the transport and mining sector will include the following:

- **Amendment to the Civil Aviation Act** as it is critical that Jamaica maintains its civil aviation standards in line with international best practices.
- **Shipping (Pollution Prevention, Response, Liability and Compensation) Bill** to allow for recovery and compensation in the event of an oil spill, and contribution by importers of oil to the International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund.
- **Minerals Industries (Encouragement Act)** to give effect to the Draft National Minerals Policy which proposes to offer incentives encouraging investment into minerals other than bauxite.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE

Honourable Members, extensive international engagement is a key foreign policy tool for promoting Jamaica's inclusive sustainable economic growth agenda and promoting our role as a good global citizen. The Government will continue to pursue a robust strategy of engagement with bilateral and multi-lateral partners, in support of our agreed development priorities.

To institutionalise the cohesive development partnership with our Diaspora, the draft National Diaspora Policy has been approved for tabling in Parliament. Its implementation will be supported by the new Global Jamaica Diaspora Council and Global Jamaica Youth Diaspora Council.

Major goals of the Government's regional and multilateral engagement will include:

- Supporting the CARICOM Secretariat in its execution of a Results Based Management System;

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- Concluding a new foundation Partnership Agreement between the ACP States and EU together with its CARIFORUM Regional Protocol to facilitate new modalities for continued cooperation; and
- Signing and ratifying the Revised Georgetown Agreement on the establishment of the new Organization of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States.

CONCLUSION

Honourable Members, as we begin a new **decade of growth**, we stand at a pivotal point in our history.

Our people are deserving of the bountiful reward that will come from our collective efforts at building a stronger Jamaica; a greater Jamaica.

Our collective sacrifices as a people are bearing fruit and we are better placed than ever before to chart a path to a future of prosperity and dignity for every Jamaican.

While we have record low unemployment, we must continue to create more jobs for our people.

While we have record housing starts, we must continue to build even more houses for our people.

While we have had record investment in security, we must continue to rebuild our security infrastructure.

Our collective sacrifices as a people are bearing fruit and we are better placed than ever before to chart a path to a future of prosperity and dignity for every Jamaican.

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Let us build on the economic stability which we have achieved in this last decade to now **Anchor in this new Decade; our Growth, Peace and Prosperity.**