

WEDNESDAY JUNE 16, 2004

**SECTORAL PRESENTATION
MINISTER OF WATER & HOUSING
HONOURABLE DONALD BUCHANAN**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This debate comes against the background of an emerging national consensus that present economic indicators herald a period of economic development unparalleled in Jamaica's history. The unprecedented modernization of our physical infrastructure - highways, airports, seaports – the levels of direct foreign investment and the dramatic growth in tourism have all contributed to making Jamaica the place to invest.

I want to place on record that this positive transformation of Jamaica's economic possibilities in a globalized world is in no small way due to the outstanding leadership of Prime Minister P.J. Patterson. I recall the emotional response that was generated by the campaign to elect him Prime Minister, as well as the quiet dignity and decorum with which he accepted the awesome responsibility of state power.

No matter our personal disappointments in the results of elections, we all have to concede that over the last sixty years, the Jamaican people have shown remarkable intelligence in the way they have exercised their right to vote. No other Jamaican leader has enjoyed their trust and confidence over such an extended period as Percival James Patterson.

His leadership has been characterized by a continuing search for national consensus, always preferring cooperation over confrontation, yet, as some have discovered to their peril, there is no way around his quiet resolve, strength of character and capacity to stand up for what is right and principled, even if it means temporary isolation.

In observing Prime Minister Patterson at work, I am constantly reminded that in the long duel between the rock and the stream, it is the stream that wins.

Looking back at the last twelve years and the extraordinary challenges Jamaica has faced to achieve economic stability and growth, I would also like to place on record the contribution of that dedicated public servant and outstanding Minister of Finance, Hon. Omar Davies. No one can deny his extraordinary contribution to keeping the national economy afloat during a turbulence that would have sunk lesser captains.

The Prime Minister would be the first to concede that none of the achievements of his administration would have been possible without the support of his entire Cabinet and Parliamentary team. It is my pleasure to be a member of such a team with the responsibility for two subjects most critical to national development and prosperity – water and housing.

INTRODUCTION

Mr. Speaker,

My point of departure in making my contribution to the 2004/05 Sectoral Debate in this Honourable House is to locate my arguments, firstly, within the context of the universal preoccupation of governments everywhere to “Create an environment...which is conducive to development and the elimination of poverty”¹

These governments have set eight Millennium Goals for development and poverty eradication to be achieved by 2015. These goals are:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
2. Achieve universal primary education;
3. Promote gender equality and empower women;
4. Reduce child mortality;
5. Improve maternal health;
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases;
7. Ensure environmental sustainability; and,
8. Develop a global partnership for development.

The Government of Jamaica is part of this global commitment and our national policies reflect this commitment.

¹ UN General Assembly Resolution 55/2. para. 12

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I wish to ground my arguments within the framework of our national development agenda. The unprecedented economic expansion programme that is taking place in Jamaica is helping to redefine the work of the Ministry of Water and Housing.

The unprecedented expansion in the tourism sector to provide an additional 5,000 rooms over the next five years, the multi-billion Harmony Cove development project and the further expansion in the bauxite sector are driving the demand for improved and sustainable water supply and decent, legal and affordable shelter.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, I wish to locate my arguments against the background of the socio-historical realities of the Jamaican people that is largely defined by a constant reconstruction of that socio-cultural space, so eloquently described by Art Consultant and Radio Personality, Tony Laing, as “Smadditisation”²

These convergent positions at the global and local levels are translated into a progressive social policy that is defining a new social policy order that is contained in the Jamaica Social Policy Evaluation (JASPEV) Plan of Action that has been developed by this Government.

² Used by Rex Nettleford in *Mirror Mirror: Identity, Race and Protest in Jamaica*, pp. xvii

We have translated these positions into a vision of respect and dignity for all Jamaicans.

The Ministry of Water and Housing is guided by this vision.

Mr. Speaker, it is on this vision that **we are building a strong Jamaica.**

In my presentation, I will outline:

1. The big goals for water and housing;
2. Show how we intend to achieve the goals;
3. Update you on the progress thus far; and,
4. Place the work of my Ministry within the context of Jamaicans striving for respect and human dignity.

BIG GOALS

Our big goal is stated in the Water Sector Policy, Strategy and Action Plan that was approved by Cabinet last year July and is now being tabled in this Honourable House. The goal is simple: **ALL HOUSEHOLDS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO WATER BY 2010.**

We have a big goal for housing as well. **BY 2025 ALL JAMAICANS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, SAFE AND LEGAL HOUSING SOLUTIONS.**

Mr. Speaker, this Government intends to remove the word ‘squatter’ from the vocabulary of the Jamaican people.

ACCESS TO WATER FOR EVERY JAMAICAN – ACHIEVING THE GOAL

Mr. Speaker, the Millennium Development Goal # 7 “Ensure environmental sustainability” has special significance to the Ministry of Water and Housing. The Government’s social policies are un-achievable without universal access to sustainable safe drinking water. The health of the nation, human dignity and rural development are at risk without access to water.

The United Nations is evaluating the progress of countries based on the proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source and the proportion of people with access to secure tenure.

The United Nations Committee on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights has affirmed that “Water is fundamental for life and health. The human right to water is indispensable for leading a healthy life in human dignity. It is a pre-requisite to the realization of all other human rights”.

We Jamaicans have a way with words - we simply say, “**Water is life**”.

Mr. Speaker, just so that we have a common understanding of what we are talking about when we refer to improved water, the United Nations offers a definition for us:

“Access to improved water sources refers to the percentage of population who use any of the following types of water supply for drinking:

- Piped water;
- Public tap, borehole/pump;
- Protected well;
- Protected spring; and,
- Rainwater.”³

The question is, how is Jamaica living up to its obligation to the Jamaican people in this regard?

The Human Development Report 2003 shows that 85% of Jamaica’s rural population and 98% of its urban population was using improved water sources.⁴

³ Progress Towards the Millennium Development Goals, 1990-2003 pp. 18

⁴ Human Development Report 2003, pp. 224

Mr. Speaker, Jamaica is ahead of developing regions with recorded sustainable access to improved sources of water at 92% and 69% for the urban and rural areas respectively⁵.

We are keeping our eyes on the vision and the big goal. Our strategic focus is based on four planks:

1. Facilitating private investment in the sector;
2. Installing new water systems and improving existing ones;
3. Protecting our sources of water to prevent depletion and ensure sustainable safe water; and
4. Enhancing Jamaica's agricultural development by developing new irrigation schemes and maintaining existing ones.

FACILITATING PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT IN THE SECTOR

The Ministry intends to fulfil the mandate of the Government by facilitating private investment in the water sector. A new Act, the "Water Supply and Sewerage Services Act", will allow for the licencing of service providers in the water and sewage sector. The Chief Parliamentary Counsel is making final changes to the Bill, which we expect to be passed in this legislative year.

⁵United Nations Statistics Division," World regional trends," Millennium Indicators Database

Mr. Speaker, we know that private sector participation is required to achieve our big goal. It is estimated that some J\$121.2b (US\$2.2b) is required to achieve universal coverage of potable water, construct sewerage systems and to put in place the necessary irrigation systems. In keeping with our objective of facilitating private sector involvement, two licences were issued to private operators under the OUR Act. These are to:

1. CAN-CARA Development Limited for the provision of sewerage services to housing developments west of Spanish Town; and,
2. Rose Hall Utilities Company Limited to provide bulk collection and sewerage services along the Rose Hall strip in Montego Bay.

PROTECTING OUR SOURCES OF WATER TO PREVENT DEPLETION AND ENSURE SUSTAINABLE SAFE WATER

Mr. Speaker, every continent shares a common predicament - their water tables are falling. At present, 18% of the world's population or 1.1 billion people lack access to safe water. One reason is that water use grew at twice the rate of population during the 20th Century. In Jamaica, water use grew by almost 10% last year.

The achievement of our big goal requires an aggressive and strategic approach to water management. The Water Resources Authority (WRA) has responsibility for the management of the island's water.

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) is funding the upgrade of the Water Resources Master Plan which when completed will provide projections of demand to year 2025, 15 years beyond the 2010 deadline for our big goal of safe and sustainable water for every Jamaican household. I will take the plan to this Honourable House next year.

Mr. Speaker this is long-term vision, which only comes with progressive leadership.

As I indicated at the outset, the work of the Ministry is taking place within the context of the largest programme of economic expansion ever to be seen in the history of Jamaica. In the last five years projects valuing over J\$15b (US\$250m) have been undertaken to give Jamaicans access to improved water supply. By way of example:

The Lucea/Negril water supply (Longwood water supply) totaling J\$1.2b (US\$20m) and benefiting some 50,000 people is directly responsible for the removal of the moratorium on development and the opening of the Spanish Riu Hotel in Negril.

The J\$2.4b (US\$40m) Great River/Lucea water supply is scheduled for completion this year and will benefit some 30,000 people. The coastal strip between Montego Bay and Lucea will be opened up for development.

The Negril, Ocho Rios and Montego Bay sewerage systems, completed at a cost of over J\$2b (US\$33.3m), have improved the quality of coastal water, which is vital to Jamaicans living in these areas as well as the tourism sector.

The Kingston Metropolitan Water Supply which is being implemented at a cost of J\$5.18b (US\$86.3m) to:

1. Rehabilitate existing systems in Spanish Town and South East St. Catherine;
2. Replace old pipes and meters; and,
3. Provide an additional 8.5 million gallons of water every day for these two areas with population in the region of 500,000 Jamaicans.

Mr. Speaker, over the last five years, sustainable access to improved water supply is already a reality for hundreds of communities in:

- Kingston;
- St. James;
- Westmoreland;
- Hanover;
- St. Catherine;
- St. Thomas;
- Clarendon;

- Manchester; and,
- St. Elizabeth

under the leadership of Prime Minister P. J. Patterson. Never before seen in the history of Jamaica.

**ENHANCING JAMAICA'S AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
BY DEVELOPING NEW IRRIGATION SCHEMES AND
MAINTAINING EXISTING ONE**

Mr. Speaker, earlier I pointed to the link between access to safe and sustainable drinking water and the health of the nation, the achievement of human dignity and rural development.

I believe that the members of this house readily appreciate the health benefits to the nation.

In Jamaica, we take for granted the fact that our population enjoys good health. It is the result of vision and leadership and the hard work of our technocrats in several sectors including the Ministries of Health and Water and Housing. We are fortunate to have them and we salute them.

I wish to take some time to examine how access to safe and sustainable water affects rural development.

I do not believe that this link is more clearly demonstrated than in the work that we do to support rural agriculture. I am pleased to inform the House that the National Irrigation Development Plan is a reality and provides the framework for a blueprint for irrigation development island-wide.

Mr. Speaker, fifty-one irrigation projects were identified for construction at a cost of some J\$6.4b (US\$106.3m) by year 2015.

This will result in a 60% increase in irrigated area moving from 25,000 to 40,000 hectares. Over 6,900 farm families will benefit. Total agricultural production will increase by some J\$7.95b (US\$132.5m) annually and annual income will increase by J\$3.3B (US\$55m).

This year we will begin with Pedro Plains and Seven Rivers. Next year, we will move to Hounslow in St. Elizabeth. The CDB has made J\$80.5m (US\$1.342m) available for the preparatory work for the implementation of these projects. Some J\$720m (US\$12) is required to complete the projects over the next four years.

I wish to thank the staff of the National Irrigation Commission for keeping their eyes on the vision and for their contribution to rural development and more specifically, the development of agriculture.

HOUSING

Mr. Speaker, I now turn my attention to housing. There is a universal commitment for governments worldwide to achieve “A significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, as proposed in the “Cities Without Slums” initiative by 2020⁶.

The global urban population is expected to double during the next generation from 2.5 billion to 5 billion and almost all of the increase will take place in developing countries.

In Jamaica, we have seen the growth in population in areas such as Old Harbour, Spanish Town and Portmore exceeding 5%, which is much higher than the national figure. This situation presents challenges as overpopulated towns create pressure on local resources to provide for water, sanitation and housing.

Mr. Speaker, housing must be the most emotive subject in Jamaica. This is because housing occupies an important part of that socio-historical quest for personhood.

Mr. Speaker, home ownership is a Jamaican dream.

⁶Road Map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, pp.24

It confers on our people a sense of self and identity and undermines the collective sense of rootlessness, displacement and wandering that characterize the socio-historical condition common to Africans in the Diaspora.

Mr. Speaker, this Government will bring the Jamaican people home to occupy a collective space that is defined by a sense of place and stability.

That is why the goal of affordable and decent shelter for every Jamaican is a priority in the vision and social policy of this Government.

Never before in the history of this country has so many houses been built for middle-income, low income and no income Jamaicans. The Population Census 2001 shows that one hundred and thirty-seven thousand nine hundred (137,900) homes were built for ordinary Jamaicans in the decade of the 90s.

This means that some four hundred and ninety-six thousand (496,000) Jamaicans realized the Jamaican dream⁷ because we believe that respect for human dignity implies a commitment to create an enabling environment in which Jamaicans can develop a sense of self worth and security.

⁷Calculation is based on the average 2.6 persons per dwelling. See Population Census, 2001

The record speaks for itself.

The latest population census (2001) shows that the average number of persons per dwelling is 3.6 down from 4.2 in 1991. By way of example:

- The average number of persons per dwelling living in Tivoli Gardens was reduced from 4.7 in 1991 to 4 in 2001;
- In Denham Town the number of persons per dwelling moved from 3.4 in 1991 to 3 in 2001;
- In Manley Meadows the figure moved from 12 per dwelling to 2.8 in 2001; and
- The average figure for St. Andrew moved from 4.3 in 1991 to 3.6 in 2001.

REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF PERSONS PER DWELLING: 1991 - 2001

	2001		1991	
	Population	Average no. persons per dwelling	Population	Average no. persons per dwelling
Manley Meadows	5,252	2.8	2,252	12.0
Denham Town	8,380	3.0	8,158	3.4
Tivoli Gardens	4,389	4.0	4,268	4.7
Seven Miles/Bull Bay	17,817	4.0	8,734	4.7
August Town	6,281	3.7	3,924	4.3
Nannyville	2,427	4.8	1,957	6.4

Compiled from data presented in Population Census, 2001

Mr. Speaker, Jamaicans are coming home to dignity and decency.

As you know, the work of the Ministry in the provision of housing for the Jamaican people represents just a part - albeit an important part- of the Government's assault on homelessness.

My Ministry has a fixity of purpose to achieve the national goal for housing which I will repeat: **BY 2025 ALL JAMAICANS WILL**

HAVE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, SAFE AND LEGAL HOUSING SOLUTIONS.

We are taking four broad approaches to achieve this great goal:

1. Joint venture facilitation;
2. Community participation;
3. Security of tenure; and,
4. Mortgage provision

JOINT VENTURE FACILITATION

The Joint Venture Policy that was tabled in this House last year is resulting in more houses for more Jamaicans at prices they can afford. Under this Policy, the Ministry utilizes land it owns to form partnerships with private firms to develop housing solutions at lower than market cost for Jamaicans.

But it is a reciprocal arrangement in which private firms who own land partner with the Ministry, which provides legal and administrative services and assists in the approval process.

During the year, of the three thousand one hundred and twenty-eight (3,128) solutions that were started, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight (1,898) were completed.

One thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight (1,898) Jamaican families achieved the Jamaican dream of home ownership.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Mr. Speaker, our flagship programme of community participation is Operation Pride. No programme in the history of this country compares to Operation Pride in either scope or impact on the Jamaican people. The story of Operation Pride is the story of the struggles and successes of the Jamaican people to achieve human dignity.

I thank the Prime Minister, the Most Hon. P. J. Patterson for the faith he has placed in me to be a part of the writing of the history of modern Jamaica. This Government, together with the Jamaican people, intends to relegate shanty-towns, shacks and slums to the footnotes of Jamaican history.

We will not fail the people of Jamaica.

During the year:

- We restructured the National Housing Development Corporation,
- Introduced performance management,
- Carried out a process of re-engineering,
- Upgraded the Management Information Systems,

- Enhanced project management capabilities; and,
- Introduced new collections and project financing strategy because we believe in the purpose of Operation Pride.

The NHDC ended the financial year with net operating profit of J\$79.4m, an increase of some J\$13.8m over the same period last year.

There is more accountability and greater transparency in the operations of provident societies because we believe in self-reliance and community empowerment.

Mr. Speaker, 32 of the 113 Pride projects island-wide have been completed. Another 38 will be completed this year and the remaining 43 projects are at varying stages of planning and development because we believe that decent and affordable shelter for every Jamaican household is a right.

Mr. Speaker, one of the irrefutable strengths of P.J. Patterson is his ability to embrace all people who possess the Jamaican spirit of community responsibility and participation. This is because he believes in the ability of the Jamaican people to define their own destiny.

In light of this, we wish to commend:

1. Food for the Poor,

2. Mustard Seed Communities,
3. Habitat for Humanity Jamaica,
4. Kingston Restoration Company,
5. St. Patrick's Foundation, and
6. The Association for Settlement and Commercial Enterprise for National Development,

that are among the many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are bringing the Jamaican people home to decency and dignity.

IMPROVING SECURITY OF TENURE

Mr. Speaker, no other administration has achieved the great success of this administration in securing tenure for land and home ownership for ordinary Jamaicans.

During the year:

1. 3,109 Titles were received from the Titles Office for 27 schemes;
2. We made applications to the Titles Office for the splintering of Titles relating to 21 schemes;
3. 309 Certificates of Titles were delivered to persons who completed payments;
4. 490 Certificates of Titles were received from the Office of Titles with purchaser's name endorsed on them as proprietor;

5. In Trench Town Phase 7, sixty-one occupants have completed payments on their units and have collected their Titles.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate the 250 occupants who have signed sales agreements and have paid more than \$5.4m and the 120 occupants in Phases 4a and 4b who have paid over \$1.5m to date.

The quest for decency and dignity involves all Jamaicans everywhere.

MORTGAGE PROVISION

The Jamaica Mortgage Bank (JMB) is an important player in the housing sector, providing short-term financing to residential construction and infrastructure development and insuring residential mortgage loans. During last year, the JMB financed 2,000 housing solutions across Jamaica.

BUILDING A STRONG JAMAICA

Mr. Speaker, there is irrefutable evidence that Jamaica is making progress in human development and this is recognised internationally. Jamaica was one of the biggest movers in the Human Development Index (HDI) as reported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) moving from 86 in the 2002 report to 78 out of a total of 175 countries in 2003.

The country has also moved to 14 in the 2003 report up from 20 in the Human Poverty Index (HPI) for 94 developing countries.⁸ Please refer to the table below.

HPI-1 Ranks (Top 25 developing countries)	HPI-1 Ranks (Top 25 developing countries)
2003	2002
1. Barbados	1. Uruguay
2. Uruguay	2. Costa Rica
3. Chile	3. Chile
4. Costa Rica	4. Cuba
5. Cuba	5. Singapore
6. Singapore	6. Trinidad & Tobago
7. Jordan	7. Jordan
8. Trinidad & Tobago	8. Panama
9. Panama	9. Venezuela
10. Columbia	10. Columbia
11. Venezuela	11. Mexico
12. Belize	12. Lebanon
13. Mexico	13. Paraguay
14. Jamaica	14. Belize
15. Lebanon	15. Mauritius
16. Paraguay	16. Guyana
17. Mauritius	17. Brazil
18. Brazil	18. Turkey
19. Peru	19. Peru
20. Maldives	20. Jamaica
21. Ecuador	21. Thailand
22. Turkey	22. Dominican Rep.
23. Guyana	23. Philippines
24. Thailand	24. China
25. Dominican Republic	25. Maldives

⁸ Human Development Report, 2003 pp. 224 & 247, see also Human Development Report 2002, 149 & 159

The work of the Ministry of Water and Housing contributed in no small measure to this progress. The HPI measures deprivations in three basic dimensions:

1. A long and healthy life;
2. Knowledge; and,
3. A decent standard of living.

The third dimension - a decent standard of living - examines “Lack of access to overall economic provisioning... as measured by the... percentage of the population without sustainable access to an improved water source and the percentage of children underweight for age”⁹.

As pleased as I am about our improvements in the eyes of the international community, I am more interested in meeting the expectations of the Jamaican people for quality life. We will continue to do just that in this new financial year:

⁹Human Development Report 2003, pp.342

In the area of water:

- Road reinstatement works Williamsfield/Flower Hill and Grange/Burnt Savannah water supply schemes in Westmoreland will be undertaken because **we are building a strong Jamaica;**
- Pipe laying for the Yallahs/Pamphret water supply in St. Thomas will be completed by July of this year because **we are building a strong Jamaica;**
- In addition to the White Horses/Botany Bay/Pamphret water supply in St. Thomas, construction will also commence on the Cottorwood water supply system in St. Elizabeth because **we are building a strong Jamaica;**
- The Southeast Westmoreland/Darliston water supply will be improved by upgrading the Roaring River slow sand treatment facility at a cost of \$150m because **we are building a strong Jamaica;**
- \$2.4b water supply project in Trelawny to begin in September in support of the Harmony Cove development project – the single largest development project in the history of the country because **we are building a strong Jamaica.**

In the area of housing,

- 6,829 Titles are now ready to be handed over to home-owners in 19 Operation Pride schemes across Jamaica because **we are building a strong Jamaica;**
- An additional 10,000 Titles will be delivered into the hands of Jamaicans under Operation Pride during this financial year because **we are building a strong Jamaica;**
- We are assisting Jamaicans in inner-city communities such as Trench Town acquire legal shelter because **we are building a strong Jamaica;**
- We have acquired 29 properties to facilitate 2,621 splintered Titles to be issued in Seaview Gardens, Cassava Piece and M^cIntyre Villas because **we are building a strong Jamaica;**
- We are spending J\$120m to assist 12,000 families in constituencies across Jamaica with building materials and 2,000 houses in partnership with Food for the Poor because **we are building a strong Jamaica.**

ONE VISION: ONE PEOPLE

Mr. Speaker, our theme of **“One Vision, One People: a Strong Jamaica”**, represents a reading of the Jamaican mood. The people are ready to unite around a common vision.

In every nook and cranny of this country Jamaicans are saying we want to move forward with a strong sense of where we are going and how we will get there.

Mr. Speaker, we have given them the vision and presented them with the road map to get us there.

The time has come for us as Jamaicans to create a new social ideology. We must construct a new socio-cultural space that stretches beyond racial harmony to a oneness of vision and purpose; oneness in our collective reaching out for respect and dignity.

And it is on this new social ideology that we are building a new Jamaica; a strong Jamaica.

God bless Jamaica and Jamaicans as we build.