

**A Better Way**  
**...for a Better Jamaica.**

**Jamaica Labour Party**  
**Manifesto 2007**

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### OUR COMMITMENT TO THE PEOPLE OF JAMAICA

# Message from the leader

As a nation marking its 45th year of independence, our people have a right to expect to live in a peaceful and just society that offers them the opportunity to enjoy a good life. Many countries which were in circumstances similar to ours in 1962 have advanced to First World status. They have moved on. We could have done as well but we haven't. As a nation we have made too many mistakes and missed too many opportunities. We have much ground to make up.

We can make up that ground because, as we have demonstrated time and again, we are a tough, resilient people capable of greatness. But we need to make a fresh start finding a common purpose, sharing a new vision and going forward with new leadership.

The Jamaica Labour Party offers that leadership to energize our people to strive with a new zeal to make Jamaica a land of JUSTICE, LIBERTY and PROSPERITY. We believe that we are too rich to be so poor, too gifted to be so restricted, too blessed to be so stressed and too anointed to be so disappointed.

Yes, we can make it but we must be clear as to what our goals, are and the steps we must take to achieve them.

*(Cont'd)*

This Manifesto sets out our vision, where we want to go and the path we will take to get there. It is a roadmap that has at the centre of its concerns our people and their advancement. It represents our commitment to the Jamaican people and is reinforced by our 100 Day Covenant which sets out the specific initiatives we intend to take within the first 100 days to demonstrate the strength of our commitment.

I ask for your support and I urge you to vote on election day for the JLP candidate in your constituency. He or she is part of the team whose commitment is reflected in the plans we have laid out in this Manifesto. And after the elections, I urge Jamaicans of all political persuasions to work with us for ours will be a government for all the people....finding a better way for a better Jamaica.

# Introduction

## **The challenges we face...**

### **...the ground we must make up**

Eighteen years of PNP rule have left Jamaica facing severe economic and social problems. While there has been progress in some areas such as new highways, improved air and sea ports, construction of new hotels, increased housing benefits and a build-up in foreign reserves, Jamaica has stagnated or declined in several critical areas:

**Sluggish economy:** Between 1988 and 2006, the Jamaican economy grew by only 28% or an annual average of 1.4%. This compares unfavourably with countries like Trinidad (153%), Belize (136%), Antigua (92%) and St. Kitts (90%).

**Crippling national debt:** Massive government borrowing has increased the national debt from J\$31 billion (US\$5.7 billion) in 1988 to J\$947 billion (US\$13.8 billion) in 2007.

Jamaica now owes more than J\$350,000 for

every man, woman and child! It costs the country more than J\$550 million per day to service that debt.

**Unemployment:** Official statistics which show unemployment to be less than 10%, really ignores the high level of “disguised” unemployment since persons recorded as employed include those who hustle to survive and are employed for as little as one hour per week. In addition, over 300,000 persons, the equivalent of 25% of the labour force are not counted among the unemployed. Many of these persons, out of frustration, have stopped looking for work.

**Weak agricultural sector:** The agricultural sector suffers from lack of technology, low productivity and uncompetitiveness. It accounts for only 6% of the total output of the economy but employs 18% of the labour force. As a result, the economy of rural communities remains severely depressed and the majority of farmers are condemned to the lowest living standards.

**High levels of crime:** Jamaica has one of the highest crime rates in the world. Since 1988 the annual murder rate has climbed from just over 400 to more than 1,300; over 17,000 murders have been committed and more than 50% of them remain unsolved.

**Poor education:** Our education system is failing our children and blighting our future. Seventy-percent (70%) of students leaving high schools have failed to achieve the minimum internationally- accepted standard of 5 passes at CXC level. In the core subjects, only 27% manage to pass English Language and only 17% Mathematics.

**Unskilled labour force:** In a world where employment opportunities are increasingly knowledge-based, 72% of the labour force have attained no academic qualifications whatsoever and 76% are without any skill training.

**Corruption:** Corruption is rampant in Jamaica and not only siphons off billions of dollars of taxpayers' money but undermines the competitiveness of those who play by the rules. In 2006, Transparency International gave Jamaica a score of 3.7 out of 10 (10 being the least corrupt).

**Inadequate health services:** Our public health system suffers from lack of equipment and supplies; shortage of medical personnel especially nurses; and is unaffordable to many poor persons who are required to pay for hospital services.

**Poor roads:** While much attention has been paid to new highways, secondary and tertiary roads, especially in urban and rural communities, have been severely neglected.

**Lack of water supplies:** Only 45% of households throughout Jamaica have piped water in their homes.

**Abuse of human rights:** The abuse by the State of the rights of ordinary citizens is virtually a daily occurrence with inadequate means of prevention or redress.

**Poor justice system:** Our justice system is creaking. The Resident Magistrate Courts where the vast majority of Jamaican's come in contact with the justice system, has a backlog of more than 400,000 cases with over 300,000 new cases filed each year.

**Crumbling social order:** The decline in values and standards has severely undermined our sense of community. Indifference, the lack of respect for each other, indiscipline, disunity and lawlessness threaten to overwhelm the traditional Jamaican way of life which, in the past, held us together as a people and enabled us to triumph over adversity.

# GOVERNANCE

## A framework for good governance

The Jamaica Labour Party believes that the essential purpose of government in a democratic society is to guarantee the rights of its citizens and to enable them to achieve prosperity.

Policies and programmes, no matter how well formulated, will succeed only if they are implemented within a framework of good governance designed to:

- protect the rights of every citizen
- prevent the concentration and abuse of power
- impose strict accountability on those exercising authority.
- ensure an efficient and easily accessible justice system
- maintain effective law enforcement
- provide an efficient bureaucracy impervious to corruption

For too long, the Jamaican people have suffered from institutionalized injustice, abuse of power, violation of their rights, rampant

corruption and callous negligence by state agencies in performing their duty.

The JLP is committed to establishing a new framework for good governance.

### **Our pledge**

#### **1.1 Republican status**

Take steps to amend the Constitution to replace the Queen with a Jamaican President who symbolizes the unity of the nation. Such a President will be appointed by consensus through a two-thirds majority vote in each House of Parliament.

#### **1.2 Fundamental rights**

Seek entrenchment in the Constitution of a new CHARTER OF RIGHTS to guarantee the fundamental rights of every citizen.

#### **1.3 Citizens Protection Bureau**

Establish a Citizens Protection Bureau headed by the Public Defender with expanded powers to defend the rights of and secure redress for citizens

whose constitutional rights may be violated.

#### **1.4 Challenge to government actions**

Establish the right of individuals and organizations to challenge executive action in the public interest for the protection and enforcement of public rights.

#### **1.5 Impeachment of public officials**

Enact provisions for the impeachment of public officials for misconduct, corruption, abuse of office or betrayal of public trust.

#### **1.6 Prosecutorial functions**

Make provision for judicial review of the decisions of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

#### **1.7 Appointment to sensitive posts**

Require that appointment to sensitive posts that are critical to the delivery of good governance be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority in each House of Parliament thereby requiring consensus between the government and the opposition. These include:

- Chief Justice
- President of the Court of Appeal
- Director of Public Prosecutions
- Public Defender
- Contractor General
- Judicial Services Commission
- Police Services Commission
- Public Services Commission
- Governor of the Bank of Jamaica

In addition, we will require that appointments to ambassadorial posts and statutory boards be subject to scrutiny and approval by Parliament.

#### **1.8 Local government**

Give constitutional recognition and protection to the Local Government system

#### **1.9 Greater representation for civil society**

Increase the membership of the Senate to include representatives of civil society chosen by the President.

#### **1.10 Fixed election period**

Establish a fixed election period subject to variation only in specified circumstances.

#### **1.11 Term limits**

Impose a two-term limit on anyone holding the office of Prime Minister.

#### **1.12 Special Prosecutor to combat corruption**

Establish a Special Prosecutor to investigate and prosecute persons involved in corruption.

#### **1.13 Enforcing procedures for awarding government contracts**

Impose criminal sanctions for violation of the rules governing the award of contracts and make provision that contracts issued without the proper procedures and authorization are rendered null and void and unenforceable.

#### **1.14 Strengthening corruption prevention authorities**

Strengthen the Corruption Prevention Commission and the Parliamentary Integrity Commission to enable them to more effectively ferret out public officials engaged in corrupt activities.

#### **1.15 Whistleblower protection**

Introduce whistleblower legislation to protect persons who provide information on wrongdoing on the part of public officials.

### **1.16 Reform of libel and slander laws**

Modernize the laws relating to libel and slander so that those engaged in corruption can be more easily exposed and brought to justice.

### **1.16 Independent investigation of abuse by security forces**

Establish an independent authority to investigate instances of abuse by members of the security forces.

### **1.17 Special Coroner**

Appoint a Special Coroner to speedily conduct inquests in instances where citizens die in circumstances in which agents of the State are involved.

### **1.18 Strengthening the role of Parliament**

- A two-thirds majority in each House of Parliament will be required for approval of certain measures (e.g. increase in debt and deficit ceilings and appointment of certain sensitive posts) to increase the ability of Parliament to act as a restraint on the government in critical areas.
- Provide that all Sessional and Special Select Committees of Parliament be chaired by a member of the Opposition to ensure more diligent oversight of government's activities as is the case with the Public Accounts Committee.
- Strengthen the Standing Orders of Parliament to expand and protect the rights of Members of Parliament to make statements, secure answers and debate issues on behalf of their constituents.

### **1.19 Issues of accountability**

Make provision that reports from the Auditor General, Contractor General, Public Defender, Political Ombudsman, Corruption Prevention Commission and Integrity Commission must be debated within 30 days of submission to Parliament.

### **1.20 Parliamentary salaries**

Restrict increases in parliamentary salaries to the weighted average of increases granted to the Public Sector.

### **1.21 Structure of Cabinet**

Establish in the Constitution the core ministries of government with a limit as to the number of additional ministries that can be created.

### **1.22 Transforming the bureaucracy**

Undertake a comprehensive review of the existing structure and operation of government bureaucracy to eliminate waste and unnecessary red tape and improve efficiency and accountability.

### **1.23 Financing of political parties**

Enact, in consultation with the Electoral Commission, legislation to regulate the financial operations of political parties.

## Improving the effectiveness of the people's representatives

Members of Parliament are the people's representatives.

It is they (the people) who elected them; and it is them (the M.Ps) that the people hold accountable. Yet, MPs are rendered powerless and unable to effectively represent their constituents. They table questions and move resolutions but there is no obligation to provide answers or allow debate. They seek provisions to address the needs of their constituents but it is a Minister who decides whether those needs should be met.

We are committed to ensuring that MPs are enabled to represent their people....that they have the tools to do their jobs.

### **2.1 Questions and resolutions must be dealt with**

Amend the Standing Orders to prescribe a time limit within which questions must be answered and resolutions debated.

### **2.2 Statements by MPs**

Every MP will have the right to make statements to Parliament on behalf of his constituents. The duration of statements will be limited to five (5) minutes and no more than six (6) statements will be permitted at any one sitting. Statements will be allowed in the order in which notice was served on the Clerk of Parliament.

### **2.3 Constituency Development Plan**

- Each MP will be required to submit to Parliament within six (6) months of being elected a 5 year development plan outlining the programmes and projects to be undertaken in his or her constituency.
- Constituency Development Plans will be developed with technical support from the relevant government agencies and will be subject to approval by Parliament.
- The relevant committee of Parliament will evaluate the

implementation of the Plan each year and recommend such modifications as may be proposed by the MP for the approval of Parliament.

- A Constituency Development Fund will be established funded with two-and-a-half percent (2 1/2%) of the annual budget and allocated in equal amounts among all constituencies to finance the approved projects.

- Disbursements from the Fund will be made through the relevant government agencies and subject to all applicable procurement and disbursement procedures.
- All expenses from the Fund will be audited by the Auditor General and reported to Parliament.

## Planning for development

Proper planning is essential in defining our goals and designing the path to ensure their achievement. It must be built on a shared vision and it must outline the strategies to be employed, the outcomes to be achieved, the resources that will be required and the medium-term targets that will measure its progress. It will also provide a known, predictable framework for the development and implementation of policies in the various sectors.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **3.1 National Development Plan**

Formulate a National Development Plan on which the PIOJ has already commenced work to guide policy development and programme implementation over the next 20 years.

#### **3.2 Physical Development Plan**

Prepare an accompanying Physical Development Plan to determine the strategies for urban and rural development, land utilization, infrastructure

planning and investment, transportation and civic amenities.

#### **3.3 Public Sector Investment Programme**

Develop a comprehensive Public Sector Investment Programme to support these two plans by identifying the investments that the government will be required to make, the sources from which those investments will be derived, and the economic returns that will result.

**FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT,  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
& GROWTH**

## Building a platform for strong economic growth

Jamaica needs strong, sustained levels of economic growth to create jobs, reduce poverty, raise living standards and pay down the national debt. This will require high levels of investment both local and foreign. In the post cold-war, globalized world, investors have wide choices as to where to go to invest their money. If we are to attract the level of investments that our economy requires, we must create an investment climate that makes us the preferred choice for real, long term, productive investment activity, the critical elements of which are:

- A sound, predictable macro-economic policy framework that maintains low inflation, a stable exchange rate and competitive interest rates
- A tax system that is simple and competitive
- A modernized labour market geared toward high levels of productivity
- A simplified, business-friendly bureaucracy
- Effective measures to prevent corruption
- Low crime levels
- Supportive infrastructure



## A sound macro-economic policy framework

Over the last 18 years, Jamaica has suffered from erratic financial management involving reckless swings from loose fiscal and monetary policies to painful corrective tightening.

We have paid a high price for these mistakes:

- Devaluation of the Jamaican dollar from \$5.50 to \$69 per US dollar
- High levels of government borrowing that at times commandeered up to 86% of available banking system credit
- Persistent fiscal deficits ranging as high as 12% of GDP
- Protracted high interest rates that made it unprofitable to invest and impossible to borrow to invest
- Massive increase in public debt from J\$31 billion to J\$947 billion (US\$5.7 billion to US\$13.8 billion)
- Crippling inflation that in one fiscal year rose as high as 105%

- Collapse of most major financial institutions and the huge cost to the taxpayers of over J\$120 billion to rescue deposits and pension funds
- Closure of many businesses and massive job losses

Robust investment, economic growth and job creation can only occur if the country enjoys a macro-economic framework designed to sustain sound fiscal and monetary policies, moderate public debt levels, low inflation, competitive interest rates, a stable exchange rate and a business-friendly regulatory framework.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **5.1 Independent Central Bank**

Transform the Bank of Jamaica into an independent central bank insulated from political direction and with sole responsibility for monetary policy and mandated to maintain domestic price stability. This will enhance investor

confidence with the assurance that the central bank can no longer be used to facilitate reckless, politically expedient fiscal decisions. The Governor of the Bank will be required to appear before the appropriate committee of Parliament twice per year to outline and report on the policies being pursued to fulfill its mandate.

## **5.2 Debt management**

- Enact legislation to impose on, a phased basis within five (5) years, a constitutional limit on the level of public debt of 95% of Gross Domestic Product with provision for this level to be exceeded only in times of specified emergencies and only with the approval of a two-thirds (2/3) majority of both Houses of Parliament.
- Steadfastly pursue a debt reduction strategy to contain new borrowings within the targets required to meet the constitutional limit and, through measures to accelerate economic growth, we will seek over time to reduce the debt-to-GDP ratio to 60% - well within the constitutional limit and in line with international best practice.
- Establish a firm policy that all the proceeds from the divestment of government assets must be used to reduce the national debt.

## **5.3 Fiscal deficit**

- Eliminate the fiscal deficit through prudent fiscal management, elimination of waste and corruption and through revenue-generating economic growth in order to build the surpluses to reduce the debt and finance critical expenditures.
- Impose a constitutional limit requiring that the fiscal deficit must

not exceed 3% of GDP except in times of specified emergencies, and only with the approval of a two-thirds (2/3) majority of both Houses of Parliament.

## **5.4 Tax Reform**

- Embark on a comprehensive tax reform programme designed to simplify the tax system, make it more equitable, remove disincentives to investment and job creation and ensure greater compliance.
- Increase the tax-free threshold to provide relief to thousands of wage earners who are now required to pay income tax on earnings of more than \$3,720 per week.
- Consolidate the existing wage-related statutory deductions and contributions (NIS, NHT, Education Tax and HEART) into a single social security payment to simplify collection and remittance. The Inland Revenue Department will then be responsible for transmitting the appropriate portion to the relevant agencies.

## **5.5 Modernization of customs**

Modernize the customs system to improve efficiency and transparency and eliminate corruption which not only deprives the country of revenue but subjects legitimate businesses to unfair competition.

## **5.6 A business-friendly bureaucracy**

- Conduct a comprehensive review of government ministries and statutory agencies and implement measures to improve efficiency and accountability.
- Establish performance targets for each department or agency to be monitored by a special unit with

- in the Ministry of Finance and reported on annually to Parliament. Special staff incentives will be offered to those agencies that achieve their prescribed targets.
- Carry out an audit of all regulations, reporting requirements, approvals, licences and permits as they affect business operations and the conduct of business by the ordinary citizen with a view to eliminating or simplifying those that pose unnecessary impediments to business or inconvenience to the public. In this regard, we will incorporate the recommendations of the Legislation, Regulations and Process Improvement Project (Legs & Regs).
  - Establish within the Office of the Prime Minister a special desk to receive and investigate complaints of undue delays and inconvenience encountered in doing business with government departments and agencies.

### **5.7 Social Partnership**

Seek to create a Social Partnership involving the Government, Opposition, Private Sector and Trade Unions to establish the parameters for a new, coordinated thrust toward investment, economic growth and job creation and the binding commitments on the part of each partner.



## A proactive, customised investment strategy

Attracting investment is a market activity. We must go to the market, not wait for the market to find us.

Creating jobs will be the central focus of our economic strategies. Creating jobs for our people is the surest way to eliminate poverty, reduce crime and raise living standards. It is also the surest way to earn more revenue in order to pay down the national debt and provide more resources for critical social services and infrastructure development.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **6.1 Mega-agency for investment promotion, financing and marketing**

Merge Jamaica Invest (formerly JAMPRO), the Development Bank of Jamaica (DBJ) and EXIM Bank to become one integrated investment promotion, financing and marketing powerhouse, Jamaica Investment and Development Corporation (JIDC), to attract foreign investment and stimulate local investment.

#### **6.2 Strategic investment promotion**

Re-energize our investment promotion strategy to target investments that will create significant new jobs and establish linkages for other investments to take place. Where advantageous, we will pursue a firm-centric approach to attract “brand name” investors whose operations are globally integrated and are pacesetters for other investments.

#### **6.3 Aggressive overseas marketing**

Seek to identify overseas markets for local producers and service providers in all sectors who may be incapable of penetrating these markets on their own.

#### **6.4 Exploiting “Brand Jamaica”**

Vigorously promote Brand Jamaica - one of our most valuable national assets which already enjoys international appeal and has the capacity to build lucrative markets for local producers of goods and services.

## **6.5 Better access to Research, Development and Technology**

Merge the various existing small, struggling government research entities into a modern, efficient, cutting-edge National Research & Development Centre to be attached to the UWI and UTech in order to achieve desirable synergies between commercial and academic research and to develop products and processes that will attract investments and secure markets here and overseas.

## **6.6 Expanding venture capital financing**

Provide the appropriate fiscal and regulatory mechanisms to facilitate the growth of venture capital financing to encourage new start-ups and enable the expansion of existing businesses hobbled by lack of capital and the high cost of debt financing.

## **6.7 Eliminating double taxation on dividends**

Eliminate double taxation on dividends for non-listed companies to encourage re-investment for expansion.

## **6.8 Taking advantage of Business Process Outsourcing**

Assist local goods and service providers to tap into the large, growing market for business process outsourcing activities, taking advantage of our strategic geographical location and the currency of our language.

## **6.9 Pursuing new opportunities in the services sector**

Encourage the emergence of new businesses in the rapidly growing services sector to take advantage of the lucrative opportunities in information technology, professional services, entertainment and culture.

## **6.10 Enterprise Zones**

Establish Enterprise Zones strategically located in major urban centres with appropriate incentives and shared services to facilitate new start-ups in the manufacturing, agricultural and service sectors.

## **6.11 Science and technology**

Establish a special unit within the Office of the Prime Minister to promote and monitor the development and application of science and technology within the public and private sector to achieve efficiency and competitiveness in all sectors.

## **6.12 Pay special attention to Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)**

- Actively support the continued development and growth of SMEs which require modest capital outlay, offer high job-creating potential, can be established in a relatively short period of time and have the size-flexibility to satisfy niche markets.
- Provide appropriate incentives and access to special, concessionary financing for SMEs.
- Provide technical expertise to assist SMEs in areas of production processes and management, quality control, packaging, marketing, cost analysis and financial management.

## **6.13 Establishment of a Credit Bureau**

Provide the legislative framework for and encourage the establishment of a Credit Bureau to facilitate, especially, small entrepreneurs who may lack collateral but whose credit rating will provide access to financing to start or expand businesses.

## **6.14 Offshore educational facilities**

Actively promote the establishment of

offshore campuses and other educational facilities to provide jobs for local workers and demand for local goods and services while offering their parent universities the advantage of lower costs.

### **6.15 Offshore financial centre for Kingston**

Establish Kingston as a choice location for offshore financial services to exploit the benefits currently being enjoyed by countries such as the Cayman Islands and Bermuda. This will be sited in downtown Kingston as a fulcrum for the much needed redevelopment of that part of the city.

### **6.16 Major investment projects**

Seek investors for large-scale projects designed to generate significant numbers of new jobs and create opportunities for investment linkages. These will include:

- Air transshipment hub to be located at Vernamfield in Clarendon to parallelize the outstanding success achieved in maritime transshipment by the Port of Kingston
- Large-scale Freeport facility to be located on the Fort Augusta peninsula to provide assembling and duty free shopping comparable to that which exists in Panama
- The development of Port Royal and its rich cultural heritage as a major cruise ship destination to be interfaced with the Fort Augusta Freeport
- Expansion of the Port of Kingston on lands on the north side of Marcus Garvey Drive linked by an overpass to meet the growing need for more container storage space.
- Development of a new modern port facility at Port Esquivel in St. Catherine to facilitate the rapid growth of maritime transshipment which now threatens to exhaust the available space at the Port of Kingston.
- Modern dry dock facility at Salt River in Clarendon to take advantage of our strategic location and lower costs to provide maintenance services for ships.
- Development of a Nutraceutical and Biotechnology Industrial Park to take advantage of Jamaica's unique position as a major global source of natural products (estimated at 15% of global reserves).



## A foreign policy to support our national goals

The traditional focus of our foreign policy has been to maximize aid and development assistance and sustain preferential trading arrangements. The international environment has shifted significantly. Aid and development assistance is declining and is being confined to least developed countries. In the context of globalization the priorities in our foreign policy approach must be to secure export markets and attract investors into our economy. This will require a repositioning of our foreign policy thrust.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **7.1 Strategic foreign policy to boost investment and growth**

- Support the Regional Negotiating Machinery and the initiatives being pursued through CARIFORUM to conclude the most favourable agreements with the European Union (Economic Partnership Agreements) and the WTO (Doha round).
- Press for the removal of domestic support of agricultural products by the European Union and the United States as a precondition for further liberalization of market access for such products.
- Strenuously advocate deferment beyond January 2008 of reciprocal market access in response to the EU's proposal for the removal of all its remaining tariff and quota limitations on imports from ACP countries on a basis that would not subject us to EU's Generalized System of Preferences.
- Identify sensitive goods and services which can still be protected from market access under existing WTO rules.
- Insist on the establishment of a development agenda as the centerpiece of the revival of the Doha round which is critical to the integration of developing countries in the multilateral trading system.

- Urge CARIFORUM to seek an extension of the waiver granted to the EU by the WTO in respect of preferential arrangements that are in breach of WTO rules in order to allow more time to conclude and implement EPAs.
- Continue to insist upon special and differential treatment for developing countries within the WTO agreement.
- Pursue investment possibilities through the European Investment Bank in major areas such as tourism, telecommunications and services.
- Negotiate additional bilateral preferential trading arrangements (especially with regard to energy supplies) that are not inconsistent with our WTO obligations.
- Restructure our Missions abroad to reflect priority focus on trade and investment promotion as well as provide services to the Jamaican community in Diaspora countries.
- Promote greater involvement of the private sector in policy formulation and trade negotiations in recognition of their critical role in an economics-driven foreign policy.

## **7.2 Our foreign policy in the context of international politics**

- Maintain a non-aligned political posture in our foreign relations and take positions consistent with our obligations under international conventions that are in the best interests of Jamaica and the international community.
- Support the work of the UN, Commonwealth, OAS and other regional and international bodies of which we are a member.

## **7.3 Our relations with CARICOM**

- We pledge our support for CARICOM and the concept of regional integration.
- We will use our membership and influence within CARICOM and the CSME to exploit their real potential, i.e., to combine our energies and resources as individual states to secure investments, create jobs, increase exports to third countries and improve living standards within the region.

## **7.4 Integrating the Diaspora**

- Continue our support for the Diaspora Foundation and its efforts to network all Jamaican organizations overseas.
- Strengthen the Jamaican's Overseas Department to improve the procedures with which returning residents have to contend as well as promote and protect the interests of Jamaican's overseas.
- Use diplomatic channels to more proactively represent the interests of the Jamaican community to the governments of the countries in which they reside.
- Float a special, secure Diaspora Bond to provide an attractive investment opportunity for Jamaican's overseas and raise capital to help finance the Education Transformation project.
- Establish a database of Jamaican's overseas to strengthen our contact with the Diaspora and provide a resource base for the recruitment of special skills.

## Better energy security and efficiency

Jamaica's almost total dependence on imported oil as its source of energy threatens our prospects for economic growth and development. Our energy costs are higher than that of most of our trading partners.

Oil prices are likely to remain high due to diminishing global oil reserves, worldwide shortage of refining capacity, rapidly increasing demand arising from the spectacular growth in economic activity in China, India and other Asian and Pacific countries and the continuing turmoil in the Middle East where the bulk of the world's oil reserves is located.

Jamaica needs to move with greater speed and purpose to diversify its energy sources if we are to enjoy energy security at prices that will allow us to achieve competitiveness and sustained growth.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **8.1 Energy diversification**

Pursue all available options to establish

the most appropriate energy mix based on cheaper sources including coal, natural gas, ethanol and other bio-fuels, hydro- electric and solar and wind power. We will provide the necessary incentives and regulatory framework to encourage this diversification.

#### **8.2 Oil and gas exploration**

Support and continue exploration to determine whether commercial quantities of oil or gas exist within Jamaica's territorial waters.

#### **8.3 Expanding available sources of supply**

Seek to expand existing bilateral arrangements for the supply of oil to include other oil producing countries within and outside the Latin American and Caribbean region.

#### **8.4 Electricity generation**

Ensure proper development and timely approval of Least Cost Expansion Plans so that local power providers will be obliged to replace, on a phased basis, inefficient plant and replace it with more efficient units. We will also ensure that the savings are reflected in the rates charged to consumers.

#### **8.5 Modernizing electricity legislation**

Replace the age-old statutes under which electricity is produced and supplied and replace them with modern legislation reflecting current best practices in the regulation of electricity providers.

#### **8.6 Enforcing required standard**

Rigorously enforce the required standards regarding the transmission and distribution of electricity which continue to be the source of substantial losses that have to be borne by consumers.

#### **8.7 Ensuring accurate meters and billings**

Institute measures to ensure the accuracy of electricity meters and billing systems with user-friendly systems for investigation and verification in instances where disputes arise.

#### **8.8 A more proactive OUR**

The OUR will be required to be more vigilant in ensuring transparency and fairness in the conduct of licensed electricity suppliers.

#### **8.9 Local refinery operations**

Continue the programme to modernize and increase the capacity of our local refinery.

#### **8.10 Rural electricity expansion**

Intensify the Rural Electrification Programme to extend electricity to those communities that are still without the service.

#### **8.11 Illegal electricity consumption**

Institute a new programme to regularize electricity supply in areas where electricity is being accessed illegally in order to bring these residents into the formal consumer base.

#### **8.12 Introducing new petroleum reference price mechanism**

Abandon the Gulf reference standard currently being used to determine petroleum prices and replace it with an import parity price mechanism based on market realities within the region.

#### **8.13 Diversifying motor vehicle fuels**

Use fiscal measures to encourage the use of flexi and hybrid motor vehicles and those designed for diesel, bio-fuels and other more efficient and environment- friendly fuels.

## Launching a new agricultural revolution

Agriculture, once the backbone of the Jamaican economy, has declined to the point where, today, it accounts for less than 6% of the economy. Yet, it employs 18% of the total labour force and is the sole means of livelihood for thousands of families in rural communities. As a result, incomes and living standards in rural areas are the lowest in Jamaica.

In the past, the agricultural sector enjoyed the benefit of preferential arrangements for its traditional export crops (sugar and bananas) and a protected domestic market for almost everything else. Our preferential arrangements are rapidly coming to an end and trade liberalization has opened up our domestic market to foreign imports.

The average farmer today, more than ever before, is struggling to survive. The rising cost of inputs, low productivity and depressed markets due to fierce competition spell disaster for the future of agriculture unless there are radical changes in our approach to the sector.

The most compelling challenges to agriculture are to raise the level of productivity through the use of technology and improved farming practices; and to provide better access to markets.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **9.1 Widescale application of technology to dramatically increase productivity**

- Aggressively promote the use of proven technology (e.g. green house, hydroponics, tissue culture etc.) to increase yield, improve quality and rationalize the use of scarce water.
- Provide training and technical support to ensure that farmers master the application of new technologies.
- Promote greater use of bio-technology through the National Research and Development Centre to improve the quality and marketability of farm produce.

## **9.2 Restoration of extension services**

Restore and expand agricultural extension services which have been severely depleted to ensure the effective transfer of technology and application of modern practices.

## **9.3 Improved pest and disease control**

Improve the capabilities for pest and disease control by stricter quarantine procedures and speedier detection and corrective practices.

## **9.4 Promotion of organic farming**

Provide technical and financial support for organic farming to exploit the growing international market for organically produced foods.

## **9.5 Promotion of exotic crops**

Promote the cultivation and export marketing of exotic crops including fruits, herbs and spice in a strategic programme integrated with the Brand Jamaica campaign.

## **9.6 Provision of refrigeration facilities**

Establish strategically located refrigeration facilities to extend the shelf life of farmers' produce and improve marketing possibilities.

## **9.7 Improved market intelligence**

Improve the gathering and timely dissemination of marketing information to provide farmers with the best options for marketing their produce

## **9.8 Improved selection, grading and packaging practices**

Provide training to farmers in proper selection, grading and packaging practices to more effectively synchronize farm production with market requirements.

## **9.9 Support for brokers**

Recognize the importance of brokers who serve as intermediaries between

the farmer and otherwise inaccessible markets. We will provide incentives for brokers to extend market reach and increase the demand for farmers' produce.

## **9.10 Incentives for agro-processors**

Provide incentives for agro-processors to extend the market for agricultural produce and provide greater predictability and price stability for farmers.

## **9.11 Affordable loans for farmers**

Increase the availability of low-interest loans to farmers through the PC Banks especially to ensure that they are able to meet the required capital investment to adopt new technologies.

## **9.12 Land titling process**

- Amend the Registration of Titles Act to simplify the registration of untitled land where the claimant has been in possession for a specified minimum period of time, ownership is not in dispute and can be confirmed by evidence.
- Establish Community Land Tribunals to consider applications for registration and, after adequate public notification, conduct hearings and, if satisfied that the right of ownership has been established, issue a Certificate of Ownership.
- Certificate of Ownership together with a surveyor's report and diagram would be sufficient to effect registration of title.

## **9.13 Irrigation expansion**

Improve existing and establish new irrigation schemes to increase the acreage of land available for high-productivity farming.

#### **9.14 Protection and strengthening of the livestock sector**

- Institute measures to protect and expand the livestock sector and improve productivity with a view to capturing a greater share of the domestic market.
- Provide the necessary protection to milk producers to mitigate the effects of subsidized imported milk solids.

#### **9.15 Expansion of aquaculture**

Expand the aquaculture industry, especially for the export market, and promote the production of new species to replicate the success achieved with the tilapia.

#### **9.16 Improved management of marine fishing**

Establish a comprehensive programme to improve the management of the marine fishing industry including:

- More vigilant efforts to stem illegal fishing in Jamaican waters.
- Careful monitoring of our fish population and stricter control measures to prevent over-fishing and the depletion of fish stock by regulating the size and weight of fish that can be harvested.
- Implementation of an environmental programme to stop the pollution of our sea water and the use of dynamite and chemicals to reap fish and reverse the damage being done to our fish nurseries and coral reefs.
- Provision of loans and training for fishers to equip them to operate beyond our coastal waters which are severely over-fished.
- Provision of safety gear, training and public education to ensure better standards of safety at sea.

- Improved refrigeration facilities at our major fishing beaches to preserve the catch to meet marketing cycles.
- Introduction of new, scientific methods for growing lobsters, shrimp, oysters, squid and other high-demand species under controlled conditions.
- Implementation of a programme to clean up and upgrade fishing beaches islandwide.

#### **9.17 Repositioning the sugar industry**

- Pursue, in the face of the drastic cuts in sugar prices being offered through our arrangements with the European Union, the divestment of government-owned sugar estates and factories with a view to ensuring the required capital investment and management to achieve world market competitiveness and/or the production of value-added cane derivatives such as ethanol and nutraceuticals.
- Utilize our allocation under the compensation fund being provided by the EU to enable cane farmers and sugar workers in those areas that may be dislocated by the divestment to enter alternative, high-productivity farming activities.

#### **9.18 Intensifying efforts to combat praedial larceny**

Reorganize, retrain, equip and redeploy District Constables to be a more effective force in combating praedial larceny.



## Strengthening the manufacturing sector

The manufacturing sector faces considerable difficulties: high interest rates, high energy costs, high security costs, high transaction costs and intense competition from cheap imports, especially from China.

In 1988 the manufacturing sector employed 136,000 persons and accounted for 21.4% of GDP. Today, it employs less than 75,000 and accounts for only 12.7% of GDP. The challenge for the manufacturing sector is to identify those areas of production in which it can achieve international competitiveness or for which it can secure niche markets.

We must enable the manufacturing sector to overcome these challenges.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **10.1 Industrial Plant Modernization Fund**

Establish through the Jamaica Investment & Development Corporation an Industrial Plant Modernization Fund to assist manufacturers to install modern equipment

and apply cutting-edge technology to improve productivity and competitiveness.

#### **10.2 Improving labour productivity**

Provide grants through the HEART Trust to finance institutional and on-the-job training to improve the skills level and productivity of employees.

#### **10.3 Improving energy efficiency**

Provide tax incentives for manufacturers to achieve energy efficiency

#### **10.4 Penetrating new export markets**

The Jamaica Investment & Development Corporation (JIDC) will provide strong support to local manufacturers to identify and penetrate new export markets under the Brand Jamaica campaign.

#### **10.5 Provision of factory space**

Make available to manufacturers on special terms factory space currently being used for the warehousing of imported goods.

### **10.6 Improving packaging design and development**

Provide special incentives for companies engaged in packaging design and development to improve the marketability of locally manufactured goods.

### **10.7 Special relief for specified capital expenditure**

Allow capital expenditure in specified areas that enhance competitiveness or the development of new value-added products to be fully expensed in lieu of annual depreciation.

### **10.8 Tax credit for overseas marketing**

Provide tax credits for expenses incurred in marketing locally manufactured products overseas.

## Conquering new frontiers in tourism

The tourism industry has been one of the main planks that have sustained the economy over many years. While recognizing the value of its contribution and the growth that has occurred, we believe that there is vast potential for expansion and diversification that needs to be exploited.

While Jamaica's tourism has been dominant in the mass and mid-price segments of the leisure market, the focus of our strategy for the future will be to develop new, high-value options while enhancing the attractiveness of the existing offerings.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **11.1 Measuring tourism's contribution to the economy**

Disaggregate our National Accounts and identify tourism as an accounting sector in order to measure its direct contribution to the GDP.

#### **11.2 Giving export status to hotel operators**

Recognizing that tourism is an invisible export, we will accord hotel operators the benefits and concessions enjoyed by export manufacturers.

#### **11.3 Diversifying the tourism industry**

- Promote the development of more high-value luxury accommodation including condominiums.
- Promote the development of wellness facilities to take advantage of our natural spas as well as facilities geared toward long-stay convalescents.
- Attract healthcare entrepreneurs to establish medical facilities offering clinical and surgical procedures to foreign patients.
- Provide renewed support for the development of South Coast adventure and eco-tourism.
- Promote heritage tourism consistent with our policy on the development of our heritage sites and

the marketing of our rich cultural traditions.

#### **11.4 Tourism development for eastern Jamaica**

Formulate a strategic plan for the development of Portland and St. Thomas as a unique tourist resort area to take advantage of their unique attributes as well as provide a new economic catalyst to mitigate the decline in sugar and bananas.

#### **11.5 Development of attractions**

Encourage the development of new state-of-the-art attractions especially for night time entertainment and offer incentives similar to those provided for new hotel construction.

#### **11.6 Preservation and appropriate utilization of the Cockpit Country**

Declare the Cockpit Country a no-mining zone and encourage the development of environment-friendly attractions.

#### **11.7 Transformation of Fern Gully**

Reroute traffic currently traversing Fern Gully and develop it into a botanical attraction with boutique restaurants and craft shops.

#### **11.8 Upgrading and marketing of small hotels and villas**

Provide grants and concessionary loans for the upgrading of small hotels and villas and assist them in developing a special programme for advertising and marketing.

#### **11.9 Expansion of Ocho Rios Cruise Ship Pier**

Relocate the shipping operations for bauxite, sugar and aggregates from the Reynolds Pier in Ocho Rios to facilitate its redevelopment and expansion as a modern cruise ship port.

#### **11.10 New cruise ship port at Falmouth**

Support the development of a major cruise ship port and ancillary facilities in Falmouth.

#### **11.11 Development of marinas**

Promote the expansion of marinas in Ocho Rios and Montego Bay which, together with the Port Antonio marina, will be aggressively marketed to attract mega-yacht visitors and sport fishing activities.

#### **11.12 Modern airport facilities for Port Antonio**

Redevelop the Ken Jones aerodrome to accommodate private and mid-size commercial aircraft as an important element in the revitalization of Port Antonio as a high-end resort area as well as facilitating tourism development in St. Thomas

#### **11.13 Enhancing Jamaica's duty-free shopping appeal**

Establish a new regime for in-bond merchants to enhance Jamaica's appeal as a duty-free shopping destination.

#### **11.14 New impetus for craft production and marketing**

- Establish a sophisticated craft training centre on the north coast to enable our craftsmen to produce high quality craft items and ensure that our craft vendors can offer first-rate indigenous craft items.
- Upgrade and improve the management of existing craft markets and we institute a programme to promote them especially among cruise ship passengers.

#### **11.15 Major Convention Centre for Montego Bay**

Support the construction of a major stand-alone Convention Centre in Montego Bay to attract more convention visitors.

#### **11.16 Establishment of Hospitality**

## **College**

Pursue the development of a Hospitality College either as an independent entity or as a college of one of our existing universities to train persons for middle and senior level positions in the tourism sector.

### **11.17 Teaching the value of tourism in schools**

Develop a tourism-related course to be taught in schools and to be an accredited curriculum subject to increase awareness and appreciation of the value of tourism to the nation.

### **11.18 Pension scheme for tourism sector workers**

Institute in collaboration with employers and workers in the tourism sector a pension scheme for workers whose NIS pension entitlement is low because it is calculated on basic wages and does not include non-taxable gratuities which make up a substantial portion of their earnings.



## Support for the entertainment industry

The entertainment sector is emerging as a significant area of economic activity providing jobs and foreign exchange earnings and while it generates significant earnings globally, only a small fraction inures to Jamaica's benefit. It has great potential for creating wealth in areas such as music, dance, theatre, film and video productions, writing and publishing, fashion, craft, and local cuisine. It offers a valuable tool for internationalizing the Brand Jamaica campaign.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **12.1 Entertainment venues**

Provide incentives for the establishment of large and medium-size entertainment venues.

#### **12.2 International music festivals**

Support the staging and promotion of new and existing music festivals with a view to making Jamaica one of the world's premier music festival destinations.

#### **12.3 Incentives for the entertainment industry**

Enact an Entertainment Industry Encouragement Act to provide incentives for the promotion and commercial development of Jamaican music, art, dance, drama, writing and publishing, fashion, craft and local cuisine.

#### **12.4 Sector coordination**

Establish a single agency to coordinate developments in the entertainment sector.



## Telecommunications as a driver for economic growth

Telecommunications has been the world's fastest growing area of economic activity in the last decade. It offers tremendous opportunities for new investments, growth and job creation especially with the growing trend in developed countries toward outsourcing. However, the playing field is highly competitive and the appropriate policy measures must be instituted to position Jamaica to take advantage of these opportunities.

Telecommunications also offers a means of revolutionizing the education process and improving the quality of lesson delivery.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **13.1 New regulatory framework**

- Revise the Telecommunications Act to take account of new developments in technology and market dynamics.
- Establish a single regulatory authority to undertake the regulatory functions currently scattered among the OUR, the Broadcasting

Commission and the Spectrum Management Authority.

#### **13.2 Judicious spectrum management**

Ensure the careful allocation of spectrum frequencies to encourage competition and new investments and to preserve flexibility to facilitate the future growth of the telecommunications sector.

#### **13.3 Expanding the telecommunications infrastructure**

- Promote the development of an islandwide backbone network capable of transmitting existing and emerging media such as ADSL, broadband, PSTN and wireless networks.
- Ensure cheaper bandwidth costs to make access more affordable
- Require the building of new high-speed loop facilities
- Institute regulations to require the

unbundling of local loop facilities to provide wider access to cable programmes landing in Jamaica for licensed operators.

#### **13.4 Enforcing commitment to increase number of fixed lines**

Contrary to the commitment made in 2002 to provide 200,000 additional fixed lines, the number of such lines has, in fact, decreased from 434,772 to 342,500. We will ensure that this commitment is fulfilled.

#### **13.5 Universal service and greater access**

Ensure the provision of universal service through the islandwide backbone network in order to significantly increase internet penetration from 40% (currently) to 75% within 5 years.

#### **13.6 Universal Access Fund**

Ensure strict management and accountability of the Universal Access Fund which will be used to finance the crucial e-learning component of the Education Transformation Programme.

## Expansion of the mining sector

The mining sector remains critical to economic growth, employment and foreign exchange earnings.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **14.1 Expansion of Jamalco**

Seek to re-energize the stalled plans for the expansion of the Jamalco alumina plant at Halse Hall.

#### **14.2 Strategic partnership with Trinidad for producing aluminum**

Seek to establish a strategic partnership with Trinidad to process alumina into aluminum at the smelter which it proposes to build in joint venture with Sural of Venezuela. Trinidad has expressed a willingness to offer the Jamaican government a part of its 60% shareholding in the venture.

#### **14.3 New investment in non-bauxite minerals**

Seek to attract new investment in the extraction and processing of non-bauxite minerals such as gypsum, limestone aggregates and their derivatives.

#### **14.4 Environmental management of mining and processing operations**

Establish and vigorously enforce new regulations for the control of chemical and dust emissions from mining and processing operations and ensure adequate protection and compensation for persons who may be adversely affected.

#### **14.5 Better treatment for mined-out lands**

- Apply stricter measures to ensure that mined-out lands are optimally restored.
- The Capital Development Fund will be dedicated to the redevelopment of those communities that have been dislocated and disfigured by mining activities.



## Placing the construction industry on a better footing

We recognize the critical importance of the construction industry as a major source of employment (110,000 in 2006) and a significant contributor to the economy (10.1% of GDP in 2006).

The construction industry will also play a crucial role in the investment and job-creation drive that we have identified as the major focus of our plans to accelerate economic growth since new investments invariably require industrial, commercial and residential space.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **15.1 Equal opportunity for local contractors and construction professionals in the award of contracts**

- Ensure that local contractors and construction professionals are given the same opportunities as foreign companies in consideration for the award of public sector contracts.
- Vigorously enforce the provisions

of the Architects Registration Act and Professional Engineers Registration Act which stipulate the conditions under which foreign professionals are permitted to be engaged in local projects in order to protect the integrity of the local professions and ensure that they are held responsible for the quality of the work they perform.

#### **15.2 One-stop shop for planning and building plans**

- Promulgate a National Building Code and the appropriate Development Orders to regulate land use and development, planning and building activities throughout the island.
- Establish one single authority with representatives of all relevant agencies including local government authorities to be responsible for evaluating planning and building plans.

- Shift the burden of responsibility from the developer seeking approval to the authority registering objections. Any developer against whose plan the authority has not registered an objection within 90 days will be entitled to proceed with the development.
- Provide an adequate cadre of building inspectors to ensure timely inspection and the required certification of development stages.
- Impose severe sanctions against those who undertake projects without reference to the authority, in violation of the Building Code or any Development Order or contrary to the design and technical specifications that were presented and against which no objection was registered.
- Make provision that individual buildings below a specified size may be constructed without reference to the regulatory authority provided the technical specifications and construction are certified by a registered architect who shall be responsible for ensuring their compliance with the Building Code and any applicable Development Order.

### **15.3 Ensuring greater integrity in the awarding of government contracts**

Amend the Contractor General's Act to:

- give legal force to the contract award procedures by including them as a schedule to the Act;
- provide criminal penalties for breaches of the contract award procedures;
- render null and void and unenforceable contracts that have not been certified as compliant with the contract award procedures;
- disqualify from future consideration for the award of contracts, those contractors who secure contracts by corrupt means;
- require that variations and escalations beyond a specified limit must be approved by the same authority which approved the original contract.

### **15.4 Periodic review of the National Register of Contractors**

The National Contracts Commission will be required to undertake a periodic review of the register of contractors based on current capability and past performance.

### **15.5 Penalties and incentives for contract performance**

Strictly enforce the penalties provided for delays in the completion of contracts. We will also provide incentives for early satisfactory completion.

# EDUCATION & JOB CREATION

## Education – the key to growth and development

Education is the single most important factor in building a platform for economic development and social stability. It determines the quality of our human capital, our level of productivity and competitiveness, and our ability to attract the investments we need to transform our economy, reduce poverty and build prosperity.

We regard education as a fundamental human right. It must therefore be universally available and everyone must have equal access. It is the inescapable duty of the government to provide the policy framework and facilities to achieve this.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **16.1 Improved parenting culture**

- Promote, through the health and children's services and in collaboration with community organizations, better parenting techniques, greater awareness of the potential of the child and its nutritional and emotional needs and better preparation of its capabilities for the formal learning process.

- Promote the establishment of day-care centres independently operated, and at the workplace to ensure proper care of children of working parents.

#### **16.2 Emphasis on early childhood education**

- Commence primary school enrollment at age 5 instead of 6 years.
- Establish stand-alone infant schools and infant departments at selected primary schools to increase the availability of basic school places.
- Provide grants to private basic schools to enable them to meet the minimum standards prescribed by the Early Childhood Act.
- Enforce maximum class size of 20 for all basic schools.
- Ensure at least one trained teacher in each basic school and Level 2 certification for other early childhood practitioners.

- Extend school feeding programme to all basic schools.
- Develop standardized early childhood curriculum.

### **16.3 Improved school management**

- Establish performance standards and targets for schools to include student performance as well as the operation and maintenance of school facilities.
- Provide training in management practices for school board members, principals and bursars and hold them accountable for the performance of schools.
- Eliminate the shift systems in all schools.
- Establish a system of zoning to determine the GSAT placement of students from primary to secondary schools.
- Regional education authorities will be required to monitor performance of each school and provide technical support including the provision of specialist teachers.
- Establish a National Schools Security Policy to be adopted and implemented by all schools to ensure the safety of students and staff and the protection of school property.
- Establish standardized electronic accounting and reporting system for all schools.
- Institute management information system to record, collate and analyze data on student performance.
- Performance of each student should be ranked against class, regional and national averages and should be reported annually to parents.

- Strengthen the support system available to each school through the increased involvement of PTAs, alumni, citizens association, student councils, etc.
- Encourage churches, NGOs and private sector entities to assume greater responsibility for the management of individual schools.

### **16.4 Teacher performance**

- Accelerate programme of upgrading of teacher skills to Bachelor of Education level.
- Significantly increase specialist training and the provision of Master Teachers in Mathematics and English.
- Institute a performance-based remuneration component for teachers determined on the basis of improvement in student performance.
- Establish a system of licensing and certification of teachers to be renewed every 5 years.
- Employ retired teachers of excellence on contract.

### **16.5 Student performance**

- Establish compulsory school attendance for all children between the ages of 3 and 18.
- Abolish tuition fees at government-operated secondary schools.
- Strengthen the student assessment process supported by remedial programmes to ensure that students attain minimum proficiency standards before advancing to higher grades.

- Employ trained remediation specialists for remedial programmes.
- Identify children with special needs and provide required support.
- Introduce character education courses commencing at Grade 4 and culminating in certification at CXC level to instill values and attitudes appropriate to national development.

### **16.6 Improved lesson delivery**

- Review and update curriculum at all grade levels and constantly evaluate its impact on student performance.
- Expand internet access to primary and secondary schools as a critical learning tool.
- Focus e-learning project on providing standardized distance lessons in critical subjects to support classroom lesson delivery.
- Institute homework programme in after-school hours supervised by teachers (with special remuneration) and NYS workers.

### **16.7 Health and nutritional support**

- Conduct health screening at entry point for basic, primary and secondary schools to identify any factor that might impair learning ability.
- Collaborate with health services to provide periodic dental, optical and hearing examinations and treatment.
- Identify children in need of special nutritional support and provide appropriate response, e.g. breakfast programmes.

### **16.8 Extend school-leaving age**

Extend the school-leaving age from 16 to 18 by: increasing the number of

schools in strategic locations offering Grades 12 and 13 (6th Form) integrating Grade 11 school-leavers into other education and training opportunities (tertiary, HEART, vocational and apprenticeship programmes, etc.)

### **16.9 Expanding school capacity**

- Upgrade and expand existing schools to standards required for the Education Transformation Programme.
- Develop a 5-year capital expenditure programme to construct new primary and secondary schools to meet current and anticipated demand and to achieve the desired class sizes.
- Establish on a regional basis schools with special emphasis on Arts and Sciences for children with exceptional talent or proficiency in these disciplines.
- Establish strategically located schools at primary and secondary levels for highly gifted children and provide boarding facilities or grants for those who live beyond commutable distances.

### **16.10 Financing the Education Transformation Programme**

- Increase the budgetary allocation to education by 1% per annum to a level of 15%.
- Reallocate budgetary resources to increase the expenditure per student at basic, primary and secondary levels.
- Issue government-guaranteed Education Bonds to significantly increase the loan amounts available to tertiary students through the Student Loan Bureau at reduced interest rates subsidized by annual budgetary provisions.

- Dedicate proceeds of Diaspora Bond floated among the Jamaican Diaspora.
- Negotiate long-term concessionary loans from multilateral agencies (World Bank, IDB, CDB and European Union)

## Creating a productive workforce

Our most important factor of production is our human capital.....our people. They contribute significantly to the productive process and are direct beneficiaries of that process.

A trained and motivated workforce is an essential component of our strategy for investment, growth and job creation. It runs a crucial leg in the relay to achieve the world-class competitiveness on which our future rests.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **17.1 Education and training**

Implement policies as outlined in Section 16 to ensure a well-educated and skilled workforce.

#### **17.2 Labour market reform**

- Vigorously uphold the right of workers to representation and collective bargaining.
- Conclude, in collaboration with employers and workers organizations, the deliberations on labour

market reform to ensure that our workforce and labour market practices are able to meet the challenges of new, technology-driven investments.

- Provide through the HEART Trust grants to facilitate institutional and on- the-job training of workers to upgrade their skills and improve productivity levels.

#### **17.3 Improved conciliation machinery**

- Promote in strategic sectors agreements similar to the MOU within the bauxite sector to establish competitiveness-enhancing measures and ensure that workers share in the gains from improved productivity and efficiency.
- Increase the number of trained conciliation officers to enable speedier intervention in industrial disputes.
- Improve the facilities at the Industrial Disputes Tribunal.

- Strengthen the facilities for protecting the rights of non-unionized workers.

#### **17.4 Improved labour market information**

- Improve the Labour Market Information System to provide more information on the characteristics of and developments within the labour market and encourage greater use as a Labour Exchange.

- Institute an annual survey to measure and report on labour productivity.

#### **17.5 Modernize regulatory mechanisms**

Review and modernize regulatory mechanism dealing with the workplace environment such as occupational safety, health and factories regulations.

**CRIME PREVENTION,  
SECURITY & JUSTICE**

## Reducing crime - A national imperative

Making the nation safe and secure is our most urgent priority. Too much of our energy is being devoured by the ever-present fear for our own safety. The goals we outline in this Manifesto for economic growth and job creation can only be achieved if there is a drastic reduction in crime and a return to a peaceful, orderly society.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **18.1 Strengthening the capability of the Police Force**

- Increase the strength of the Police Force to 12,000
- Launch an intensive recruitment drive especially among CXC graduates to bring complement to full establishment.
- Expand the Mobile Reserve and have contingents based at strategic locations across the island to more effectively respond to outbreaks of crime and violence.
- Provide special training in civilian

law enforcement for members of the Jamaica Defence Force to better equip them to assist the Police when called upon and to be able to do so with full regard for the rights of citizens.

- Establish a cadre of Police Auxiliaries to undertake clerical, administrative and light-security duties at police stations to enable police personnel to concentrate on law enforcement
- Establish a Traffic Corps made up of civilians to relieve the Police of traffic duties and enable them to focus on law enforcement.
- Establish a Police Reserve similar to the JDF Reserve drawn from civilians whose character and suitability have been verified to assist the Police especially at the community level.

- Intensify the graduate entry and accelerated promotion programmes to improve the quality of management of the Force.
- Improve training in investigation techniques and crime scene management.
- Improve forensic capability by providing appropriate technology and training and recruiting the necessary expertise.
- Establish a National Intelligence Agency with appropriate technology and expertise to collate, analyze and disseminate intelligence data as a critical tool in the prevention and detection of crime and apprehension of criminals. Appropriate levels of intelligence information must be accessible online or by radio or telephone contact to police stations and mobile police.
- Establish a National Identification System to improve police surveillance and detection capabilities and protect law-abiding citizens.
- Design a 5-year programme for the rehabilitation of police stations islandwide.
- Make annual budgetary provisions for the timely replacement of police vehicles and equipment.
- Construct residential complexes at strategic locations for police personnel to ensure that they are within commutable distance of their station assignment.

### **18.2 Improved management and accountability**

- Strengthen the powers of the Commissioner of Police to discipline (including dismiss) members of the Force to enable him or her to weed out corrupt and non-per-

forming members and then hold him/her responsible for their conduct and performance. Provision will be made for appeals to the Police Service Commission against the decisions of the Commissioner of Police.

- Restructure the Police Public Complaints Authority into an independent investigative authority to investigate all cases of police abuse or excess. The PPCA will refer matters as it deems fit to the Director of Public Prosecutions or the Commissioner of Police for appropriate action and will be required to report annually to Parliament.
- The Commissioner of Police and the Chairman of the Police Service Commission will be required to report twice per year to Parliament on the management and operations of the Police Force.
- Strengthen the human rights component of the curriculum of the Police Academy to ensure that police graduates are sensitized to their duty to respect the rights of citizens and are fully aware that they will be held responsible for their actions.
- Provide more intensive on-duty supervision of new recruits to ensure that their conduct conforms to the training received.

### **18.3 Transforming political garrisons**

- Enact into law the relevant provisions of the Code of Political Conduct with appropriate criminal penalties.
- Amend Section 40(2)(g) of the Constitution to include provision that any person convicted under the above enactment will be auto-

- matically disqualified for such time, as determined by the Court, from contesting any election or continuing to hold any elected office.
- The Political Ombudsman will be required to monitor the conduct and activities of political representatives especially in garrison constituencies and report to Parliament. He will also be entitled to refer any matter to the Director of Public Prosecutions.
  - Any report made to Parliament by the Political Ombudsman which reflects negatively on the conduct of any elected official may constitute grounds for impeachment and removal from office.
  - Contractors to be registered with the National Contracts Commission will be required to produce satisfactory criminal records. Contractors who engage subcontractors with criminal records involving conviction for gun-related or violent crime will be removed from the register of contractors.

#### **18.4 Detection of illegal guns**

Increase surveillance at our ports of entry and along our coastline to detect and stop the inflow of illegal guns. Research being undertaken in the United Kingdom is well-advanced in developing a portable device capable of detecting concealed weapons. The research project is expected to be completed by December 2008. If it proves successful, we will employ this technology on a large scale to enable the Police to more effectively recover illegal guns.

#### **18.5 Building community support for law enforcement**

- Intensify programme of community policing to build strategic partnerships between communities and the Police in ridding the communities of crime.
- Prioritize crime-affected communities for targeted inner-city renewal projects as a critical support measure to reduce crime and enhance law enforcement measures.
- Establish a Police Cadet Corps to enlist young potential community leaders to strengthen the alliance between the Police and the communities.
- Strengthen the current initiatives to promote conflict resolution by the provision of increased training and opportunities.
- Re-energize the Neighbourhood Watch and Police Youth Club programmes to mobilize communities against criminal activity.



## Healing our ailing justice system

The justice system is indispensable to a free and democratic society. It is the ultimate source of protection of the rights of the citizen, holding the scales between one citizen and another and between the citizen and the State. How efficiently and fairly it functions defines the quality of our democracy and, indeed, the quality of our lives.

Our justice system is creaking from years of neglect resulting in a pile-up of more than 400,000 cases. Poor physical facilities, shortage of personnel and archaic judicial and administrative procedures have rendered our justice system an obstacle - not a facilitator - to our development. We are committed to changing that.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **19.1 Commitment to Justice Reform Programme**

We are committed to a 10 year Justice Reform Programme supported by the necessary policy decisions and allocation of resources as recommended by the Jamaica Justice System Reform Task

Force.

#### **19.2 Use of technology for speedier disposal of cases**

- Provide computer-based audio and text recording in the Appeal Court, Supreme Court and all Resident Magistrates Court to facilitate real-time production of testimonies and submissions.
- Provide for computerization of and online access to transcripts, notes of evidence and judgements.
- Expand the Justice Training Institute to train existing Court staff and as well as those required to operate new procedures.

#### **19.3 Rehabilitation and modernization of Court Houses**

Establish a 5-year programme for the rehabilitation and modernization of all Court Houses to better accommodate the case load and the introduction of the appropriate technology.

#### **19.4 Better utilization of Court facilities and elimination of case backlog**

- Improve the utilization of court facilities by having Courts operate two shifts where necessary and sit for more days where possible and necessary.
- Increase the number of Family Courts to facilitate greater access and allow for sittings to be held at locations which do not carry a “court house” atmosphere.
- Establish special Courts to deal with cases involving domestic violence.
- Increase the number of Resident Magistrates, prosecutors and Court staff
- Recruit on a temporary basis from among retired judges and the private Bar persons to serve as Resident Magistrates and prosecutors to assist in disposal of the huge backlog of cases in the RM Courts.

#### **19.5 Better management of cases**

- Introduce an efficient case management system in RM Courts to track and expedite the trial of cases or, where possible, refer for mediation.
- Require that objective timelines be set for the various stages and eventual disposal of each case with the ultimate aim being to have cases disposed of within 6 months.

#### **19.6 Better provision for witnesses**

- Provide better facilities for witnesses to attend Court
- Expand the Witness Protection Programme
- Increase the number of shelters for victims of domestic violence especially women and children.

#### **19.7 Improved jury selection**

- Improve the jury selection process by providing better facilities and remuneration.
- Launch a public education programme to sensitize the public as to the critical importance of jury service to the justice system.

#### **19.8 Law Reform**

- Establish a Permanent Law Reform Commission to conduct a review existing statutes and make recommendations for changes.
- Repeal offences that are no longer necessary or appropriate.
- Enact the necessary amendment to make certain minor crimes ticketing offences.

#### **19.9 Review of Court jurisdictions**

Review and restructure the existing jurisdiction of the Lay Magistrate’s Court, the RM Court and the Supreme Court to achieve optimal allocation of responsibilities consistent with the required level of jurisprudence.

#### **19.10 Appointment of Judges**

- Increase the number of Judges of the Appeal Court from 7 to 11 and appoint additional Judges of the Supreme Court
- Provide a more transparent process for the appointment of Judges

#### **19.11 Constitutional protection and security of tenure for Resident Magistrates**

Amend the Constitution to recognize Resident Magistrates as part of the judiciary and provide them security of tenure in furtherance of the principle of the independence of the judiciary.

### **19.12 Restorative Justice**

Enact the necessary legislation to enable Courts to order convicted persons to compensate victims who have suffered personal loss or damage as a result of the offence.

### **19.13 Community Justice Tribunals**

Establish Community Justice Tribunals to be conducted by Justices of the Peace to resolve disputes between citizens that do not involve criminal

offences, and which are heard with the consent of the disputing parties. Settlements agreed on would be enforceable by the Courts.

### **19.14 Judgement debts owed by the government**

Enact provisions to make it a statutory requirement similar to provisions for payment of public debt, for the government to pay to a citizen such amounts as have been ordered by the Courts.



## Transforming our prisons into rehabilitation centres

Prisons ought to be more than places of punishment. They must serve to rehabilitate offenders who will someday return to society to live among us. The reform of our prison system is critical in establishing a safe and peaceful society.

### **20.1 Increase prison capacity**

Construct a new modern prison facility to ease the severe overcrowding existing at the Tower Street and St. Catherine Adult Correction Centres which currently house 75% more prisoners than they were designed to accommodate.

### **20.2 Comprehensive programme of rehabilitation**

- Establish a full-time multi-grade school at Tower Street and St. Catherine Adult Correction Centres to upgrade the academic skills of all inmates who have not achieved Grade 9 certification.
- Assess the skills possessed by inmates and devise work pro-

grammes to utilize these skills with a stipend being paid to purchase approved personal items and accumulate savings to be paid over at time of release.

- Unskilled, low-risk inmates will be deployed on public works projects, e.g. drain cleaning, under supervision of the JDE.

### **20.3 Increased use of non-custodial sentences**

Courts will be urged to increase the use of non-custodial sentences for convicted persons who have no record of violent crime or behaviour. Sentences should include engagement on public works projects.

### **20.4 Enforcement of discipline**

Stricter measures will be enforced to prevent indiscipline and the abuse of inmates.

### **20.5 Adequate counseling for inmates**

- Provision will be made in collaboration with Churches and NGOs for adequate counseling services to assist inmates to prepare themselves to return to society as reformed, productive citizens.
- Non-denominational Church services will be encouraged as a means of assisting in the rehabilitation process.

### **20.6 Parole and furlough decisions to be informed by assessment of progress toward rehabilitation**

Care will be taken to ensure that parole and furlough decisions are based on an objective assessment of the inmate's progress toward rehabilitation

### **20.7 Mentally-ill inmates**

Special facilities to be provided at the Bellevue Hospital for mentally-ill inmates.

# **PUBLIC UTILITIES & DISASTER PREPAREDNESS**

## Our plans for the transportation sector

The transportation system is an integral part of any strategy for economic growth to ensure efficient movement of people and cargo over land, air and sea.

### Our Pledge

#### 21.1 Rationalizing the public transportation system

- Review the financial and operational performance of the JUTC and restructure the company to operate efficiently with a capped subsidy based on an assessment of its relationship with other forms of urban transportation.
- Establish a proper organization structure for the operation of route taxis by:
  - declaring an amnesty period for all unlicensed taxi operators to apply for registration;
  - implementing a system of colour coding of taxis based on assigned routes;
  - simplifying the procedures for

renewal of licences;

- monitoring the operation of taxis to ensure compliance.

#### 21.2 Rural and long-distance transportation

Rationalize the licensing of buses, mini-buses and taxis for rural and long-distance routes to ensure the appropriate mix of vehicle types and sizes.

#### 21.3 New transportation centres

Establish properly regulated transport centres in all major towns

#### 21.4 Restore the railway service

- Pursue negotiations with potential investors to establish a modern rail service on the existing rail network for passengers and freight.
- Railway stations to be developed as commercial centres as part of the revenue stream to lower passenger fares.
- Renegotiate the terms of the contract with the operators of Highway 2000 to allow an exten-

sion of rail service into Portmore.

### **21.5 Rationalization of freight haulage**

Use tariff measures and appropriate incentives to encourage investors to establish major warehouse and redistribution centres at strategic locations to facilitate the haulage of goods to these centres by rail and sea in order to relieve congestion on major thoroughfares.

### **21.6 Airport development**

- Pursue negotiations with private investors to establish a new airport at Vernamfield as an air transshipment hub as well as a third international airport to serve the mid-island with a link to the new rail service.
- Establish a new domestic aerodrome at Caymanas in close proximity to the Portmore toll road to replace Tinson Pen.
- Develop the Ken Jones aerodrome as an international airport to accommodate private and mid-size

commercial jets.

- Upgrade the Boscobel and Negril aerodromes for domestic flights.

### **21.7 Making Air Jamaica viable**

- Pursue negotiations for an equity partnership with a suitable international airline to revitalize Air Jamaica and to integrate it within a wider network of destinations and connections.
- The government would retain part ownership of Air Jamaica which would retain its name and its unique Jamaican characteristics and would continue to serve the routes that are significant to local travelers, tourism and the Jamaican Diaspora.

### **21.8 Development of our sea ports**

Support the proposed establishment by private investors of a new major port and commercial and industrial complex at Port Esquivel.

## Improving the road network

Jamaica has one of the highest road densities in the world with over 4 km per square mile. Two-thirds of these are parochial roads serving deep rural communities. We need new highways to facilitate current traffic realities and stimulate new investment and development. However, a long-term programme to ensure proper maintenance and upgrading of the existing network must also be given priority.

### 22.1 Single Road Authority

- Restructure the National Works Agency as a service provider with technical responsibility for all roads.
- Local Government Authorities will retain jurisdiction for parochial and urban roads and will authorize works to be carried out under the supervision of the NWA.

### 22.2 National Road Improvement and Maintenance Programme (RIMP)

- Establish a National Road Improvement and Maintenance

Programme to provide three levels of treatment for the road network:

- Routine maintenance: Cleaning of drains and patching of surfaces
- Periodic maintenance: Resurfacing and construction of drains
- Major Improvement: Reconstruction and widening
- Reintroduce the “lengthman” programme under which local citizens are trained and engaged to carry out routine maintenance on assigned sections of road.
- Establish a timeline for periodic maintenance of each road based on technical assessment.
- Identify roads for major improvement based on technical assessment, traffic volume and economic benefits.

### **22.3 Expanded highway network**

- Construct new highway from Clarendon Park to Trinity to connect with the Melrose By-Pass.
- Construct new by-pass roads for Montego Bay and Santa Cruz.
- Upgrade and widen the following roads:
  - Stony Hill to Agualta Vale
  - Harbour View to Hector's River
  - Port Antonio to Hector's River
  - Middle Quarters through Newmarket and Montpelier to Montego Bay
  - Ferris through Ramble to Montpelier

### **22.4 Major expressway for the Corporate Area**

Update engineering studies of the road network and traffic flow to determine the most feasible way to provide an expressway to relieve traffic congestion in the Corporate Area. Current options are:

- (a) strategic flyovers at congested intersections
- (b) a beltway around the city
- (c) a suspended road along the Sandy Gully channel

### **22.5 Axle-load control**

- Rigidly enforce axle-load control to prevent the overloading of trucks and trailers which do significant damage to road surfaces.
- Operationalize existing and install new weigh stations at strategic locations to be manned by the Traffic Corps to support the axle load control programme.

### **22.6 National drainage system**

- Commission a detailed islandwide study of our drains and waterways with a view to establishing a national grid for the proper disposal of surface and flood waters.
- Develop a 10 year programme involving new construction and upgrading of existing drains to be integrated into the national grid.
- Developers will be required to make adequate provisions for the disposal of surface water into the national grid.
- Special engineering solutions will be designed to mitigate flooding in known, flood prone areas.

### **22.7 Improved facilities for pedestrians**

Develop a 10 year programme to construct and repair sidewalks on heavily trafficked roads in our cities and towns.

### **22.8 Coordination of road-related activities with utility companies**

- Ensure long-term planning and regular consultation between the NWA and utility companies to synchronize where possible development works and ensure that newly constructed or repaired road surfaces are not disturbed by utility works.
- Require utility companies to deposit with the NWA funds for the restoration of road surfaces disturbed by utility works.

## Responding to natural disasters

Jamaica is vulnerable to natural disasters and appropriate systems must be maintained to enable us to mitigate the effects of these disasters when they occur and provide the appropriate response in terms of relief and restoration.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **23.1 Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance**

We support and will maintain coverage under the new Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility to provide immediate compensation based on the category of a disaster event without requiring detailed assessment of losses sustained.

#### **23.2 Annual assessment and mitigation for flood prone areas**

Assessment will be conducted in the first quarter of each year of the vulnerability of known flood-prone areas to determine what precautionary measures are required. The relevant works

will be carried out as a priority in the second quarter.

#### **23.3 Budgetary contingency for disasters**

Provide a contingency in the Budget specifically for use in the event of a disaster.

#### **23.4 Availability of relief supplies**

- Establish warehouses at JDF establishments in Montego Bay, Mandeville, Moneague and Port Maria to store relief supplies for rapid distribution when disaster strikes.
- Liaise with local suppliers to ensure adequate stocks of relief supplies during the hurricane season.
- Identify and establish standby arrangements with nearby overseas suppliers to source additional supplies as may be required.

### **23.5 Overseas assistance**

- Establish long-term arrangements with donor countries including direct contact with the relevant agencies to expeditiously access assistance after a disaster strikes.
- Put in place a structured arrangement through our missions overseas to coordinate donations made by Jamaican's in the Diaspora.

### **23.6 Availability of equipment and manpower**

Maintain a register of contractors and equipment that will be available to respond to disasters.

Maintain an adequate supply of Bailey bridges for temporary replacement of bridges that may be destroyed in a disaster.

### **23.7 Mobilization of the citizenry**

- Mobilize uniformed groups such as the Cadet Corps, Boys Scouts, Girls Guides, etc. to play a critical role in disaster response.
- Recruit disaster response liaisons at the community level to assist in information flow and the mobilizing of the community in times of disaster.

## Water, indeed, is life

Jamaica, although named for its wood and water, faces significant shortage in the delivery of water. Approximately 60% of the rural population do not have access to piped water in their homes. Twenty-three percent (23%) of these depend on rainwater collected from the roofs of their houses and are left to suffer in times of drought.

The current unsatisfied demand for domestic water is approximately 32 million gallons per day and it is estimated that by 2015 an additional 103 million gallons per day will be required. The agriculture sector currently needs an additional 44 million gallons per day with an additional 370 million gallons per day anticipated by 2015.

Most alarming is the fact that approximately 50% of the domestic water currently being harnessed is lost to leakage. This means that customers are paying twice as much as they should for the water they consume.

A concerted effort to improve the management and increase the supply and distribution of water is required to facilitate development and improve living standards.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **24.1 Assessment of available water resources**

- Assess the available water resources in our hydrological basins to identify future water projects to meet current and anticipated water needs.
- Identify small water sources in rural areas that can sustain localized water harvesting and distribution.

#### **24.2 New water supply projects**

- Implement new water supply projects prioritized on the basis of areas of greatest need.
- Increase storage capacity in major urban centres to sustain supplies during periods of low inflow.
- Develop special Rural Water Supply Programme to harness small streams, rivers and springs to supply isolated communities.

- Establish desalination plants in coastal areas from which communities without alternative sources can be served.

### **24.3 Water conservation and management**

- Carry out an intensive and on-going programme of leak detection and repair to reduce pipeline losses.
- Remove duties on water-saving devices to encourage more efficient use of water.
- Include in National Building Code requirements that will result in more efficient use of water.
- Ensure careful management of water resources to reduce pollution and protect aquifer levels.

### **24.4 Irrigation**

- Encourage more efficient use of irrigation water through the application of appropriate technology.
- Augment irrigation water sources with high-level treated effluent from the Soapberry treatment facility.

### **24.5 Sewerage collection**

Extend central sewerage collection and treatment services in major urban centres with high population densities in order to protect water sources and coastal waters.

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT & THE ENVIRONMENT

## Local government must be local and governmental

We are committed to the Local Government system. Local government plays an important role in giving the people more interaction with their elected representatives and greater involvement in the process of government. It allows more focused management of the delivery of critical services thereby leaving central government to concentrate on national development and enables local decision-making to determine and apply appropriate weight to local priorities. Additionally, it facilitates the decentralization of government functions and authority and ensures that this devolution is to a democratically elected body directly answerable to the people. The JLP strategy for local government will be based on four principles:

- Effecting a clear separation of functions between central and local governments and according to local government full financial and jurisdictional autonomy in recognition of the fact that it is directly elected by the people and directly

accountable to them.

- Institutional capacity strengthening to ensure effective management and accountability in the delivery of services.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **25.1 Local Government Reform**

- Give constitutional status to the Local Government system.
- Clearly define the functions of Local Government and separate them from control or interference by Central Government.
- Provide a statutory guarantee for funding of Local Government authorities which must be remitted directly to them on the basis of monthly warrants.
- Consolidate as far as possible the various statutes in which Local Government powers reside into a single Act.
- Provide a fixed term of 3 years

which cannot be manipulated by Central Government.

- Amend the Counties and Parishes Act to separate Portmore from St. Catherine and make it the 15th parish.
- Abolish the power of Local Government authorities to expel a member and replace it with the power to suspend for a maximum prescribed period.

## **25.2 Institutional capacity**

- Amalgamate the Municipal and Parish Council Services Commissions.
- Upgrade staff levels in the Local Government authorities to improve capabilities in General Management, Technical Services, Financial Administration, Audit and Community Relations.
- Each Council to have Standing Committees dealing with relevant subject areas.

## **25.3 Accountability**

- Procurement of goods & services will be subject to the regulations and oversight of the National Contracts Commission
- Provide for mandatory preparation, presentation and approval of budgets
- Enforce strict procedures for the certification and authorization of expenditure
- Require monthly presentation and examination of statements of expenditure.
- Require monthly presentation of contracts awarded
- External audit functions will be retained by Auditor-General
- PAC-type audit committee will conduct review of expenditure
- Decisions of Councils will be subject to judicial review
- Permanent Salaries Review Board will be established to determine salaries and allowances of Councillors

## A clean, safe, productive and sustainable environment

Our environment impacts on our quality of life and the sustainability of our natural resources. How we manage that environment determines our prospects for sustainable development and long-term prosperity.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **26.1 National Environmental Authority**

- Establish a stand-alone National Environmental Authority with statutory powers to protect the environment and regulate activities that impact thereon.
- Review, update and consolidate existing statutes relating to the regulation of the environment.

#### **26.2 Sustainable development**

- Set and enforce standards governing land use, water quality and the utilization of water, air quality, emissions, sanitation and solid waste management and the protection of marine and coastal resources.
- Promote environmental protection

policies including the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

- Conduct environmental audits.
- Protect Jamaica's wildlife especially its endemic species and develop a recovery plan for endangered species.
- Ensure compliance with our obligations under the UN Convention on Climate Change.

#### **26.3 Public awareness**

Introduce environmental studies into the high school curriculum. Maintain public education programmes to encourage environmentally-friendly practices in everyday living.

#### **26.4 Solid waste management**

- Relocate the Riverton Landfill to eliminate the pollution of nearby residential communities.

- Improve the volume of garbage collected (currently estimated at 70%) as well as the frequency of collection.
- Use tariff measures to encourage the use of degradable material in packaging.
- Provide incentives for households and industrial and commercial enterprises to sort garbage before collection.
- Strictly enforce laws and regulations relating to illegal dumping and littering.
- Establish through private sector investment one or more sorting, recycling and biomass gasification plants to extract recyclable material and convert the residue into electricity.
- Develop and promote community-based solid waste management systems for rural areas.
- Establish port facilities for the disposal of ship-generated waste as is required by the International Convention on the Prevention of Pollution from Ships.
- Establish special facilities for the disposal of medical and hazardous waste as well as tyres and batteries.

# HEALTHCARE & HOUSING

## Unrestricted, universal access to healthcare

We are irrevocably committed to the view that it is the duty of the government to provide unrestricted access to basic health services including primary health care, emergency services, out-patient treatment, diagnostic procedures, surgical operations, hospitalization, dialysis, radiological services and in-patient medication and supplies. It will be made one of the highest priorities of our government.

At the same time, we must strive to modernize our healthcare infrastructure, recognizing that proper medical facilities, technology and research can contribute immensely to keeping our population healthy and productive.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **27.1 More intensive public health management**

- Improve sanitation, waste management and public health practices to minimize the risk of outbreak of communicable diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, leptospirosis, etc.

- Intensify public education programmes to reduce the incidence of lifestyle-related illnesses such as cardiovascular diseases, lung cancer, diabetes, hypertension, hepatitis and HIV/AIDS and encourage early detection and treatment.
- Strengthen the surveillance and response capability of public health agencies.
- Intensify immunization programmes to achieve a minimum of 95% coverage within 5 years.
- Re-energize the Family Planning Programme to encourage responsible parenthood and vigorously promote birth control options.

#### **27.2 HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment**

Intensify the multi-sectoral response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic to encourage preventive measures, reduce the spread of the disease and offer appropriate treatment for infected persons.

Expand public education and sensitization programmes to encourage responsible sexual behaviour and regular testing as well as changing public attitudes and eliminating the stigma and discrimination associated with persons with HIV/AIDS.

Pursue initiatives to ensure more affordable access to essential medication.

Collaborate with NGOs to expand the facilities for residential care of HIV/AIDS patients.

### **27.3 Improved primary health care delivery**

- Re-establish mobile clinics for preventive screening and basic treatment of chronic illnesses in rural areas.
- Upgrade strategically located health centres to improve primary health care delivery including assessment and initial treatment of chronic illnesses thereby reducing the case load of hospitals.
- Improve system of referrals to rationalize the utilization of primary vs secondary health facilities.
- Increase the cadre of community health aides to expand primary health coverage.

### **27.4 Expand the Emergency Medical Services**

Strengthen the Emergency Medical Services and provide specially trained medical technicians to handle trauma cases and critical illnesses with real-time communication with emergency centres.

### **27.5 Free public hospital care**

Abolish user charges at all public health facilities including public hospitals.

### **27.6 Financing the public health system**

- Preserve normal budgetary provisions for the health sector and gradually increase the percentage allocation as fiscal circumstances permit.
- Increase significantly the inflows into the National Health Fund (NHF) by allocating to it a portion of the aggregate wage-related statutory deductions as well as surcharge revenues from medical tourism facilities (explained further) to assist in defraying the cost of hospital services delivery.
- NHF will make monthly payments to each public hospital calculated on the basis of the number of patients and type of service delivered.
- NHF will continue to provide existing individual and institutional benefits from its traditional sources of funding.

### **27.7 Improved health facilities**

- Upgrade the Spanish Town, Mandeville and St. Ann's Bay hospitals to Type A level providing specialist services similar to those offered at University Hospital of the West Indies, Kingston Public Hospital and Cornwall Regional Hospital.
- Upgrade parish hospitals to Type B level offering the four basic specialties: Surgery, Obstetrics & Gynecology, Medicine and Paediatrics.
- Expand the range of specialist services for children at the Bustamante Children's Hospital including dialysis.
- Upgrade Bellevue to a neuro-psychiatric institution with specially designed wards for secondary men-

tal care networked with an island-wide community mental health programme.

- Establish well-equipped diagnostic and treatment centres at UHWI, KPH, CRH, Spanish Town, Mandeville and St. Ann's Bay Hospitals to provide laboratory, radiology, ultrasound, radiotherapy and dialysis services.

### **27.8 Pursue exciting opportunities in health tourism**

- Provide appropriate incentives and regulatory and legal framework to attract health care entrepreneurs to invest in the establishment of state-of-the-art medical facilities in Jamaica for clinical and surgical treatment of foreign patients, taking advantage of: the rapidly growing global market (estimated at US\$40 billion) for outsourcing medical treatment in view of the high cost and long delays at North American institutions; Jamaica's suitability given our proximity to the United States, language compatibility and tropical climate. Jamaica's well-established brand name as an internationally-preferred destination.
- Apply a surcharge on treatment costs to be paid into the NHF to help finance and expand public hospital services.

### **27.9 Telemedicine technologies**

Establish an information technology platform to support telemedicine technologies for long-distance, real-time consultation between our major medical centres and rural hospitals and facilities in order to extend expertise and specialist services.

### **27.10 Centres of Excellence**

- Develop private/public sector partnerships to establish Centres of Excellence, each dedicated to a particular specialty of medicine to become world-class treatment centres attracting patients from overseas.
- Establish negotiated group rates for the referral of patients from public hospitals.

### **27.11 Availability of medical personnel**

- Expand the training of medical personnel in short supply, especially nurses, specialist nurses, radiographers and medical technologists, and offer improved remuneration and conditions of service to ensure adequate retention to meet required staff levels.
- Intensify the recruitment of personnel from overseas as required to meet staff shortages.

### **27.12 Fiscal measures**

- Remove all import duties on the importation of medical equipment and technologies.
- Provide tax credits for health insurance premiums paid by employees and employers.

### **27.13 Management structure of public health facilities**

- Review the existing structure of regional health authorities to restore decentralized executive management of hospitals and institute a tripartite structure (CEO, SMO and Matron) for the day-to-day administration of hospital facilities.
- Institute systems for monitoring

and auditing policy implementation, professional management, financial administration and service quality delivery.

## A better approach to housing our people

Despite the efforts over many years, Jamaica continues to experience a severe shortage of housing. The building of new houses has not been able to keep pace with the demand and the need for replacement of obsolete stock. To compound the problem, there is a mismatch between the cost of new housing and the affordability of those in greatest need.

We need to take a new approach that tailors our shelter solutions to the needs and affordability of the different target markets. Included in this new approach must be an acceptance of the reality that for many of our people housing themselves is a process, not a deed.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **28.1 More structured options to meet diverse needs**

Provide different types of housing solutions to meet the varying needs and circumstances of the population:

- Serviced lots for persons to erect

their own houses at a pace they can afford

- Build-on-Own-Land solutions to assist persons to build on lands they already own
- Housing schemes targeted at different levels of affordability
- Open-market purchases
- Upgrading and security of tenure for selected informal settlements
- Orderly relocation of informal settlers to new sites where permanent settlement is not feasible
- Improvement and expansion of existing dwellings
- Houses for indigents

#### **28.2 Land for housing development**

- Strictly enforce laws to prevent the emergence of new informal settlements.
- Re-establish a Settlement Upgrading Programme to provide

basic infrastructure (roads, water and sanitation) and secure tenure where settlements can be regularized based on planning and environmental considerations.

- Provide alternative sites with basic infrastructure for the relocation of informal settlers where regularisation is not feasible and for would-be squatters to erect their houses on a secure-tenure basis.

### **28.3 Financing solutions**

- Develop the secondary mortgage market to enable government mortgage holders such as the National Housing Trust, Jamaica Mortgage Bank, National Housing Development Corporation and the Ministry of Housing to sell mortgages to raise funds to finance new housing solutions.
- Leverage funds from private sector mortgage companies such as building societies to expand the pool of funds available to finance new housing solutions.
- Introduce shared equity mortgages to meet the affordability needs of the target population with the lender retaining up to 40% equity to be liquidated in not more than 10 years.

### **28.4 Protecting the rights of NHT contributors**

- Amend the National Housing Trust Act to provide that NHT funds can be used only for the provision of mortgage benefits to their contributors, portfolio investments and operating expenses and eliminate the practice of government commandeering the funds for other purposes.
- Funds made available by the NHT for other purposes including inner-

city housing for non-contributors must be made through intermediaries with the appropriate security or guarantee and must form part of its portfolio of investments.

- Establish a Guaranteed Mortgage Entitlement System under which every contributor, after a qualifying period, will be entitled to a mortgage benefit calculated on a formula determined by actuarial assessment to end the frustration of contributors who make mandatory contributions but are unable to secure a benefit. Contributions would be refundable after a specified period if the guaranteed mortgage entitlement is not accessed.

### **28.5 Incentives for private sector housing development**

Provide incentives for private developers and mortgage companies to provide housing solutions for low-income families and in depressed communities.

### **28.6 More affordable construction materials and methods**

Conduct research to develop and promote the use of cheaper building materials and methods.

### **28.7 Rental housing**

Review the Rent Restriction Act and make appropriate amendments to encourage the provision of houses for rent.

## Redeeming our inner-cities

The problem of poor housing conditions, overcrowding and rundown or undeveloped infrastructure is most acute in inner-city communities which display the most glaring manifestations of urban blight.

Poverty, lack of employment opportunities, unstable families, high fertility rates, illegal or insecure tenure, weak delivery of public services and high crime rates help to complete the circle of misery.

A structured, targeted programme is required to arrest the decay and transform these communities into centres of life and hope.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **29.1 Provision of new housing**

Expand the Inner-City Housing Project (IHP) in targeted communities

#### **29.2 Upgrading of infrastructure**

Establish a multi-agency programme to upgrade the rundown infrastructure in the inner-cities with special emphasis

on roads, water supply, sanitation, electricity and neighbourhood sporting facilities.

#### **29.3 Capacity building**

- Institute programmes for leadership training, mediation, parenting skills, drug abuse prevention and community action for community building.
- Synchronize government-led initiatives with the work of NGOs and community-based organizations to maximize available resources and effective transformation.

#### **29.4 Creating new opportunities**

- Develop an accelerated programme of training in marketable skills through existing institutions such as HEART for inner-city youth.
- Expand training programmes to include training in entrepreneurship, music and entertainment, events management and hospitality.

- Provide access to credit and technical assistance for micro-enterprise projects.
- Offer tax incentives for property transactions and job-creating investments in designated communities.

**INFORMATION, CULTURE  
& THE ARTS**

## Greater access to information

Transparency and access to information are indispensable features of a functioning democracy and good governance.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **30.1 Strengthening access to information**

- Complete the review of the Freedom of Information Act and enact such amendments as are required to ensure that the public has easy access to official documents.
- Modernize the facilities for the storage and retrieval of information in government departments and agencies to allow for speedy access.

#### **30.2 Development of Public Broadcasting Service**

- Develop the Public Broadcasting Service as an independent agency with a mandate to provide the public with information on current affairs and public issues to assist the public in being more informed.
- The PBS will, among other things, carry live broadcasts of parliamentary proceedings so that the public can observe the deliberations of Parliament. It will also broadcast civic and community events in the public interest.
- The PBS will be financed from the fees paid by broadcasting licencees.



## Preserving and promoting our rich culture

Jamaica's unique culture constitutes one of our most valuable assets which traces our past, defines us as a people and influences our future. It can be a powerful unifying force instilling in us national pride and a sense of purpose as we confront the challenges of the future.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **31.1 Restoration of the Jamaica Festival**

- Restore the Jamaica Festival to its former glory so that it can once again serve as a vehicle for unearthing, developing and showcasing the abundant talent and rich cultural forms that exist at the community level.
- Establish community cultural programmes as a resource base for the Jamaica Festival and as a building block for community development.

#### **31.2 Expanding cultural programmes in schools**

Expand programmes for the performing and visual arts in schools and provide scholarships for the exceptionally talented to receive higher training and pursue careers in their chosen art forms.

#### **31.3 Community cultural programmes**

Establish community cultural programmes as an incubator for undiscovered talent.

#### **31.4 HEART Academy for visual and performing arts**

Establish a specialized HEART Academy to provide intermediate training in the visual and performing arts and technical training in studio engineering, entertainment marketing, talent management and events production..

### **31.4 Expanding programmes at Edna Manley College**

- Develop the Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts to university accreditation.
- Increase the training opportunities by expanding the range of course offering to include art forms not currently provided for.

### **31.5 Support for performing groups**

Provide incentives for performing groups to stage productions locally and overseas.

### **31.6 Promoting our culture within the tourism industry**

Provide incentives to encourage greater use of our cultural performers and marketing of artistic products within the tourism sector.

### **31.7 Performing arts venues**

- Construct a state-of-the-art concert hall for the performing arts.
- Establish smaller performing arts centres strategically located across the island to facilitate stage productions.

### **31.8 Increased production and transmission of local programming**

- Improve the capacity of the Creative Production and Training Centre to provide training in all areas of the media arts.
- Facilitate the production of local programme material for radio and television and will provide subsidies for production that promotes Jamaican culture.
- Increase the local programme content that broadcasting licencees will be required to transmit as a condition of their licencees.
- The Public Broadcasting Service to be mandated to include locally-

produced, culturally-oriented programmes in its broadcast fare.

### **31.9 Intellectual Property Rights**

- Amend existing copyright legislation to provide greater protection and compliance.
- Require broadcast licencees to be copyright compliant as a condition of their licencees.
- Provide support for intellectual property rights organizations to ensure appropriate reward for their intellectual products.

### **31.10 Development of heritage sites**

- Accelerate the development of Spanish Town, Falmouth, Port Royal and Seville as World Heritage sites.
- Identify and secure other sites that have significant heritage value.
- Acquire and restore the birthplace in St. Ann's Bay of national hero, the Right Excellent Marcus Mosiah Garvey.

### **31.11 Upgrading of museums**

Upgrade existing museums and more aggressively promote them as attractions especially to tourist visitors.

### **31.12 Preservation of historical and cultural material**

Provide additional resources to improve the capacity of the National Library and the Institute of Jamaica to secure and preserve documentation, artifacts and audio and visual materials of special historical, cultural and heritage value.

**CHILD PROTECTION, YOUTH,  
SPORTS & COMMUNITIES**

## Protecting our children

We have a duty to protect our children, ensure that their basic needs are met and enable them to achieve their full potential.

### Our Pledge

#### 32.1 Safeguarding children's rights

- Uphold and enforce all conventions and laws relating to the rights of the child.
- Strengthen the Office of the Children's Advocate and promulgate the necessary regulations to ensure full protection of the rights of children as provided by law.
- Make special provision for the intervention of the Children's Advocate to protect the rights of children in civil, criminal, property, estate or divorce proceedings.
- Amend the Offences against the Person Act to provide severe penalties for carnal abuse of girls between the ages of 12 and 16 which now constitutes a mere misdemeanour.

- Provide stiffer penalties for the offence of incest.
- Ensure that no child is held in lock-ups and that special facilities are provided by juvenile detainees.

#### 32.2 Children's Homes

- Upgrade and expand Children's Homes to ensure a proper environment for abandoned children and those assigned by the Courts to protective care.
- Provide increased support to Churches and private organisations for the operation of private Children's Homes.

#### 32.3 Surveillance of children's development

- Issue and maintain a Child Health and Development Passport for each child from birth.

- Provide specially trained child development therapists through the Early Childhood Commission for assignment to schools and to work in communities to monitor child development and identify children with emotional or other abnormalities.

#### **32.4 Workplace day care centres**

Provide tax incentives for businesses that provide day care facilities for employees' children.

#### **32.5 Street children**

Launch a programme to rehabilitate street children to enable their return to their family or placement in an appropriate institution.

#### **32.6 Adoption and Foster Parents**

- Review the Adoption Act to simplify procedures for the legal adoption of children while ensuring their safety and well-being.
- Expand and promote the Foster Parents programme.

## Youth... our responsibility today and our hope for tomorrow

More than 50% of our population is under 25 years. A half million of those fall in the vulnerable 15-24 age group. The strength of a nation can be measured by the hope that it offers to its young people. It is their energy that will drive the nation. It is their hopes and aspirations that must define our goal as a people. Our youth must therefore be at the centre of our development strategy.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **33.1 Educating our young people**

Ensure that every child is afforded the opportunity of a proper education and training in income earning skills as outlined in our policy on education.

#### **33.2 Socializing our young people**

- Revitalize the National Youth Club programme with a view to having at least one youth club in every community to encourage positive socialization of our young people. Youth Clubs will emphasize discipline and social responsibility and will support a wide range of activi-

ties involving community projects, sports, culture, personal development, drug awareness and responsible sexual behaviour.

- Promote a national competition for the most innovative and impacting community project.
- Establish an active network of youth leaders across the island to build a powerful movement for positive change.
- Launch character training programmes through youth clubs and other youth organizations to instill self worth.
- Conduct training programmes in civil rights and civic responsibility.

#### **33.3 Strengthen the National Youth Service**

Strengthen the National Youth Service to provide training and work experience to more young people in community development activities.

### **33.4 Economic empowerment of our young people**

Provide a special loan fund through MIDA for financing business ventures for young people below 30 years.

## Sports as a development strategy

Sports provide a powerful means of socialization and social development. It creates vast opportunities for individual achievement and unites communities around the efforts and successes of their sportsmen and sportswomen. At the international level it has been a source of national pride.

### Our Pledge

#### 34.1 Expand sports infrastructure

- Develop a 5 year programme for the construction of mini-stadiums in urban centres where such facilities do not now exist.
- Acquire land and develop playfields for schools which do not currently have such facilities.
- Upgrade community playfields where necessary
- Expand programme for the erection of small courts for games such as basketball and netball in towns, villages and inner-city communities.
- New housing developments above a certain size will be required to

include the development of playfields to prescribed specifications.

#### 34.2 Training

- Upgrade facilities at the GC Foster College to provide training for coaches and provide incentives for them to work in rural areas and inner-city communities.
- Every school will be required to have at least one teacher with training in physical education.
- Provide coaches in the major sports working at the parish level to identify and develop talent at the school and community level.
- Provide scholarships to local institutions for promising sports performers who satisfy entry requirements.
- Provide financial assistance as needed to overseas scholarship recipients.

**34.3 Private sector support for sports**

Provide greater incentives for private sector entities which contribute to approved sporting activities.

**34.4 Fund for retired sports personalities**

Establish a special fund to assist retired sports personalities who may be in need.

## Energizing our communities

Our communities provide much of the social framework within which behavioural patterns are formed and the socialization process occurs. The community itself is a powerful tool for mobilizing individuals toward common goals and resolving many of the social problems plaguing our society.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **35.1 Building social capital**

- Establish a National Council of Community Organizations to register and liaise with all community-based organizations.

- Promote programmes for leadership training in communities throughout the island.

#### **35.2 Community projects**

- Identify in consultation with community-based organizations priorities within the community for government action.
- Establish a register for voluntary projects in each community each year and provide incentives for their implementation.



**POVERTY ALLEVIATION,  
DISABLED & ELDERLY**

## Gender mainstreaming

We are committed to the principle of gender equality. Implicit in that commitment is the need to redress the negative imbalances that our women have suffered. While legislation has addressed some of these concerns, there still remain cultural and societal biases against women which we must proactively strive to eliminate.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **36.1 Gender balance**

- Ensure that policy formulation and implementation are gender-sensitive.
- Keep under constant review legislation and policy initiatives designed to eliminate all forms of gender discrimination and take action where necessary.
- Prioritize the employment of women in our investment and job-creation drive to redress the imbalance reflected in the fact that the unemployment rate among

women is twice that of men.

#### **36.2 Protection from violence**

- Enforce strict measures to eliminate domestic violence, especially against women, and provide adequate support facilities for victims.
- Enact legislation to provide protection against sexual harassment.



## A modern, streamlined safety net for the poor

As a society, we cannot ignore the basic needs of those who live in the bowels of poverty.

Our approach will be two-fold: to provide opportunities for those, especially children, who can be lifted out of poverty through education and training and to provide reliable assistance to those whose capacity for productive activity is diminished.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **37.1 Review public assistance programmes**

Undertake a comprehensive review of all public assistance programmes to:

- evaluate their impact on poverty alleviation
- ensure that those who can be graduated out of poverty are being optimally assisted in doing so
- ensure that programmed assistance is being delivered to the defined target group.

#### **37.2 Opportunity programmes for adult beneficiaries**

Establish programmes for training adult beneficiaries for income earning activity.

#### **37.3 Establish National Assistance Act**

Enact a National Assistance Act to govern the administration of public assistance programmes, define the categories of beneficiaries, assign responsibilities for the delivery of benefits and provide systems of accountability.

#### **37.4 Care and shelter for the homeless**

- Establish in conjunction with churches and charitable and civic organizations shelters in major towns for homeless persons.
- Include these shelters in the routine programme of public health delivery to ensure proper medical and psychiatric evaluation and treatment.

- Assign social workers to assist those who can be reintegrated with their families or restored to a life of dignity.

## Enabling the disabled

It is estimated that there are approximately 165,000 persons in Jamaica with disabilities.

Almost 50% of them experience functional limitations.

The disabled community has demonstrated a strength of will and determination that are an inspiration to all Jamaica. They deserve our support.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **38.1 Removal of impediments**

- Enact the National Disability Act and review all other relevant statutes and policy initiatives to remove provisions that discriminate against disabled persons.
- Require all new buildings and facilities accessible to the public to be disabled-friendly.
- Require operators of public passenger vehicles, as a condition of their licence, to provide facilities

or offer special assistance to disabled persons.

#### **38.2 Special facilities for the disabled**

- Establish a Rehabilitation Centre for disabled persons at the Cornwall Regional Hospital.
- Collaborate with non-governmental organizations to provide additional facilities for the care, treatment and rehabilitation of severely disabled persons.
- Reserve 5% of places in all public educational institutions, jobs within the public sector and public sector housing solutions for disabled persons who satisfy the normal requirements.

#### **38.3 Empowering the disabled**

Strengthen existing programmes such as vocational training and early stimulation for persons with disabilities and support the efforts of the Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities

and the Abilities Foundation.

### **38.3 Early detection of disability**

Conduct early detection programmes through schools, health services, children's services, poor relief departments and non-governmental organizations to identify children with disabilities in order to provide treatment and special assistance.

### **38.4 Protection from violence**

Enact legislation to impose special penalties for violence against disabled persons.

## Security for the elderly

People worldwide are living longer because of improved access to health care and more effective medication. But, unable to work or find work and without family members who are able to support them, many find themselves in the evening of their days in the darkest of despair.

The care we provide to our elderly is a measure of the moral conscience of our nation.

We recognize this as a crucial policy responsibility.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **39.1 Register of dependent elderly**

- Establish a register of dependent elderly with an assessment of their basic needs and what assistance, if any, they are already receiving from any source.
- Expand the PATH programme to include those in need who are not already registered.

- Primary health care programmes will place special emphasis on home visits by community health aides.

#### **39.2 Homes for the Aged**

- Refurbish and maintain adequate standards of nutrition and medical care at all public infirmaries and Golden Age Homes.
- Train staff to provide counseling and group therapy and organize productive activity programmes.
- Provide subventions to individuals and community organizations that offer shelter and care for dependent elderly.



## Securing the best deal for our pensioners

Retired workers who have to rely on their pensions to survive often find that the pension payments are incapable of meeting even their modest living expenses let alone cope with the additional cost of health care they are likely to need and the ravages of inflation. We owe it to them to ensure that they get the best deal at the time when they need it most.

### **Our Pledge**

#### **40.1 Review National Insurance Scheme to provide greater protection and benefits**

- Institute new, secure administrative procedures for the recording of contributions to ensure that they are properly credited to the accounts of the individual contributors.
- Provide annual statements to each contributor indicating the number and value of contributions for that year and to date.

- Increase the prescribed limit of one year within which applications for retirement benefits must be submitted.
- Amend the existing legislation to require that the National Insurance Fund be invested in the best interest of the Fund and not be available for use by the government as it sees fit.
- Require that an actuarial valuation be conducted every two years to determine increases in benefits that can be paid without impairing the integrity of the Fund.

#### **40.2 Funded contributory pensions scheme for the public sector**

- Establish a contributory pension scheme for the public sector to replace on a phased basis the existing pension arrangements in which public sector workers are “granted” pensions but have no legal, enforceable entitlement to a

pension and in which increases in pension benefits remain at the benevolence of the government.

- Provide the option for current employees of the public sector to enter the new funded scheme or remain with the existing arrangements.

### **40.3 Regulation of pension schemes**

- Establish a Pensions Commission as an independent regulatory body to oversee the administration of all pension schemes (public and private).
- Make provision for portability to preserve the pension rights of members of any pension scheme and allow for the transfer of these rights when workers change jobs.

# Our commitment to the people of Jamaica

The Jamaica Labour Party is ready to govern our country and is qualified to provide a more responsible and experienced leadership; a kinder brand of leadership; a leadership that is confident responsive and accessible; a leadership that can share your dreams and feel your pain.

Much painstaking work has gone into formulating this plan and we have benefited greatly from our ongoing consultations with a wide cross section of Jamaican people. This consultative approach will be the hallmark of our government.

We pledge:

- To bring social, cultural and economic development to benefit all Jamaicans.
- To foster the principles of true democracy.
- To provide equal opportunities for all the people of Jamaica.
- To develop the economic resources of Jamaica.
- To encourage Individual ownership and initiative, subject to Government regulation, where Necessary, for the common good.
- To promote and protect the economic and social well-being of all Jamaicans.
- To foster cooperation among the people regardless of colour, race or creed.
- To instill in the hearts of the people reverence for God, and respect for lawful constituted authority.
- To ensure and protect the constitutional fundamental human rights of each individual.

We ask for your support and your vote, but more than anything else, we ask for your prayers as we prepare to serve you as the next Government of Jamaica.

*May God Bless and guide you all.*