

**"On a Mission to Make Jamaica Great"**

**Contribution to the Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives by the  
Hon. Lisa Hanna MP, Minister of Youth and Culture**

Mr. Speaker there is a lot for me to be thankful for in this 50th year of our Independence. I thank Almighty God for the gift of life and his many blessings.

I thank the People's National Party, this great Party whose policies and whose philosophy, like my own, put people first.

I thank the great citizens of South East St. Ann for the privilege of representing them; the Most Honourable Prime Minister for my appointment as Minister; and the hard working staff in the Ministry of Youth and Culture and in our various agencies. In particular, I thank my permanent secretary.

Mr. Speaker, my family has been my rock and a source of great strength. Especially my son, Alexander, who continues to inspire me - I truly love you.

As the Minister of Youth and Culture I represent and speak on behalf of the majority of our population – 55% comprising about 1.54 million persons who are under 30 years old.

Mr. Speaker, as children represent a vital constituency of the Youth and Culture portfolio, which I have the honour to lead, I crave your indulgence to listen to the voice of a child saying what she expects from her leaders:

[VOICE CLIP]

*“...it was not until now that child survival and rights have captivated public attention and awareness and become an issue in political debate. I say we now have the opportunity to make the commitment to bring about the care and support needed to mobilize the medication, medical facilities and finance to eradicate child suffering, torment and poverty. We know the knowledge and will power already exist, it is just for us to turn something that can be done into something that is done. I urge you to help it and make it an idea whose time has come for the good of the children. Thank you.”*

Mr. Speaker, that child was a young Lisa Hanna 23 years ago speaking at the launch of the UNICEF candle vigils to promote Jamaica's signing of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Mr. Speaker, today, I stand before you as proof in our Golden Jubilee year that the early nation-building work of Norman Manley, Alexander Bustamante, the People's National Party, the Jamaica Labour Party and other pioneers, has enabled a child in Jamaica to actually fulfill her dream and be proud to be labeled "Made in Jamaica."

Today, I have been given the awesome responsibility and the authority to make something that "can be done into something that is done." I thank all who have contributed to my journey of growth and development, both in good times and in bad.

## **Children**

Mr. Speaker, I wish to start this presentation to the Parliament by focusing on children, as they are my passion – a passion I have carried for my entire adult life. This passion is shared by our Administration led by the Most Honourable Prime Minister.

It is our mission as a Government to ensure that no child is denied the right to be safe, protected, empowered and provided with the opportunities to realize their dreams. As a country we have a long way to go, because our society has a culture of child abuse which we must overcome.

Preliminary data from the OCR shows that the number of reports on child abuse and maltreatment rose by 22% in 2011. A further review of the OCR figures reveals that there was a 70% increase in the number of sexual abuse reports, 53 % increase in emotional abuse and 50% in reports of child labour.

It is not only the child that suffers, but Jamaica suffers as well, when this child attains working age and has been denied the opportunity of realizing his or her full potential in the work force.

Our vision is to ensure that children know that the State is there to protect them, facilitate a nurturing environment in which they can thrive and develop, and that the State takes decisive steps to punish those who take advantage of their vulnerability.

Recently, a young woman came to my office to see me. It was clear that she was weak not only physically but drained emotionally. She found it difficult even to speak.

She said she did not come to ask me to give her anything, she came to give me her children as she wanted the State to take them for a while so she could get on her feet. My heart ached, as she was holding her 6 and 7 year-olds. While I was able to assist this mother, there is no doubt that there are thousands of others who feel just as overwhelmed.

In the Ministry we will be doubling our efforts at a multi-sectoral level to encourage responsible behaviour and proper planning for families among men, women and youth in the society.

However, there is a sense of urgency to deal with the issues facing children.

Mr. Speaker, while we cannot solve all of the problems over night, this year we will be spending \$1.567 billion on interventions for our children through the Child Development Agency (CDA) and the OCR.

From this amount:

- \$658.357 million goes to children homes both public and private;
- \$292.593 million to places of safety;
- \$75.358 million for maintenance grants for children in foster care.

In five months since taking office we have been able to secure some important achievements:

1. Cabinet approved our recommendation to have those children in State care who can, live in well protected, safe and nurturing family environments. Since then we have been auditing such possible family homes to ensure that they meet the prescribed standards.

We have set a target of 70% from the 53% for children in need of care to be living with suitable families. We are now at 60%.

2. Funding has been approved for the Ministry of Youth and Culture and the CDA to implement a national campaign to encourage Jamaican families to foster children who are in need of care.

3. We have approved two (2) salaried social workers at the Centre for the Investigation of Sexual Offenses and Child Abuse (CISOCA) to assist the police with counseling abused children. The social workers will also find suitable families for them while the courts deal with their individual cases, instead of placing them in Children's Homes and Places of Safety. This has kept over 1,116 children out of the state residential facilities and has saved the state \$201 million. We spend an average of \$12,000 per child per week in state care.

4. Cabinet has also approved our request for \$60 million for an increase in grants provided to private children's homes.

5. Mr. Speaker, in May, on behalf of the Government I signed with UNICEF a \$1.2 billion Country Action Plan to assist with the eradication of violence against children, and for focused interventions for child protection and development over the next five years.

6. The Ministry has developed a working terms of reference with the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) to develop a "Status of Jamaica's Children's" Report which will

analyze all the data on children, including reports of abuse. This data will guide our decision making and policy direction for the future.

7. In April the CDA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the University of Technology (UTECH). Under the arrangement nine students from UTECH's Child and Adolescent Health Programme, have already been deployed to work with the CDA. Four of the students have completed their tenure while five are currently assisting with investigations related to child abuse, abandonment and neglect.

8. I am working with my colleague Ministers of Justice and Education for a review to be done of the penalties for child abusers and to ensure that our school system entrenches the fact that children are the future of our country and the earth is theirs.

We owe it to our children to create social and cultural legacies for them in terms of values that are wholesome and uplifting. Here in Jamaica we can begin with our music.

Mr. Speaker, music that celebrates the gun and glorifies sexual violence against women has no place on the airwaves, in homes, on public transport, or in private motor vehicles where children are exposed to its debasing and socially harmful doctrines.

I am pleased that the Ministry of Transport and Works has established standards of civil behaviour within our public transport system which seek to stamp out lewd messages that are played to our nation's children.

In our efforts at reorienting the society and ending child abuse, the state must send a clear and unequivocal message to offenders: we will hunt them down, expose them no matter who they are or where they come from and will ensure that they are punished to the full extent of the law.

## **Youth**

Mr. Speaker, when I was a youth we were excited about Jamaica. But today, many of our young people with whom I speak are not. It is understandable when it appears that all they seem to be fed is a diet that speaks about the country's debt – something they did not create, but will nevertheless, be stuck with the responsibility for repaying when they grow up. Some think why bother to grow up here? Why not look for opportunities elsewhere? They see crime and violence, and many times they and their friends are the victims. They feel the pain and frustration of unemployment and they are distrustful of, and are cynical about, their national leaders.

Recently, we completed a qualitative survey on the situation of at risk youth in Jamaica. We went into all parishes interviewing young people and conducting focus groups: Some had this to say:

"We are all distorted and trying to find out who we are." "Most of us are trying to find ourselves. We have no jobs. We are lost. We have no skills to deal with certain things and no forums to express ourselves. We are in a box." (

Seventy per cent (70%) of the young people who came to the focus groups were either suicidal or wanted to kill someone.

Imagine these youth views especially in our 50th year of our political Independence. So while there are some of us who have realized our dreams, there are still too many who have not.

**The Future of work is online**

I want to say to our young people that we are here to help you fashion the vision and develop the conviction to chart a course for your personal empowerment.

Even when the odds are against you, you must trust yourself that you are special and you are here for a purpose. I have recognized from my own journey that it is not easy, but it is the right and principled course to take while at the same time ensuring that you maintain your personal integrity.

I also want to say to our youth that you are living in perhaps the most exciting time of our history. A time when you can stay right here in Jamaica and access jobs anywhere around the world. There was a time when the pinnacle of aspirations would be to own or work for a company that manufactured cars, telephones, food, building materials and the like.

However, many persons may not realize that a company such as Apple can today buy many of those traditional companies and leave change. What does Apple sell? – software and content. Today in the world economy Apple is worth US\$337 billion dollars. To put it in perspective the entire Jamaican national budget is less than US\$8b.

Today content and intellectual property are the most valuable assets in the world. It is no longer only the phone manufacturer that makes the money, but more so, the person who develops the software and content for the phone to work.

Since I was Opposition Spokesperson on Youth, I have been preaching the importance of developing and motivating our youth in this area. Now as Minister, not only have I been given a bigger microphone to preach this gospel, but also some resources to implement and give tangible results to some of the recommendations. The creation of economic opportunities for the youth must target those areas of the economy that are youth driven.

Mr. Speaker within five (5) months of coming to office, and with the World Bank's assistance we have been able to implement a major virtual economy opportunity for the youth – the Digital Jam 2.0, which was held over three days in Kingston this past weekend.

The objectives of Digital Jam 2.0 were to:

1. Identify employment opportunities in ICT;
2. Establish training and micro work centres in virtual economy opportunities;
3. Create incubating centres and promote entrepreneurship;
4. Build technical capacity in software applications through what are called hackathon competitions.
5. Bring Industry leaders and experts from the Silicon Valley and other jurisdictions to speak to and recruit young people

This was an ICT youth activity to connect Jamaican youth with the opportunities in the global virtual economy, through a range of targeted interventions. It brought together youths, the Government of Jamaica, development partners, private sector companies, academic and training institutions, and the Jamaican Diaspora.

A 24 hours "Sports Hackathon" design and coding competition was a key feature to help some 150 participating youth take full advantage of opportunities offered by the sports industry in Jamaica. There was also a major focus on the creative Industries as digital works in art, video and music were brought together.

In the short to medium term we intend to establish a set of pilot projects to provide young Jamaicans with employment opportunities in the global virtual economy via microwork, e-lancing and crowdsourcing, with IT centres that will act as both training locations and microwork aggregators. The pilot projects will also include the creation of incubation centres for entrepreneurship and business development.

Mr. Speaker, not only did we register over 2000 young people, we created jobs, internships and gave young people new possibilities for their future. To illustrate the reach of this initiative in cyber world, where a vast segment of our youth live, at June 18, Google was generating 18 million sites mentioning Digital Jam 2.0. We are already in discussions for Digital Jam 3.0 and the establishment of a fund for young people to access capital to develop businesses in these areas and software applications. I want to congratulate the hardworking team from Northern Caribbean University who won first prize for their "pot hole app" which linked GPS mapping system and internet global maps to alert people who are driving the location of pot holes. It was phenomenal!

Mr. Speaker, I want to share with you the response from the World Bank:

*"I wanted to thank you for all you have done to make Digital Jam 2.0 a real success.*

*With Digital Jam 2.0 we wanted to give young people a chance to see prospects for a better future via the online world. We wanted to give them an opportunity to showcase their talent, creativity and capacity to compete with anybody else in the global space. We wanted to get them in touch with some of the industry leaders and hear about those opportunities from the horse's mouth. We wanted to use Digital Jam 2.0 to provide concrete training delivered by world-class experts. Without a shadow of a doubt, I firmly believe that we have reached all these objectives with flying colors!*

*Seeing the booths of Freelancers, Microworkers, and MobileWorks buzzing with people was amazing... Seeing the never-ending stream of questions from the floor to the young successful Jamaicans who presented their personal life stories told me that we were reaching the intended audience... Seeing the quality of the apps being developed in the app contest and the hackathon showed that there are real young and Jamaican Steve Jobs out there... Seeing Howard University in DC standing up in the middle of the crowd and offering - right there on the spot, unannounced - 2 full MA scholarships to the winners of the competition app left me speechless...*

*I really hope that this experience will be a transformative one for the nearly 2,000 young Jamaicans who we have received and registered at the JCC throughout the three days..."*

## **Vertically Integrated Ministry**

When I was in Opposition I called for all the matters relating to youth to come under one Ministry and the Prime Minister in keeping with this recommendation is making this a reality. Since this year the OCR, CDA and NYS have been transferred to the Ministry of Youth and Culture.

Mr. Speaker the recurrent allocation of \$1.4 billion to the Ministry for this fiscal year represents an increase in real terms over last year's allocation of \$1.8 billion. We are one of the few Ministries that in real terms saw our allocation increase and I am please to point out that a great resource disparity has been corrected. Where in fiscal year 2011/2012, 4% was devoted to youth and 39% for culture, this year it is 33% and 58% respectively. I want to personally thank the Minister of Finance and the Cabinet for the priority they have given to our youth and culture. This was not an easy achievement given the current financial realities facing the country.

Mr. Speaker, the task of getting positive messages to our young people to motivate them, and get them involved in developmental opportunities is best done by their peers.

The National Centre for Youth Development will be engaging a cadre of young people referred to as Community Youth Empowerment Aides (CYEAs). They will enable the expansion of the youth development field force and will ensure the transmittal of key principles to young people across the country.

The CYEAs will be trained by the NYS in business administration and life skills as well as by the Youth Division in key principles of youth development, youth advocacy and leadership skills.

CYEAs will be deployed first in the parishes of Manchester, St. Ann, Portland, Kingston and Clarendon. The participants will be exposed to a career in youth development. Training and placement of the CYEAs will begin in August this year.

We have started a concerted effort to be in a position to measure the service we offer to every young person in Jamaica and, therefore, determine the effectiveness of youth intervention programmes. To do so, we need empirical data.

Jamaica has been selected by the Commonwealth Youth Programme as one of the first countries to pilot the Youth Development Index. The index will:

- Measure youth development over time
- Identify areas that need further attention
- Compare progress between countries
- Advocate development policies for youth
- And encourage the collection of youth related data.

### **National Youth Service**

The NYS Board has taken a strategic decision to return the organisation to its core mandate and be seen as more than a 'training and placement agency' for youth. It is challenged to return to being a development agency for youth to gain not just the right skill sets but also the correct mind set to contribute positively to national growth and development.

Emphasis is being placed on social skill development, self-sustainability and awareness and Civic pride.

The national summer employment programme is being restructured to return it to the original focus of being not a 'work' opportunity but rather a 'service' initiative. The primary objective is for young persons to (a) volunteer and (b) begin to explore career options.

Mr. Speaker, I take seriously the fact that persons who sit in this Honourable House are indeed elected by the majority of the voters in their respective constituencies. As such, we had a special team contact each MP, to ensure that applications were completed and their nominees interviewed and placed for the summer.

Mr. Speaker, we are honouring the commitment given by the Most Honourable Prime Minister to increase our integration of persons with disabilities. The NYS enrollment should be taking us closer to the internationally identified target of 17% of the population.

### **The Business of Culture**

Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege to work with Jamaica's cultural agents to foster, nurture, protect and promote one of Jamaica's most enduring assets, its culture.

I also have the opportunity to participate in the application of our culture in a uniformed, planned manner within a viable industrial framework.

The exploitation of culture within an industrial framework, which includes the development and enforcement of intellectual property and the promotion of an entrepreneurial culture and business ethic, is seen by some to happen at the expense of the preservation of culture. There is an age-old perspective that taking a business approach dilutes attempts at the retention and protection of our culture and heritage. It is also held by some that the business approach is at odds with the training of our cultural practitioners to pinnacles of excellence and fostering patriotism and respect for our own rich and vibrant culture.

I believe, Mr. Speaker that these objectives are not mutually exclusive. I am clear that, as a nation we must preserve the authenticity and richness of our culture and cultural expressions, even as we seek to derive economic benefits from the production of derivative cultural and creative products. However, as the Prime Minister mentioned in her budget presentation, this cannot happen in an unplanned manner.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker we are committed to establishing a Cultural and Creative Industries Commission as announced by the Prime Minister during her previous tenure.

Mr. Speaker our strategic approach is to:

1. Create a policy framework to position the cultural and creative industries to generate economic growth;
2. Build and strengthen the institutional capacity to train persons in jobs that will support the cultural industry;
3. Ensure that the necessary support and incentives are provided so that the talent, the skill, the training and the entrepreneurial spirit are complemented and encouraged;
4. Implement the promotional and legal framework that will protect the brand of Jamaican music/musicians and other artistic talent overseas;
5. Starting with Culture Yard in Trench Town, we will create community incubators that will expose, train and develop the great musical and artistic talent that our people possess.

Many countries of the world have started to implement strict policy frameworks for their cultural and creative industries. By so doing they seek to find the appropriate balance and mix of cultural preservation and industrialization for their stage of development.

Our country is facing very serious economic challenges. This administration is determined to confront our economic issues and to position our country on a path to sustainable prosperity. This requires placing culture at the forefront of the search for economic solutions.

Mr. Speaker, the objective is to position the cultural and creative industries among the leading sectors for foreign exchange earnings for Jamaica. The cultural and creative services sector stands as the sector of greatest competitive and comparative advantage for Jamaica and we must insist that the sector be given due respect in our efforts to produce our way out of the economic crisis.

To do this requires the planned and sustained development of the cultural and creative industries; which include music, sports, motion pictures, video, radio and television programmes, live performances, recordings, fashion, visual arts and craft, books, and

food. It includes museums, heritage sites, galleries, libraries, archives and also sporting events like festivals, merchandising and other elements of advertising and promotion etc.

Here and across the world entertainment-related activities have traditionally been considered to be "soft" industries.

Mr. Speaker, let me share some facts with you that will help to disabuse anyone with this notion:

- Jamaica is said to have earned net foreign exchange some US\$23.8 million in 2010 from cultural services including music, sports and film. Recently it was cited as the third highest contributor to the Jamaican economy.
- This was more than net foreign exchange from services in finance, business, insurance and construction combined.
- This, Mr. Speaker, is in spite of under-reporting – another challenge that plagues our industries – another challenge we are determined to address.

Globally, Mr. Speaker:

- Estimates put the cultural and creative industries as being worth US\$2.2 trillion dollars and growing at an annual rate of 5%.
- More people visit new museums in North America than the millions that attend national football games.
- How many persons are aware that the female vocalist with the most World number 1 Billboard hit songs in the last 3 years is a Black woman from the island of Barbados. Her name is Rihanna. She is the highest selling digital artist in US history having sold 47.6 million singles as of 2012. Mr. Speaker, here is an example that from a little country you can still have a dominant influence on the world.

- We have done so in sports. Nine of the 12 fastest legal times in sprint history have been done by Jamaicans. We have given the world Reggae music and our youth have won world competitions in software design and legal advocacy.
- (Just a small observation: we have also had the most Miss Worlds per capita).

The truth is, Mr. Speaker, that fewer people are coming to Jamaica for just a hotel room, sand, sea and sun. This is available in hundreds of places. They are attracted first and foremost to the appeal of our culture and the Jamaica brand and what it represents. It represents the vibe of our people, Bob Marley, Usain Bolt and so many others. Culture is a business and it is our business to make the efficient, effective 'business of culture' an ingrained part of our culture.

### **Growth with Jobs**

Mr. Speaker, Prime Minister Simpson Miller has given us a mandate to explore every option to bring about economic growth and development with jobs. Culture in all its forms affords Jamaica its greatest foreign exchange earning potential and lends itself naturally to this mandate.

Already our young people are singing and playing instruments in their churches, they are acting in their youth clubs, they are dancing and choreographing on their corners but few see the potential for a job within this sphere? How many know that they can apply their existing traditional skills within the cultural and creative industries?

Those with even basic accounting skills can provide services for budding artistes in their communities and begin to develop cultures of accountability. Carpenters can specialize in building sets. Those who are technically inclined can work with sound systems or learn lighting for large and small shows. Cosmetologists can learn make-up for television and film.

There are specialist jobs for stage managers, 'Apps' developers, cameramen and women, writers of all kinds, graphic designers, draftsmen and architects, animators etc.

Mr. Speaker, within the full spectrum of creative and cultural industries there are over possible 100 job classifications - (Not 100 jobs, but over 100 types of jobs). So when we talk about cultural and creative industries development, we must be talking about training and certification. We must be talking about empowerment and entrepreneurial development.

The creative sector is largely youth-led, fuelled by youth cultural entrepreneurship. The sector therefore contributes to youth employment and empowerment. It is for this reason that the Ministry of Youth and Culture is ensuring that there is coordination between the youth and culture portfolios that will see the development of cultural incubators for the nurturing of the training and development infrastructure.

The JEEP has begun to cruise within the cultural sector with jobs being created through the Jamaica Cultural Development Commission (JCDC). We are planning new JEEP projects through our Cultural Training arm, the CPTC including the implementation of the Audio Visual Intervention Scheme.

### **The Time Has Come**

I cannot close this segment of my presentation without speaking to the lifeblood of the creative and cultural sector – its creative workers and practitioners.

- I am speaking to the artist who designs and makes the jewelry, who lives to feel the clay between the fingers, wakes up to apply paint to canvas or to chip away at a log to reveal the magic form of sculpture;
- I am speaking to the musician who lives with a song in her head and heart, the audio technician who skillfully manipulates sounds digitally to create works of art;
- I am speaking to the sound-man and the box boy without whom the sound system could not be loaded and transported – and the selector whose vast knowledge of musical recordings we observe with awe;

- The writers directors, actors, theatre technicians and crew through whom Jamaican life is brought to the stage;
- The cameraman and editor; the producer and the writer who brings our lives to the big and small screens;
- The broadcaster and news writer who hones his or her craft to keep us entertained and informed;
- The handlers - personal managers, business managers, stage managers, road managers; the accountants and lawyers;
- You who provide support services – costume construction, set construction, makeup and properties managers;
- The graphic artists, industrial designers and architects;
- ...and the phenomenon perfected by Jamaicans as economic activities – the entourage or crew.

Each one of you continues to play an enormous role in our national development. Often you feel 'less-counted', as we say in Jamaica. I know your wait has been long for the recognition you deserve. I say to you the tide is turning.

Many of you have been working for decades, advocating for government to take your efforts seriously. That day has come. I hear you. We intend to make the quantum leap forward together.

I urge you within the industries not to take a "wait and see attitude". It will take the unity of the industries to make the plans successful. We are counting on your involvement as much as you are counting on ours. This is the true meaning of partnership. We are committed to it.

It is for this reason why as a part of our Jamaica 50 celebrations we will have a 24 hour global broadcast on August 5 and 6 where we will sell our content to the world on a global platform. We will be utilizing all the technical skills, camera men, screens, sound crews and equipment around the island to make this possible. For the first time we will be taking the risk to own our cultural content and sell it the rest of the world in real

time and for them to witness that we are in fact in control and understand the value of our **Brand Jamaica.**

## **Jamaica 50**

Finally Mr. Speaker I turn to the significance of this year in which we mark 50 years as an independent nation.

Mr. Speaker, the vision of the Administration is to use the occasion of Jamaica's 50th anniversary to:

- Encourage serious national introspection on our achievements as a nation since 1962;
- Create a national celebration emphasizing our history and culture as a people;
- Brand Jamaica internationally and improve our world standard and image particularly leveraging the opportunity presented by the London Olympics;
- Create events, memorabilia and merchandise so that the spirit of Jamaica 50 can resonate within people's minds now and for years to come;
- Strengthen the JCDC to promote its work in communities across the country and provide the Commission with adequate funding to achieve this objective;
- Create public and private sector partnerships critical for uniting the country;
- Create legacy projects in education, heritage, infrastructure, culture, academic symposia, literature and the arts that will in themselves act as meaningful economic stimulants;
- Energise our youth as the generation responsible for taking Jamaica forward into 2062.

Mr. Speaker the programme for the Jamaica 50 celebrations is rolling out nicely and all events thus far have received excellent reviews.

We now have a fully developed and fully funded programme in keeping with the guidelines and budget approved by Cabinet. Cabinet approved the programme at \$688.5 million of which \$366.5 came from the consolidated fund and \$322 million from the private sector and public bodies. Let me pause at this time to thank the private sector companies and public bodies which at very short notice stepped forward, even though their 2012 budgets were already cast. They have demonstrated true commitment to partnership as together we celebrate this national milestone.

I want to congratulate the Jamaica 50 Secretariat within the MYC which has been able to achieve a lot in only four months, and this against the backdrop that the budget was only approved in May.

Already the Jamaica 50 national events began their rollout with the National Senior Athletics Trials at the National Arena this past weekend and the superb Jamaica Defense Force (JDF) Military Tattoo. We also launched Jamaica 50 merchandise and the "Pins of Pride." Initiative. Over the next four weeks - July 1- 31 - there is a Jamaica 50 event on every day in the month of July which will lead us into the official celebratory period, August 1 -6. The Ministry of Local Government is now working in earnest with the Parish Councils to decorate Parish Capitals with our national colours and the Constituency Development Fund has approved a range of \$150,000 to \$250,000 for each MP to stage a community event during this period.

The headquarters of this celebration will be the Golden Jubilee Village in Kingston. This Village will utilize the entire Independence Park complex to establish an integrated venue to stage the celebrations.

1. The National Indoor Sports Centre will be converted into a "Performance Centre" that will house all of the Independence national events produced by the JCDC from July 9 to August 6 2012, with the exception of the finals of the Jamaica Festival Song Competition, which will be held at the National Arena this Saturday, July 7.

2. The National Arena will house an 'exhibition hall' to showcase Jamaica over 50 years and will include an introduction to the 'Jamaica sports museum' that will be established as a Jamaica 50 legacy project.

3. The Car Park area will be transformed into a major outdoor venue that will house vendors, sponsors, children's village and petting zoo as well as a major performance stage that will showcase our "best in festival performances" as well as other nightly concerts with our iconic musicians. This venue will house an ongoing programme of entertainment and activities night and day. It will carry the live Olympic feeds that will be supplied to Jamaica 50 by the official broadcast station in Jamaica for the Olympics CVM TV in association with its sponsors.

And of course,

4. The National Stadium will house the Grand Gala on August 6, Independence Day.

The Village will have a Jamaica 50 Broadcast Centre which will facilitate through our media partners the live broadcasting of all these events and activities across Jamaica, to the UK, USA and Canada by our global media partners, RJR Communications Group and LIME.

They will provide an interface for any other TV network or platform that wishes to join and share the celebrations. This infrastructure will provide streaming capabilities over the Internet, social pages and mobile devices.

Additionally, there will be fourteen (14) satellite stages across various towns and places in Jamaica on August 5 and 6 that will become the public gathering points for Jamaicans to celebrate the Golden Jubilee. The Jamaica 50 Secretariat will soon be announcing these locations.

Mr. Speaker, the Jamaica 50 Celebrations include some 50 Street Dances to be held across Jamaica between August 1 and 6 culminating in the Independence Street Dance in Half-Way Tree Square on the night of August 6.

As a prelude to Jamaica 50, Independence Thanksgiving Services will be held in all parishes on Sunday, August 5. On the 5th too, a major free concert titled, "Independence Nostalgia" will be held at the Golden Jubilee Village at Independence Park. It will feature the greats of festival songs over the years, along with other popular Jamaican vintage artistes.

On Independence Day the spectacular Independence Grand Gala Jamaica 50 Edition will be held at the National Stadium. It has already been announced that Cabinet has approved a contract in the value of \$70 million to Jambiz International for the production of the Grand Gala. Jambiz, the company which produced the Grand Gala in 2002, 2008, 2009 and 2011 was selected in a transparent tender process.

Flag-raising ceremonies are planned for all parish capitals on the morning of August 6.

Independence stage shows will be on in all parishes on Independence Night and there will also be the Western Street Parade and Gala on the streets of Montego Bay and on the Montego Bay Waterfront.

Mr. Speaker excitement is already at fever pitch among Jamaicans overseas about Jamaica 50. In Canada, The UK and North America particularly, planning committees have launched their celebrations which will reach a crescendo on August 6th.

For more information on the details of the Jamaica 50 Schedule at home and abroad I invite everyone to call the Jamaica 50 Secretariat or log on the Jamaica 50 website at: [www.jamaica50.com](http://www.jamaica50.com).

We have also activated the Social Development Commission and the Post Master General so that the calendar of events can be posted at local post offices and community notice boards.

Mr. Speaker we are covering Jamaica physically and technologically because this is a time for all of us to feel good and unite as a people on a mission to make Jamaica great! In May this year I extended an invitation and met with the Opposition Spokesperson on Culture and presented the Jamaica 50 programme. We came to agreements on a number of areas including that I would meet with the Opposition

Leader and brief him as well. Mr. Speaker I am pleased to report that I have met with the Leader of the Opposition, the Prime Minister and members of the Jamaica 50 Secretariat and he is fully aware of, and indicated his support for, the Jamaica 50 programme.

Moreover I have put in place a broad-based steering committee chaired by an eminent Jamaican to oversee the implementation of the celebrations and to make suggestions through me to the Most Honourable Prime Minister and the Cabinet. The Committee includes representatives from the PSOJ, The Jamaica Council of Churches, JARIA, JTA, JCDC and two persons from the Opposition, one whom is the Opposition Spokesperson on Culture.

Mr. Speaker, this celebration is about Jamaica and the pride of our people. As a people and a country, there is more that unites us than the forces that seek to separate us. For my part partisan politics will not be allowed to play any part in this national Jamaica 50 programme. That is a solemn commitment that I give to the people of Jamaica from the start to the finish of this programme.

## **CONCLUSION**

Mr. Speaker I am sure that none of us will be here sitting in the Jamaican Parliament in 2062, but we have a duty nonetheless to ensure that the legacy we leave is one which takes every Jamaican nearer to their personal collective and aspirations. So we will reflect and celebrate, being mindful of what the past has taught us.

But beyond that we must use the experience and inspiration of Jamaica 50 to commit to a more enlightened path and a greater sense of urgency as we point our country in a new direction for those who are now our children and those who are not yet born.

Mr. Speaker , we need to be more strategic in our long term planning, systematic in our actions, and more sensitive in our relationships. The mission to make Jamaica great will require these positive responses from all of us. The politician, the private sector, the church and our youth must all come together for this mission.

As the Minister of Culture I recognize that I have a responsibility to help shape a nation's pride through the transformation of existing cultural attitudes and values. It is clear that we have to transform the mindset especially of our children and youth to a new thinking and purpose about what Jamaica requires for the next 50 years. That is why there is a major component of Jamaica 50 that goes beyond celebrations.

Our Legacy of Jamaica 50 post August 6 will engage stakeholders towards the realization of these objectives as we pursue our mission to greatness.

Plans are already advanced for these legacy discussions and activities in the period following August 6 and I will provide the Parliament with more information on this component at the special sitting of Parliament to mark Jamaica at 50.

As I close, Mr. Speaker, I pledge to my country, the love and loyalty of my heart, the wisdom and courage of my mind, the strength and vigour of my body, in the service of my fellow citizens and towards advancing the mission to secure prosperity for the people of Jamaica. In this jubilee year of Jamaica 50, let us all as citizens of this blessed land, as recipients of this rich heritage, before God and all mankind, pledge the positive energy of our collective beings to the attainment of a successful and united Jamaica, land we love. May God continue to love and bless us all. Thank you