



# MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE



## 10<sup>th</sup> BIENNIAL JAMAICA DIASPORA CONFERENCE REPORT

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We extend sincere appreciation to the office of the Governor-General, the leadership of our two Ministers - Senator the Honourable Kamina Johnson Smith, JP, and the Honourable Alando Terrelonge, MP, Minister of State, who were invaluable in the planning and execution of the Conference. Acknowledgement is made of Ambassador Sheila Sealy Monteith, CD, JP, Permanent Secretary and Ambassador Sharon Miller, Chief Technical Director; the dedicated Conference Secretariat, led by Mrs. Ariel Bowen, Under-Secretary in the Diaspora, Protocol and Consular Affairs Division and Mrs. Lloyd Wilks Director and the team from the Diaspora Affairs Department, who ensured delivery of the Conference imperatives. Appreciation is further extended to a full-scale team which supported all aspects of the Conference in areas such as public relations, rapporteuring, accounting IT, office management, registration, and varying levels of administrative support. See names listed in Appendix I. The role of the Heads of Jamaican Missions and staff overseas is also very much appreciated.

We are deeply grateful to the Legacy Partners - the VM Group Limited, Grace Kennedy Group, the JN Group as well as new and returning Sponsors for their sterling support. The Ministry extends special commendations to Mr. Courtney Campbell, President of the Victoria Mutual Group Limited, who graciously and ably led as Conference Chairman. We thank Dr Kevin Brown, former Global Jamaica Diaspora Council member and Principal of UTECH who assisted with the Conference Programme.

We also wish to express particular appreciation for the input, presence and participation of the members of the Global Diaspora Council (GJDC) and the Global Jamaica Diaspora Youth Council (GJDYC) whose combined efforts contributed to the direction and programme planning. Their names are listed at Appendix II.

A special note of thanks to the Office of the Mayor of Montego Bay; the Pastor and members of the Burchell Baptist Church for hosting the opening church service; the Montego Bay Convention Centre; our partner hotels – Oceans Hotel and Iberostar; official transportation provided by Island Car Rentals; the Masters of Ceremonies, Moderators, Presenters and Panellists who all contributed to making the programme robust and informative.

The resounding success of a sold-out Marketplace was attributed to the participation of over 60 private and public sector entities, Ministry, Department and Agencies. We wish to thank our media partners in particular the JIS, the RJR Gleaner Group; Jamaicans.com; Fresh FM Radio and varying other media support who worked to enable the dissemination of information across the globe.

Finally, the Ministry is deeply appreciative of the work of Project Manager, Lisa-Ann Ogilvie whose insights, skill and agility enabled the seamless execution of multiple event components of the Conference. We acknowledge her meticulous logistical coordination and real-time issue resolution attributes and attention to details to the various planning components including logistics, security and emergency planning, audio-visual and technology integration, Catering and hospitality management, volunteer and staffing coordination.

The Ministry is deeply indebted to all who were involved in the process of delivering what was a very successful 10<sup>th</sup> Biennial Jamaica Diaspora Conference 2024. See comprehensive list of sponsors, partnering organizations and individuals at Appendix III.

We look forward to working with all again, as we plan the 11<sup>th</sup> Conference in 2026.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 10<sup>th</sup> Biennial Jamaica Diaspora Conference (10<sup>th</sup> BJDC) was held on 16<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> June 2024, at the Montego Bay Conference Centre. It was organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, in partnership with a range of stakeholders including other Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), Legacy Partners the VM Group, the Jamaica National Group and Grace Kennedy Group; the Global Jamaica Diaspora Council (GJDC) and the Global Jamaica Diaspora Youth Council (GJDC), as well as the broader Diaspora. Mr. Courtney Campbell, President and Chief Executive Officer, VM Group, served as the Conference Chairman.

The Conference was convened under the theme *“United for Jamaica’s Transformation: Fostering Peace, Productivity and Youth Empowerment”*. It marked another significant milestone in the Government’s formal engagement mechanism with the Diaspora over the last 20 years. Its venue, which also marked a return to Montego Bay for the first time since 2015, was in response to calls from members of the Diaspora including the Diaspora Councils. The 10<sup>th</sup> BJDC was also the first in-person Conference since the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the adoption of the National Diaspora Policy in November 2022.

The Conference attracted 1,193 delegates from 18 countries, marking the second largest number of participants in the history of the Conference. In addition to attendance from the usual large Diaspora communities from the United States of America, Canada and the United Kingdom, attendees from the following countries participated: Commonwealth of The Bahamas, Kingdom of Belgium, Cayman Islands, Republic of Chile, St. Kitts and Nevis, France, Germany, Ghana, Kingdom of Netherlands, Nigeria, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, United Arab Emirates, and Mexico.

Highlights of the Conference included a church service and welcome reception at the start of the Conference on Diaspora Day, Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2024. It also included a comprehensive programme of activities around the Conference theme, including panel discussions; fireside chats with distinguished members of the Diaspora and officials in Jamaica held in plenary; luncheon plenaries; nightly entertainment and a Government-at-Your Service (GOVAY) and Market Place. The GOVAY and Market Place allowed for the provision of goods and essential services to be made available to the Diaspora at a single location. Over 20 Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), participated in the Market Place, with a total of 60 exhibitors and 26 table-top displays from across multiple stakeholder interests. This year, for the first time a member of the Diaspora from the United States became a major contributor as a Platinum Sponsor.

Dr the Most Honourable Andrew Holness, Prime Minister, was the Keynote speaker at the Ceremonial Opening of the Conference. Other speakers included Senator the Honourable Kamina Johnson Smith, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, and the Honourable Alando Terrelonge, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Mr. Mark Golding, Leader of the Opposition and Mr. Courtney Campbell, Chairman of Conference. Welcome remarks were also brought by the Mayor and Custos of Montego Bay. The ceremony was live-streamed through on-line platforms which recorded over 5,000 participants. Three (3) international organisations participated, namely: International Organisation for Migration (IOM); Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The IOM presented the Jamaica Diaspora Engagement Model and the IDB, the Diaspora Registration Portal to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade which were subsequently launched by the Minister at the Conference.

This Conference presented the most expansive and robust Programme in the history of its staging, facilitating discussions on a range of issues critical to national development and the Diaspora’s well-being. The agenda was informed by prior consultations which included four (4) Regional Diaspora conferences held in 2023 in Africa, UK, Canada, and Continental Europe, as well as with key stakeholders including MDAs, Legacy Partners, and the Global Jamaica Diaspora Council (GJDC) and the Global Jamaica Diaspora Youth Council (GJDYC).

The Conference concluded with a number of positive outcomes including the launch of two portals to strengthen Diaspora engagements; the introduction of the Eat Jamaican Day Initiative; soft launch the Diaspora Mentorship Academy, the identification of winners in the Youth Innovation Challenge and the handing over of an atmospheric Water Generator, created by a member of the UK Diaspora, to the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

## **Conference Objectives**

The major objectives of the Conference were to:

- Continue to secure a positive trajectory in the Government's relationship with the Diaspora;
- Support the development and prioritisation of the welfare of the Diaspora where they reside;
- Facilitate inclusivity with a concerted and deliberate youth focus, particularly in respect of 2nd, 3rd and 4th generation Jamaicans overseas;
- Draw attention to opportunities to engage in relation to trade, business, investment, health, education, agriculture, and the orange economy (creative sectors, and sport);
- Launch the Diaspora virtual platforms, namely: the Jamaica Diaspora Engagement Model (JAM-DEM), and the ConnectMeJa (Diaspora Registration Portal);
- Encourage and sustain philanthropic pathways towards nation-building through the Jamaica Social Stock Exchange (JSSE); and
- Continue to sensitise participants to the role of the GJDC and GJDYC and their relationship with the MFAFT, considering the need for these bodies to be responsive to global and national shifts which may impact the execution of their respective mandates.

## **CONFERENCE PLANNING & EXECUTION**

### **Conference Planning Committee**

The planning and execution of the Conference necessitated extensive multi-stakeholder and inter-agency consultation and collaboration. Under the leadership of its Chair, Mr. Courtney Campbell, Chief Executive Officer of VM Group, planning and execution was supported by a cadre of professionals drawn from a diverse range of stakeholders. Among them were Ministries Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and Jamaican Missions overseas; Diaspora members including the GJDC and GJDYC; members of the umbrella Group of Churches and civil society organizations.

In ensuring that the concerns of the Diaspora were taken into account, a number of Regional Conferences were convened in conjunction with Jamaican Missions in Africa, Continental Europe, the UK and Canada and in consultations with the Diaspora Councils. The Conference Programme also benefitted from the work of a former member of the Diaspora – Dr Kevin Brown now President of UTECH.

Mrs. Ariel Bowen, Under-Secretary for the Diaspora, Protocol and Consular Affairs Division in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, in her capacity as lead coordinator, working in conjunction with the Director and staff of the Diaspora Affairs Department served as the Secretariat of the Conference

The Planning Committee was subdivided into Sub-Committees for effective execution of various aspects of the Conference.

### **Sub-Committees of the 10<sup>th</sup> Biennial Jamaica Diaspora Conference**

The list of the Sub-Committees is as follows:

Budget and Finance	Government at Your Service
Programme and Content	Protocol
Rapporteurs	Security
Secretariat & Registration	Entertainment/Look and Feel
Logistics	Volunteer
Diaspora Day of Service	Public Relations
Technical & ICT	Marketing
Market Place	



## **Sponsorships and Partnerships**

Sponsorship and key partnerships played a pivotal role in ensuring the success and sustainability of the 10th Biennial Jamaica Diaspora Conference. The Conference was executed at a cost of approximately J\$100 million and was only possible due to the financial support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, the Legacy Partners; VM Group, JN Group and Grace Kennedy, the Project Manager, its sponsors, exhibitors in the Marketplace, Conference Registration fees from attendees and Conference magazine advertisements.

## **Presenters**

Moderators, Presenters and Panellists were experts in their respective fields, drawn from both the Diaspora and Jamaica. This provided for rich, relevant and engaging sessions. It also allowed for significant participation of the Diaspora in the Conference proceedings. They were provided with pertinent documentation and information to support their roles in the Conference. They were also facilitated with Conference branded templates to enhance their presentations. As a major difference with previous conferences, the presenters were asked to forgo the use of PowerPoint presentations and engage more directly with the audience. This change worked effectively.

## **The Global Jamaica Diaspora Council (GJDC) and Global Jamaica Diaspora Youth Council (GJDYC)**

The 10<sup>th</sup> Biennial Jamaica Diaspora Conference in true stakeholder manner incorporated the assistance of the GJDC and GJDYC, a 30-member Diaspora group was also critical to the success of the Conference. By way of their ardent promotion and proposals, they spread the word in the locations where they reside and supported the process inclusive of being onsite in Montego Bay to lend practical support. Amongst the responsibilities of the Council is the enhancement of collaboration between Jamaicans at home and those living overseas.

The GJDC consists of 14 elected members from across the Diaspora communities in the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States of America. The remaining 16 members are appointed as follows:

Six (6) members from Africa; Asia and the Pacific; Latin America; the Caribbean; Europe (excluding the United Kingdom); and the Middle East.

Nine (9) members are in the areas of Arts, Sport and Culture; Citizen Security; Commerce; Development Issues; Education; Faith-based Community; Health and Wellness; Agriculture; and Environment. The final member of the Council is a discretionary appointment. Their names and email contacts are at Appendix II and III.

## **FEATURES OF THE CONFERENCE**

The 10<sup>th</sup> Biennial Jamaica Diaspora Conference had 16 Special Features:

- 1. *Thanksgiving Worship Service***
- 2. *Welcome Reception***
- 3. *Ceremonial Opening***
- 4. *10 Plenary Sessions***
- 5. *10 Concurrent Break-Out Sessions***
- 6. *4 Riverside Chats***
- 7. *2 Luncheon Plenaries***
- 8. *Governor General's Achievement Awards – Diaspora***
- 9. *Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Recognition Awards***

10. *Launch of Diaspora Virtual Portals: Jamaica Diaspora Engagement Model (JAMDEM) portal and ConnectMeJa App*
11. *Launch of the Eat Jamaica Day Initiative*
12. *Soft Launch of the Jamaica Diaspora Mentorship Academy*
13. *Launch of the Youth Innovation Challenge*
14. *2 Special Entertainment Events and 1 Sponsored Activity by Legacy Partners: VM Group, JN Group and Grace Kennedy*
15. *Marketplace*
16. *Government at Your Service*
17. *Diaspora Day of Service*

### **Thanksgiving Worship Service**

The Conference commenced on Diaspora Day, Sunday, 16<sup>th</sup> June 2024 with a Church service, held at the Burchell Memorial Baptist Church in Montego, which was well attended by members of the Diaspora and Jamaicans. The guest speaker was Bishop Dr. Clive Porter a member of the Diaspora based in Florida. Members of the Cabinet including Dr. Horace Chang, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, Senator the Hon. Kamina Johnson Smith, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade and the Hon. Alando Terrelonge, Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade also participated, along with officials from the Montego Bay municipal authority' other local officials and members of the local business community.

### **Welcome Reception**

Over 500 attended the Welcome Reception, hosted by Minister Kamina Johnson Smith at the Convention Centre on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2024. Officials, business and religious leaders from the Montego Bay community were also in attendance.

## **CEREMONIAL OPENING**

The Ceremonial Opening began with a spectacular Flag Ceremony, representing the 18 countries from which Diasporans travelled to participate, performed by students from the Montego Bay community.

The event, which was also live-streamed, featured the Prime Minister's keynote address and attracted approximately 1,800 in-person attendees, along with over 5,000 virtual attendees. In an address characterised by optimism and a call to action, Prime Minister Andrew Holness welcomed the Jamaican Diaspora.

The Prime Minister hailed Jamaica's economic achievements, notably the historic streak of 12 consecutive quarters of growth and the lowest unemployment rate of 4.2% since Independence, alongside a considerable reduction in the debt-to-GDP ratio to 72%. He underscored the government's commitment to fiscal discipline and infrastructural advancements in areas such as disaster risk management and security, with a noted reduction in crime rates due to enhanced investments in law enforcement and technology. He lauded the crucial role of the Diaspora, particularly in Jamaica's fiscal stability and social economy, advocating for a broader engagement reflecting the conference's vision. The Prime Minister concluded by reiterating the necessity for enhanced productivity linked to wage growth, asserting that these efforts are pivotal for national development.

Senator the Hon. Kamina Johnson Smith, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, underscored the significance of the Diaspora Conference, emphasising its transcendental nature beyond discourse to actively addressing and building consensus on pivotal issues. She noted that the evolution of the Government of Jamaica's engagement with the Diaspora since 2004 remains vital to achieving Vision 2030. This, she highlighted, was evidenced through the formation of bodies such as the Global Jamaica Diaspora Council (GJDC) and its Youth Council, reflecting an expanded and inclusive partnership. While acknowledging that the Diaspora Conference is more than just talk, she emphasised that conversations are critical to finding solutions and forming consensus around dynamic issues.

The Hon. Alando Terrelonge, Minister of State with responsibility for Diaspora Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, highlighted the Government's commitment to fostering closer collaboration with the Diaspora to drive Jamaica's transformation across various sectors, including investment, small business growth, health, security, tourism, constitutional reform, and youth empowerment. He reaffirmed the government's dedication to supporting Jamaican nationals abroad through the National Diaspora Policy, while urging continued dialogue, collaboration, and innovation to forge a legacy of unity, peace, and prosperity for future generations.

Mr. Mark Golding, the Leader of the Opposition noted the importance of the Conference theme of unity and that the Conference is also a testament to Jamaica's ability to take unified positions on situations of common interest. He recognised the significance of the diaspora to Jamaica's development across political administrations. He recalled the evidence of diaspora support which continues in the areas of education and health, as well as remittances, the value of Jamaican currency, and recently during the COVID-19 pandemic by way of philanthropic endeavours and resources sent. He opined that this represents a prime social safety net for the people of Jamaica.

Other speakers included Councillor Richard Vernon - Mayor of Montego Bay (via video, due to his absence overseas); and Mr. Courtney Campbell (President and CEO of the VM Group) Chair of Conference.

## CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

The conference programme was comprehensive and engaging, featuring three days of meaningful discussions. Topics included agriculture; climate change; health; education; security; constitutional reform; economic development; the creative industries; tourism; issues of relevance to the religious community; real estate, financial markets, sports, and youth empowerment. The Programme was executed through several plenary and break-out sessions; river-side chats and panel discussions, with participation from experts from the Diaspora and Jamaica.

### Plenaries

The following is a summary of the plenaries:

**PLENARY SESSION 1: Jamaica Open for Business:** This session highlighted the investment strengths of Jamaica, including robust infrastructure, market accessibility, stable economic management, and diverse business opportunities. JAMPRO's strategic collaborations with Diaspora financial institutions were emphasised to enhance Jamaica's investment opportunities through a new Economic Diplomacy Programme.

**PLENARY SESSION 2: Support from Jamaican Missions and Diaspora:** This session discussed the role of Jamaican Missions and Diaspora organisations in supporting Jamaicans overseas through Consular, Diaspora, and Economic diplomacy. It Highlighted plans to launch portals to link the Diaspora to investment opportunities and enable voluntary information sharing.

**PLENARY SESSION 3: Achieving Lasting Peace and Security:** This session addressed achieving lasting peace and citizen security, recognizing crime as a societal issue requiring addressing root causes. Identified challenges facing the police force including infrastructure, processes, resources, and mobility. It emphasised need for greater enforcement and technological advancement.

**PLENARY SESSION 4: Transforming Jamaica's Health System:** This session outlined the Vision for Health 2030, focusing on strengthening healthcare delivery at all levels, utilising technology, considering demographic changes and leveraging Diaspora medical missions. The importance of addressing non-communicable diseases and healthcare system reforms was reiterated.

**PLENARY SESSION 5: Transforming Education in the Digital Era:** This session discussed transforming education in the digital era, highlighting the TREND initiative to integrate STEM curriculum. Emphasized the need for improved physical school infrastructure, increased digital access, and modernized teaching methods.



**PLENARY SESSION 6: Empowering Jamaican Youth for Development:** This session explored challenges in engaging Jamaican youth in the Diaspora, emphasizing the importance of mentorship, community strengthening, and leveraging young people's skills and technology savvy. It showcased youth entrepreneurship and empowerment initiatives.

**PLENARY SESSION 7: Harnessing Creative Industries and Sports:** This session highlighted the significant contributions of Jamaica's creative industries and sports to the national brand and economy. It emphasised the need for increased policy support, strategic investments, and explored the potential for leveraging Diaspora partnerships across both sectors.

**PLENARY SESSION 8: Tourism and Wealth Creation:** The session focused on tourism as a driver of wealth creation, outlining opportunities in new accommodation, attractions, and support sectors. It emphasised the need to capitalise on global trends in 'experiential-tourism', eco-tourism, sustainability, and digitization.

**PLENARY SESSION 9: Strengthening Diaspora Engagement:** The session discussed the government's strategic goals for strengthening and sustaining Diaspora engagement, including the role of the Diaspora Councils and Jamaica's Missions overseas in fostering connections and empowering the Diaspora.

**PLENARY SESSION 10: Jamaica's Constitutional Reform:** The session addressed Jamaica's constitutional reform process, and emphasised the importance of public participation and the role of the Diaspora in this transformative journey. Emphasis was placed on bipartisan collaboration, public participation, and feedback mechanisms to ensure successful constitutional reform.

## CONCURRENT BREAK-OUT SESSIONS

The Conference featured ten (10) concurrent breakout sessions that addressed key areas impacting Jamaica's development. Significant themes included sustainable economic growth, facilitating Diaspora contributions, strengthening national systems, and enhancing Jamaica's human capital.

The breakout sessions collectively focussed on collaborative approaches to addressing Jamaica's development challenges, utilizing the resources and expertise of the Diaspora. Specific recommendations emerging from the sessions will inform future strategic planning and initiatives. See matrix attached with list of recommendations. Several cross-cutting themes emerged, including the importance of:

- Public-private partnerships
- Leveraging technology for development
- Strengthening regulatory frameworks
- Promoting financial literacy
- Addressing skills gap and brain drain

### Summary of Concurrent Break-out Sessions

Session 1 - Green Entrepreneurship: The session highlighted Jamaica's vulnerability to climate change and emphasized opportunities for green businesses. Key areas identified were renewable energy, water management, and climate-resilient infrastructure. The Development Bank of Jamaica's (DBJ) Green Climate Fund (GCF) accreditation was underscored as crucial for accessing international funding for both public and private sector projects. The Scientific Research Council (SRC) and Caribbean Climate Innovation Centre (CCIC) were presented as key resources for fostering innovation and supporting green entrepreneurs.

Session 2 - Customs and You: This session focused on simplifying the process for Diaspora charitable donations. The Jamaica Customs Agency's (JCA) initiatives such as the Electronic Passenger Form and JA

Customs Connect app were highlighted, along with the requirements for registered charitable organizations.

Session 3 - How the Diaspora Can Uplift Vulnerable Communities through the Jamaica Social Stock Exchange (JSSE): The JSSE's role in channelling Diaspora investment into social projects was highlighted, focusing on education, healthcare, and violence prevention initiatives. The session emphasized the need for greater awareness among the Diaspora of these opportunities and the streamlined process for contributing or listing projects.

Session 4 - Wealth Creation through Real Estate: This session confirmed real estate's significant contribution to wealth creation, noting market growth and increased investor activity. Challenges such as regulatory compliance, outdated building codes, and the need for financial literacy were identified. The session also highlighted opportunities in commercial, co-working, parking, and storage spaces, along with the potential of government initiatives like "Rent to Own" programs.

session 5 - Skills Training at the Cornerstone of National Development through HEART Trust/NSTA Enhancement Foundation: This session emphasized the importance of skills training in addressing unemployment and fostering economic growth. The HEART Trust/NSTA's initiatives in digital skills, green technology, and entrepreneurship were highlighted, along with strategies to reduce brain drain and address the skills gap.

Session 6 - Revolutionising Education in Jamaica: The session discussed educational reform policies, aligning school programmes with market demands, and strengthening Diaspora partnerships in education. Key areas highlighted were early childhood education, STEM education, and attracting Diaspora academics to Jamaican institutions.

Session 7 - National Housing Trust (NHT) and You: This session detailed the NHT's simplified registration process and benefits for Diaspora members, including loans for home construction, purchase, or improvement. New initiatives such as a smart energy loan were announced, along with opportunities for joint financing with other lenders.

Session 8 - The National Healthcare Enhancement Foundation (NHEF): The session centred on the NHEF's Adopt-A-Clinic program and the development of a new Burn Care Facility (BCF) through a public-private partnership. The BCF's funding model, sustainability plan, and the crucial role of Diaspora support were detailed.

Session 9 - The Church and Diaspora Collaboration: This session highlighted the church's role in mobilizing unused land for agricultural initiatives and supporting rehabilitation programs. Participants emphasized the need for Diasporans to leverage their resources to alleviate socio-economic challenges in Jamaica. Human Capital Development & National Identity:

Session 10 - Strengthening Diaspora Youth Connection to Jamaica: This session focused on fostering a stronger sense of Jamaican identity among Diaspora youth. Strategies discussed included leveraging storytelling, promoting Jamaican language and culture, and providing opportunities for engagement through programmes like the GraceKennedy Birthright Programme. The role of the Global Jamaica Diaspora Youth Council's (GJDYC) role in connecting youth was also highlighted.

## **LUNCHEON PLENARIES**

### **Luncheon Plenary 1: Diaspora Direct Investment in Jamaica**

This plenary session focused on facilitating Diaspora investment in Jamaica through the Jamaica Stock Exchange (JSE) and highlighted opportunities within the JSE's Main, Junior, and Bond Markets. Emphasis was placed on the importance of due diligence and transparency for investors, with the JSE showcasing its 18% investor growth over the past five years. The session detailed the listing process for businesses, and the JSE's outreach to improve Diaspora awareness. The session also addressed concerns about trust, following recent financial scandals, suggesting improved regulation and private sector leadership to rebuild confidence. The potential for Diaspora bonds to finance national development was also explored.

The JSE outlined future initiatives, including expansion into new markets (Guyana, Green Bonds), extended trading hours, and a high school stock market game to nurture future investors. The session also outlined common barriers for growing companies, including audited financials and board requirements.

## **Luncheon Plenary 2: Jamaican Citizenship and Travel Documents**

This plenary highlighted achievements in modernizing services, including the introduction of e-passports, e-gates, kiosks, and an online customer service chatbot. The session addressed various aspects of Jamaican citizenship acquisition (including descent and dual citizenship), passport applications (both online and through missions), and travel document processes. Passport, Immigration and Citizenship Agency (PICA) provided information on the volume of overseas passport applications, addressing lost passports, travel history requests, and emergency travel certificate options. The agency further addressed questions regarding parental consent for minors' passport renewals, the process of renouncing citizenship, and the availability of express services (locally and in the UK). PICA promoted the application for unconditional landing, enabling indefinite residency in Jamaica. Future improvements to the airport immigration process, including additional e-gates, were also previewed.

## **RIVERSIDE CHATS**

Four (4) Riverside Chat sessions were held in plenary format, focusing on investment and engagement opportunities within Jamaica for members of the Diaspora. Key highlights are summarized below:

### **1. Succeeding in Business in the Diaspora - Chef Wenford Patrick Simpson**

Chef Simpson, CEO of Simpson Restaurant and Bar, a member of the Diaspora living in New York shared his entrepreneurial journey, highlighting the importance of cultural pride and innovative business practices in achieving success. His restaurants, with locations in New York and Atlantic City, have garnered significant acclaim, achieving a leading position in the US Jamaican restaurant market, despite challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Future expansion plans include additional US locations and potential ventures in Las Vegas and JFK Airport. Chef Simpson stressed the importance of superior customer service in building a successful brand.

### **2. Diaspora Educator - Dr. Anthony Munroe**

Dr. Munroe, President of Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC) in New York, discussed the transformative power of higher education, particularly for urban youth. BMCC's initiatives include on-line programmes, internships (notably the successful Urban Male Internship Program), guaranteed admission programmes with scholarships, and free acceptance for low-income families. A memorandum of understanding with the University of the Commonwealth Caribbean which facilitates faculty exchange and research opportunities was signed. The college also partners with the Alpha School of Music. While acknowledging resource constraints, Dr. Munroe emphasized BMCC's focus on maximizing student potential and providing second chances for incarcerated individuals.

### **3. Meet the New Jamaican Police Commissioner - Dr. Kevin Blake**

Commissioner of Police, Dr. Kevin Blake outlined Operation Secure Jamaica, a comprehensive national security plan built on four pillars: crime reduction, border security, cyber defence, and technology. The plan emphasizes improvements in the Jamaican Constabulary Force (JCF) (numbers and quality of officers) through recruitment drives, training (including partnerships with Delaware State University), infrastructure development, and accreditation (ISO 9001 certification). The Commissioner highlighted the importance of improving public perception and internal communication within the JCF. He emphasized the critical role the Diaspora can play in promoting a positive image of Jamaica and supporting community policing initiatives. The Social Transformation and Renewal (STAR) project encourages community involvement in security initiatives.

#### **4: Investment Opportunities in Agriculture, Fisheries, and Mining - Honourable Floyd Green, MP Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries,**

Minister Green highlighted the significant investment opportunities that exist across the agricultural, fisheries, and mining sectors. He noted that high-demand Jamaican products include various fruits, spices (particularly turmeric), and yams and that Government initiatives include supporting the expansion of limestone exports, exploring opportunities in copper and gold mining, and providing resources; including land and planting materials for agricultural investments. The Minister also highlighted ongoing efforts to address environmental concerns, improve market access for small farmers including through the AGRI Linkages Exchange platform, and enhance support for agricultural communities impacted by climate change. He also addressed challenges like praedial larceny and the need for legislative changes and increased law enforcement efforts to solve them. A commitment was made to establish a labour bank to match Diaspora investors with experienced farm managers.

## **AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS**

### **The Diaspora Governor-General's Achievement Awards (GGAA)**

The Governor General's Achievement Awards for Excellence for the Diaspora has been an integral feature of the Biennial Diaspora Conferences. The Awards serve to recognise Diasporans from Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States of America for "excellence" in their respective fields and for significant contribution to their host countries and to Jamaica.

The event was hosted by Ms. Fae Ellington, CD, JP and opened with greetings from Mr. Courtney Campbell, JP, Chairman of the 10th Biennial Jamaica Diaspora Conference and representing the GCPE Sponsor.

Mr. Campbell emphasised the importance of the GGAA in recognizing Jamaican excellence, which serves as an inspiration for Jamaicans worldwide. He highlighted the sponsors' strong commitment to the Diaspora and their pleasure in honouring the awardees whose dedication and passion motivate others.

His Excellency the Most Honourable Sir Patrick Allen, ON, GCMG, CD, KSt, Governor General of Jamaica, welcomed the attendees and commended the awardees as testimonies of the Diaspora's accomplishments. The Governor General emphasised that the awards celebrate excellence and are a call to action, reminding all that they have a role to play in shaping Jamaica's future. The Governor General shared inspiring stories of the awardees' resilience, service, and transformative impact in their respective communities.

He showcased individual awardee accomplishments: Mr. Steven Getten's youth empowerment work in Canada; Mr. Mark Henry's community leadership in Montreal; Dr. Pearl Ann Jarrett's contributions to renewable energy and community development in Jamaica and the UK; Dr. Dahlia Ann Blake's medical and educational leadership in the US; and Mr. Roy "Gramps" Morgan's significant philanthropic endeavours. The Governor-General also promoted his "I Believe" initiative, focusing on leveraging Jamaica's strengths to address its challenges.

The response on behalf of the awardees was delivered by Dr. Pearl Ann Jarrett, who expressed gratitude for the recognition and shared her own experiences of overcoming challenges to continue her philanthropic work in Jamaica and the UK.

### **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Recognition Awards**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade hosted a special awards ceremony, awarding ten (10) individuals and entities for their contribution to the success of the Biennial Diaspora Conferences over the years. Moderated by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, Ambassador Sheila Sealy Monteith, CD, JP, the awards were handed out by Senator the Honourable Kamina Johnson Smith, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade.

- **The recipients were:**

- Legacy Partners: VM Group, JN Group, and GraceKennedy were recognized for their continuous support and leadership.
- Media Partner: Jamaica Information Service (JIS) was acknowledged for its consistent media coverage and information dissemination.
- Diaspora Organizations: The Jamaican Canadian Association was commended for its longstanding support.
- Individual Contributors: Notable figures such as Mr. Dervan Malcolm, Mr. Nathaniel Peat, Mr. Leo Gilling, Ms. Lisa Ogilvie, and Professor Neville Ying were honoured for their diverse and impactful roles in the conference's development and promotion.

## **Government at Your Service (GOVAYS) and MARKETPLACE**

The GOVAYS and Market Place, which were sustained throughout the duration of the Conference, were the largest and most successful to date. The Marketplace was sold-out with a record number of vendors offering goods and services. Sixty (60) exhibits were displayed, featuring Legacy Partners such as the VM and JN and Grace Kennedy Groups, as well as non-traditional sponsors from both the public and other private sector bodies, including new sponsors like Island Car Rentals, National Bakery, Pinnacle. For the first time two sponsors from the Diaspora participated, including Blue Mahoe (USA) as a Platinum Sponsor.

The Conference Marketplace also featured the Government-at-Your Service 'One stop shop' Fast Track Services for the Diaspora, including key Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) including:

1. **Administrator General Department (AGD)**
2. **Companies Office of Jamaica**
3. **HEART/NSTA Trust**
4. **Jamaica Business Development Corporation**
5. **Jamaica Customs Agency**
6. **National Education Trust**
7. **National Housing Trust**
8. **National Land Agency**
9. **Office of the Children's Advocate**
10. **Passport, Immigration & Citizenship Agency**
11. **Post and Telecommunications Department**
12. **Registrar General's Department**
13. **Student Loan Bureau**
14. **Tourism Product Development Company**
15. **Trade Board Limited**
16. **Tax Administration Jamaica**
17. **Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport**
18. **Ministry of Health and Wellness**
19. **Ministry of Labour and Social Security**
20. **Ministry of Legal and Constitutional Affairs**
21. **Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce**
22. **Ministry of Education and Youth**
23. **Jamaica Intellectual Property Office**
24. **Jamaica Promotions Corporation**
25. **Jamaica Special Economic Zone Authority**
26. **Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation**
27. **Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining**



## CLOSING CEREMONY

The 10<sup>th</sup> Biennial Jamaica Diaspora Conference concluded on a high note. The closing session, on 19<sup>th</sup> June, attended by over 1,200 registered delegates, featured remarks from the Honourable Alando Terrelonge, MP, JP, Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, and Mr. Courtney Campbell, President and CEO of VM Group and Conference Chair.

The Minister Terrelonge lauded the Conference's success in fostering dialogue and collaboration, highlighting its alignment with the theme, *"United for Jamaica's Transformation: Fostering Peace, Productivity, and Youth Empowerment."* He emphasized key initiatives launched or advanced during the Conference, including the Jamaica Diaspora Engagement Model (JA-DEM), the Diaspora Registration Portal (DRP), the Diaspora Governor-General's Achievement Awards (GGAA), and the Jamaica Diaspora Mentorship Academy (JDMA). Furthermore, he noted the handover of an Atmospheric Water Generator (AWG) to the Ministry of Health by its developer Dr Pearl Jarrett, a member of the Diaspora in the UK who is a recipient of the Governor-General's Award, and the government's exploration of an agricultural stock exchange to attract Diaspora investment in key sectors.

Mr. Campbell expressed gratitude to numerous partners, sponsors, participating Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), and the VM Group team for their contributions to the Conference's success.

The Conference demonstrated strong Diaspora engagement and yielded positive outcomes, furthering collaboration and investment opportunities for Jamaica's development.

## KEY CONFERENCE OUTCOMES

**The following were key outcomes of the Conference:**

### **Launch of Two (2) Virtual Portals for Diaspora Engagement and Connectivity**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade (MFAFT), in collaboration with the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) and supported by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), launched two key initiatives to enhance engagement with the Jamaican Diaspora:

- I. *The Jamaica Diaspora Engagement Model (JA-DEM) platform.* Funded by the IOM, JA-DEM provides a centralised on-line resource featuring:
  - A comprehensive historical overview of Jamaican Diaspora migration patterns.
  - A global directory of Jamaican organizations to facilitate diaspora integration.
  - Curated investment opportunities in Jamaica, including guidance on investing in the Jamaica Stock Exchange, real estate, and the Social Stock Exchange.
  - A resource library, including a "Returning Resident Toolkit" partnered with the Registrar General's Department for genealogical research.
- II. *The Diaspora Registration Portal – DRP* also referred to as ConnectMeJA, accessible via the Apple App Store and Google Play, and funded by the IDB, allows for:
  - Connections to be made by interested Diaspora members
  - Identify areas of support for the Diaspora
  - Identify and track opportunities for Diaspora contribution to national development.

These initiatives directly correspond to longstanding Diaspora requests for centralised access to investment opportunities and enhanced global connectivity. The platforms are expected to significantly improve government-Diaspora relations, aligning with the objectives of the International Diaspora Policy to promote peace, productivity, and youth empowerment.

## Launch of the Jamaica Diaspora Mentorship Academy (JDMA)

The Jamaica Diaspora Mentorship Academy (JDMA) was soft launched at the 10th BJDC with plans for a final roll out in October 2024. The JDMA commenced operations this year, following a comprehensive strategic planning process. This initiative, which is the brainchild of the Education Sector Leader on the Global Jamaica Diaspora Council, Dr. Sandra Colly Durand (Europe), was developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade (MFAFT) and the Ministry of Education, Skills, Youth and Information (MESYI). The JDMA represents a significant step towards leveraging the Jamaican Diaspora's expertise for national development. Its success will depend on continued collaboration between government entities, private sector partners, and engaged citizens both domestically and abroad.

### Key Features of the JDMA include:

1. Participant Selection: The (MESYI) will select approximately 80 students from grades 6-13 across all 14 parishes of Jamaica.
2. Mentorship Structure: Monthly one-hour mentoring sessions will be conducted, followed by mentee-driven deliverables.
3. Engagement Activities: The programme includes quarterly "Best Practices Mental Meet Ups," monthly randomized check-ins, and three annual events (Christmas and Easter gatherings, and a Graduation Ceremony).
4. Mentor Recruitment: A successful call for diaspora mentors in April 2024 resulted in 91 respondents from diverse professional backgrounds and age groups.
5. Corporate Partnerships: Victoria Mutual provided a contribution to the Academy and other sponsors are invited to come on board.

### Areas for Further Support:

To enhance and expand the JDMA's capabilities, additional corporate sponsorship and private assistance are being sought in the following areas:

- Scholarships
- Technology resources (devices and phone plans)
- Programme materials (participant badges and graduation certificates)
- Technical infrastructure (website maintenance and Zoom licenses)
- Scaling initiatives (recruitment of additional mentors)

## Youth Innovation Challenge

In alignment with the Conference's thematic focus on youth empowerment, a Youth Innovation Challenge was conceptualised and executed by the GJDYC to encourage youth involvement and contributions to Jamaica through innovative ideas. It involved a competition involving six (6) teams of youth entrants who proposed innovative solutions to identified challenges to help stimulate growth and development in Jamaica to influential stakeholders and decision-makers.

Plenary Session 6: Concluded with the announcement of the top two (2) participants of the Youth Innovation Challenge launched by the Global Jamaica Diaspora Youth Council. The challenge sought to facilitate increased interaction of Jamaican youths resulting in initiatives and ideas that will help stimulate growth and development in Jamaica.

The following teams emerged as winners of the Youth Innovation Challenge:

1. The 1<sup>st</sup> place pair of Mr. Kevin Pinnock and Christina Briscoe, who proposed the incorporation of technological advancements within the agricultural sector, noting that there is a greater extent of manual labour involved in the agricultural industry.

2. The 2<sup>nd</sup> place team including Michael Morgan, Chelsea Wright, and Lyndsay Archer developed the project "Layman's Lawyer" an AI-driven chatbot, which is an App designed to provide clear and accessible information, with considerations given for data protection and ethical safeguards.
3. The 3<sup>rd</sup> place winners, which included: Guarnett Flowers, Monique Brown, Bariki Innis, Shantae Suffren proposed the development of an ATM Outta Service "Blue Wave", a digital neo-bank aimed at revolutionising Jamaica's banking system by addressing issues like unreliable ATM services, high fees, and over-reliance on cash transactions through comprehensive digital banking solutions and financial inclusion initiatives.

### **Launch of "Eat Jamaican Day" Initiative**

The Honourable Floyd Green, MP, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining announced the expansion of the "Eat Jamaican Day" initiative globally, targeting Jamaican Diaspora communities worldwide. This strategic move builds upon a 21-year-old domestic programme established by the Jamaica Agriculture Society and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining.

This initiative represents a significant step in Jamaica's agricultural export strategy, aiming to capitalize on the country's culinary reputation while supporting domestic producers and safeguarding the integrity of Jamaican products in the global marketplace.

#### **Key Points from the Launch included the following:**

1. Historical Context: November 25<sup>th</sup> was officially designated as "Eat Jamaican Day" by the Governor General, with the entire month of November recognised as "Eat Jamaican Month."
2. Global Health Initiative: The Government of Jamaica aims to promote the consumption of Jamaican agricultural products internationally, emphasizing their superior health benefits and flavour profiles compared to imported alternatives.
3. Strategic Export Enhancement: In response to the expanding Jamaican Diaspora, the government is implementing a more focused approach to exports, aiming to distinguish and elevate the "Brand Jamaica" identity.
4. Global Campaign Launch: An "Eat Jamaican" global campaign is scheduled to commence in November 2024, leveraging Jamaica's overseas diplomatic missions for implementation.
5. Economic Implications: The high demand for Jamaican cuisine has led to premium pricing, necessitating measures to combat fraudulent branding and ensure product authenticity.
6. Diaspora Engagement: The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining is developing a comprehensive database of authenticated Jamaican food providers in key Diaspora centres, which will be disseminated to expatriate communities.

#### **Special highlight:**

##### **Gift of Atmospheric Water Generator**

A special highlight of the Conference was the handing over of an Atmospheric Water Generator (AWG) by Dr Pearl Jarrett to the Ministry of Health. Dr Jarrett of the Jarrett Foundation in the UK, is member of the Diaspora who is responsible for the design of the equipment, which is meant to serve as a solution to water challenges in Jamaica. The idea of the equipment is that it is able to pull water out of the atmosphere and present the liquid in a format for drinking. Dr Jarrett was a recipient of the Governor-General's Diaspora Achievement Award

## DAY OF SERVICE

On 20<sup>th</sup> June 2024, the Diaspora Day of Service, an initiative of the Diaspora, which provides an avenue for them to participate in activities to give back to the country through various projects administered at the community level, successfully implemented eighteen (18) projects across Jamaica. These projects, originating from the United States of America, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Jamaica, addressed diverse needs, ranging from educational improvements to health screenings and environmental initiatives. Four projects originated in the United States, four in Canada, six in the United Kingdom, and four in Jamaica. With regard to the domestic distribution of project implementation, St. James emerged as the primary beneficiary, hosting eight projects. St. Ann followed with four initiatives, while St. Elizabeth accommodated two. Manchester, Portland, and St. Andrew each saw the realization of one project within their respective jurisdictions. Notably the construction of a housing unit for a needy family in Chatham, St. James, sponsored by Food for the Poor, was also undertaken during this year's Day of Service.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

The following is a list of issues raised from the Conference floor by participants, as compiled by the Secretariat and are to be referred to the relevant stakeholders for consideration and necessary follow-up:

THEME	RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION ITEMS	RESPONSIBLE / EXECUTING ENTITIES
<b>JAMAICA'S ECONOMY &amp; INVESTMENT</b>	Promote Jamaica's "Open for Business" environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highlight infrastructure, stable business framework, diverse investment opportunities, access to external markets, and secure financial services.</li> <li>Promote Jamaica as a destination for "digital hotels," such as Airbnb, to leverage the growing interest of Diaspora youth in real estate development.</li> <li>Continue promoting Jamaica for investment and trade through marketing and engagement activities by JAMPRO and MFAFT missions.</li> </ul>	JAMPRO, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade (MFAFT), Jamaican Financial Institutions (GK Financial Group, JN Group, VM Group), Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce (MIIC)
	Explore potential partnerships between the Jamaica Social Stock Exchange (JSSE) and the Jamaican Diaspora in support of social impact projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a mechanism for tax-deductible donations to social impact projects in Jamaica from Diaspora-based companies and individuals.</li> </ul>	Jamaica Social Stock Exchange (JSSE), Ministry of Finance and the Public, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade (MFAFT), Jamaican Embassies/Consulates, Diaspora organisations (Global Jamaica Diaspora Council and Youth Councils)

THEME	RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION ITEMS	RESPONSIBLE / EXECUTING ENTITIES
	Explore potential partnerships between the Jamaica Stock Exchange (JSSE) and the Jamaican Diaspora in support of increased Diasporic investment on the Main and Junior Markets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve JSE Awareness &amp; Education: The Jamaica Stock Exchange (JSE) should launch a robust education campaign targeting the Diaspora, highlighting investment opportunities and the JSE's offerings.</li> <li>• Build Market Confidence: Focus on increasing transparency, governance, and compliance to address Diaspora concerns about potential financial loss. Emphasise the importance of thorough research, due diligence, and independent verification of investments.</li> <li>• Diaspora Bonds: Explore the issuance of Diaspora Bonds to attract investment and fund development projects in Jamaica.</li> <li>• Invest in Infrastructure: Promote investment in infrastructure projects, particularly highways, to stimulate real estate development and overall growth.</li> <li>• Expand Market Access: Continue to explore opportunities in new markets, such as Guyana and the Green Bond Market.</li> <li>• Expand the Junior Market's maximum earning potential</li> <li>• Launch a Stock Market Game for high school students</li> <li>• Establish a Diaspora-Led Investment Platform: Create a</li> </ul>	Jamaica Stock Exchange (JSSE), Ministry of Finance and the Public Service, Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce (MIIC), JAMPRO, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade (MFAFT), Jamaican Embassies/Consulates, Global Jamaica Diaspora Council (GJDC), The Global Jamaica Diaspora Youth Council (GJDYC), other Diaspora Organisations, Financial Services Commission.



THEME	RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION ITEMS	RESPONSIBLE / EXECUTING ENTITIES
		<p>platform managed by the Diaspora, fostering trust and confidence in the Jamaican financial system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote Junior Market Participation: Encourage Diaspora participation in the Junior Market, highlighting incentives such as tax exemptions and mentorship programmes.</li> <li>Strengthen Regulation and Cooperation: Increase collaboration between the JSE and the Financial Services Commission to enhance market regulation and minimise fraud.</li> </ul>	
<b>DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT</b>	Strengthen Diaspora Support Systems and Mechanisms including consular services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced Consular Services: Improve consular services, including immigration matters, passport processing, and support for returning residents.</li> <li>Strengthen Diaspora Organisations: Support and promote the growth of Diaspora organisations, encouraging replication of successful models like the Jamaica Women of Florida (JWoF).</li> <li>Strengthen the Global Jamaica Diaspora Council (GJDC): Continue to expand the GJDC's reach, promote regional conferences, and appoint representatives in key locations.</li> <li>Simplify the process for Diaspora members to donate charitable goods to Jamaica.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade (MFAFT), Global Jamaica Diaspora Council (GJDC), Jamaican Missions Abroad, GJDC, GJDYC, Diaspora Organisations, Jamaica Customs Agency (JCA), Department of Cooperative and Friendly Societies (DCFS)

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to promote the benefits of the e-passport, highlighting its security features and ease of use during travel.</li> <li>Improve the On-line passport application process. Ensure user-friendliness and provide robust customer support for the process.</li> <li>Expand Access to Express passport citizenship Services to more locations.</li> <li>Provide sensitisation seminars on Dual Citizenship</li> <li>Enhance immigration infrastructure at Airports including e-gates and other technological upgrades to streamline airport immigration processes.</li> <li>Actively promote the unconditional landing provision to attract Diaspora members to reside and contribute to Jamaica.</li> </ul>	Passport, Immigration and Citizenship Agency (PICA), Jamaican Missions Abroad
	Leverage Diaspora Expertise for National Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilise the intellectual capital of Diaspora professionals in Jamaica's education system, especially in STEM fields.</li> <li>Encourage Diaspora investment in real estate, promoting a "Rent to Own" initiative to address affordability.</li> <li>Simplify the process for Diaspora members to donate charitable goods to Jamaica.</li> <li>Facilitate collaboration between Diaspora professionals and Jamaican organisations in fields such as</li> </ul>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade (MFAFT), Jamaican Missions Abroad, Diaspora Organisations, Jamaica Customs Agency (JCA), Department of Cooperative and Friendly Societies (DCFS), Ministries with responsibilities for Education, Health, and Technology, and Diaspora organisations.

THEME	RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION ITEMS	RESPONSIBLE / EXECUTING ENTITIES
		<p>education, healthcare, and technology.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create incentives to attract Diaspora talent back to Jamaica, particularly in key sectors like education and healthcare.</li> <li>• Promote and support Diaspora-led initiatives aimed at revitalising communities in Jamaica.</li> <li>• Develop a national strategy to address the issue of brain drain, focusing on creating a more conducive environment for highly skilled Jamaicans.</li> </ul>	
<b>HEALTHCARE</b>	Implement Vision for Health 2030, exploring avenues for partnership with the Jamaican Diaspora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen the healthcare system at all levels, integrate technology, address demographic transitions, and secure necessary infrastructure, equipment, and supplies.</li> <li>• Increase the number of physicians through training programmes, partnerships, and recruitment initiatives.</li> <li>• Support Medical Missions; encourage the Diaspora to participate in medical missions targeting underserved communities and support organisations like Help Jamaica Medical Mission (HELP JAMM).</li> <li>• Promote Special Education Support: Provide training for special education teachers and expand existing programmes like the MICO Care Centre to address</li> </ul>	Ministry of Health and Wellness, HEART Trust/NSTA, Diaspora organisations.

THEME	RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION ITEMS	RESPONSIBLE / EXECUTING ENTITIES
		autism and other learning challenges.	
	Increase the capacity of the National Healthcare Enhancement Foundation (NHEF) to mobilise resources and support healthcare initiatives in Jamaica.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construct a Burn Care Facility (BCF) in a timely manner, ensuring its sustainability through long-term funding, exploring the potential for partnerships with the Diaspora.</li> <li>• Develop a comprehensive national strategy to address burn prevention and education, emphasising public awareness and community engagement.</li> </ul>	Petrojam Limited, University Hospital of the West Indies (UHWI), The National Healthcare Enhancement Foundation (NHEF), Ministry of Health and Wellness
<b>EDUCATIONAL TRANSFORMATION</b>	Strengthen the partnership between the Diaspora and Jamaican educational institutions, facilitating academic exchange programmes, mentorship initiatives, and collaborative research projects for youth empowerment and development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Implement TREND Initiative:</b> Fully integrate STEM curriculum across all levels of education, democratising access through initiatives like the National STEM Centre.</li> <li>• <b>Invest in Digital Infrastructure:</b> Equip schools with proper digital infrastructure, including internet connectivity and devices, to ensure equitable access to technology.</li> <li>• <b>Promote greater Cyber Security and AI Literacy:</b> Train teachers on cyber security practices and AI to ensure a safe and productive digital learning environment.</li> <li>• <b>Encourage increased Diaspora Philanthropy:</b> Support the National Education Trust (NET), adopt a child for the school year, and provide skills and</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education and Youth, E-Learning Jamaica, 21stCentEd, UJAA and other Diaspora organisations.

THEME	RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION ITEMS	RESPONSIBLE / EXECUTING ENTITIES
		resources to schools in Jamaica. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Address the Gender Gap:</b> Implement strategies to bridge the educational attainment gap between boys and girls, recognising their different learning styles.</li> <li>• Increase funding and support for early childhood education, recognising its critical role in educational outcomes.</li> <li>• Invest in teacher training programmes focused on integrating technology and innovation into the classroom.</li> <li>• Increase access to special education services for children with disabilities, particularly in rural communities.</li> </ul>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand and strengthen the HEART Trust/NSTA's training programmes, focusing on emerging technologies and in-demand skills.</li> <li>• Promote the recognition and acceptance of HEART Trust/NSTA certifications both within Jamaica and internationally.</li> </ul>	HEART Trust/NSTA, Private Sector
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a national curriculum that effectively incorporates Jamaican history and culture, fostering a strong sense of identity and belonging.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education and Youth, Institute of Jamaica
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a national strategy to address the mental health needs of Jamaican youth, particularly in the</li> </ul>	Ministry of Health and Wellness, educational institutions, non-profit organisations.



THEME	RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION ITEMS	RESPONSIBLE / EXECUTING ENTITIES
		context of violence and trauma.	
<b>EMPOWERING JAMAICAN YOUTH FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT</b>	Provide opportunities for the empowerment of Diaspora youth through partnerships between the GoJ and the Diaspora.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Promote Youth Engagement in Diaspora Organisations:</b> Offer diverse membership options, provide mentorship and support, and include young people in decision-making processes.</li> <li>• <b>Bridge the Digital Divide:</b> Improve communication and collaboration among young people in the Diaspora through technology and social media.</li> <li>• <b>Strengthen Community Collaboration:</b> Host conferences and workshops to encourage collaboration and networking among young Jamaicans worldwide.</li> <li>• Continue to connect Diaspora youth with Jamaican culture, history, and development opportunities.</li> <li>• <b>Encourage Mentorship Programmes:</b> Facilitate mentorship programmes between experienced Diaspora members and young Jamaicans to transfer knowledge and skills.</li> <li>• <b>Support Youth Entrepreneurship:</b> Provide training, resources, and funding opportunities for young entrepreneurs, fostering economic development.</li> </ul>	Global Jamaica Diaspora Youth Council (GJDYC), National Youth Council, Ministry of Education and Youth, Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport GK Birthright Programme, VM Foundation, Jamaica Diaspora Mentorship Academy, Diaspora Organisations

THEME	RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION ITEMS	RESPONSIBLE / EXECUTING ENTITIES
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create accessible platforms and programmes to foster a sense of Jamaican identity and connect Diaspora youth to Jamaica.</li> </ul>	Jamaican Embassies/Consulates, Diaspora organisations, cultural institutions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the use of Jamaican patois and other cultural expressions among Diaspora youth, recognising its importance in preserving cultural heritage.</li> <li>Encourage storytelling and the sharing of inspiring narratives from Diaspora youth to inspire and connect with youth in Jamaica.</li> </ul>	Jamaican Language Unit, Diaspora organisations, cultural institutions, educational institutions.
<b>UNLOCKING THE POWER OF JAMAICA'S CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES</b>	Explore opportunities for partnerships between the Diaspora and the Government for enhancing the reach and impact of Jamaica's Cultural and Creative Industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Integrate Cultural and Creative Industries into National Planning:</b> Recognise their contribution to national brand value, promote investment, and inform policy development.</li> <li><b>Support Emerging Artists and Creators:</b> Provide opportunities for young artists, writers, and musicians to showcase their talent and gain recognition.</li> <li><b>Leverage Technology:</b> Promote the use of digital technologies to enhance production, distribution, and marketing in the creative industries.</li> <li><b>Foster Public-Private Partnerships:</b> Strengthen collaboration between government, private sector, and Diaspora organisations to</li> </ul>	Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, JAMPRO, Kingston Creative, Saint International Jamaica Limited.

THEME	RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION ITEMS	RESPONSIBLE / EXECUTING ENTITIES
		<p>support the growth of the creative industries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Promote Cultural Tourism:</b> Develop experiences that allow tourists to immerse themselves in Jamaica's rich culture, heritage, and arts.</li> </ul>	
<b>MAXIMISING THE POTENTIAL OF JAMAICA'S TOURISM SECTOR</b>	Explore opportunities for optimising Jamaica's Tourism product through partnerships with the Diaspora and other stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Diversify Tourism Products:</b> Develop new attractions, experiences, and activities to cater to evolving tourist demands and target new markets.</li> <li>• <b>Invest in Tourism Infrastructure:</b> Continue to expand hotel capacity and invest in infrastructure to support tourism growth, including transportation, attractions, and amenities.</li> <li>• <b>Promote Wellness and Eco-Tourism:</b> Capitalise on Jamaica's natural resources to develop health and wellness tourism offerings, focusing on sustainability and environmental responsibility.</li> <li>• <b>Upskill Tourism Professionals:</b> Invest in training and certification programmes to equip Jamaican professionals with the necessary skills for the tourism industry.</li> <li>• <b>Facilitate Diaspora Investment in Tourism:</b> Provide information and support to Diaspora businesses interested in investing in the tourism sector, including access to funding and incentives.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Tourism, Tourism Product Development Company (TPDCo), Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF), Diaspora Tourism Businesses

THEME	RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION ITEMS	RESPONSIBLE / EXECUTING ENTITIES
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Promote Community Tourism:</b> Develop programmes to involve local communities in tourism initiatives, ensuring equitable benefits and preserving cultural heritage.</li> </ul>	
<b>CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM</b>	Explore opportunities for ensuring the Diaspora's participation and contribution to the Constitutional Reform process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Implement the Constitutional Reform Committee (CRC) Report:</b> Engage in public consultations and parliamentary debates to move forward with the recommendations outlined in the CRC report.</li> <li>• Replace the Monarchy with a President of Jamaican nationality and identity.</li> <li>• <b>Develop a Constitution Made by Jamaicans for Jamaicans:</b> Ensure that the Constitution reflects the values and aspirations of the Jamaican people.</li> <li>• <b>Address Issues of Dual Citizenship:</b> Review and update the eligibility criteria for dual citizens to serve in the Jamaican Parliament.</li> <li>• <b>Promote Public Participation:</b> Facilitate public engagement in the constitutional reform process, including through social media, online platforms, and local forums.</li> <li>• <b>Consider Diaspora Representation:</b> Explore options for Diaspora representation in the Jamaican Parliament and address the</li> </ul>	Ministry of Legal and Constitutional Affairs, Constitutional Reform Committee (CRC), Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Jamaica's Diplomatic Missions and Consular Posts, Global Jamaica Diaspora Council and its Youth Council

THEME	RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION ITEMS	RESPONSIBLE / EXECUTING ENTITIES
		challenges associated therein.	
<b>CLIMATE CHANGE &amp; GREEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP</b>	Develop and implement a comprehensive national climate change strategy, leveraging expertise and resources from the Jamaican Diaspora to enhance both mitigation and adaptation measures across all sectors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a national strategy to address climate change, incorporating both mitigation and adaptation measures.</li> <li>• Increase awareness and education about climate change at all levels (primary, secondary, tertiary) to encourage informed decision-making.</li> <li>• Invest in research and development of climate-smart solutions for water harvesting and other areas of critical need.</li> </ul>	Climate Change Advisory Board, Scientific Research Council (SRC), Caribbean Climate Innovation Centre (CCIC), Development Bank of Jamaica (DBJ), Ministry of Education and Youth, Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation – Climate Change, Environment and Water Divisions, Universities in Jamaica
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote green entrepreneurship by providing accessible funding, technical assistance, and training, particularly for projects in sectors like transportation, medicine, water, food, and agriculture.</li> </ul>	DBJ, CCIC, SRC, JN Foundation, private sector
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate training and development opportunities for Jamaican companies to service emerging green technologies, such as electric vehicle maintenance.</li> <li>• Incentivise the adoption of solar-powered air conditioning systems to mitigate rising temperatures.</li> </ul>	HEART Trust/NSTA, Private Sector
<b>VIRTUAL PORTALS FOR DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT AND CONNECTIVITY</b>	❖ Enhance the JAMAICA DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT MODEL (JA-DEM) and DIASPORA REGISTRATION PORTAL (DRP) through ongoing user feedback, expanded language options, and a user-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Platform Development and Enhancement: Conduct ongoing user feedback surveys and incorporate improvements based on user needs and suggestions.</li> <li>• Expand the platform's language options to include languages</li> </ul>	MFAFT, PIOJ, International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Appfinity Technologies Limited

THEME	RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION ITEMS	RESPONSIBLE / EXECUTING ENTITIES
	<p>friendly mobile app to better serve the diverse needs of the Jamaican Diaspora.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Leverage data-driven insights from the Diaspora Registration Portal to develop targeted outreach and engagement initiatives, showcase successful Diaspora entrepreneurs, and provide tailored support for diaspora investors and entrepreneurs.</li> <li>❖ Strengthen partnerships with international organizations, financial institutions, and Jamaican community groups to expand the JA-DEM platform's reach, foster Diaspora connections, and mobilise resources and expertise to support the Jamaican Diaspora's involvement in national development.</li> </ul>	<p>spoken by a significant portion of the Diaspora.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a system for analysing data collected from the Diaspora Registration Portal, focusing on demographics, needs, skills, and investment interests.</li> <li>• Develop targeted outreach and engagement initiatives based on the analysed data, focusing on specific diaspora groups with different needs and interests.</li> <li>• Host virtual and in-person events for the diaspora, focusing on topics like investment opportunities, entrepreneurship, and community building.</li> <li>• Create a dedicated section on the JA-DEM platform showcasing successful diaspora entrepreneurs and their stories.</li> <li>• Develop a programme to mentor and support diaspora entrepreneurs, providing access to resources, training, and networking opportunities.</li> <li>• Develop a virtual community forum or platform within the JA-DEM portal for diaspora members to connect, share information, and support each other.</li> <li>• Partner with organizations focused on education, healthcare, and other social services to provide resources and support to the Diaspora.</li> </ul>	



THEME	RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION ITEMS	RESPONSIBLE / EXECUTING ENTITIES
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launch a comprehensive marketing campaign to promote the JA-DEM platform and ConnectMeJA app, targeting Diaspora communities worldwide.</li> <li>Partner with influential Diaspora figures and organisations to spread awareness about the platforms.</li> <li>Establish a system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the JA-DEM platform and Diaspora Registration Portal (ConnectMeJA app), measuring user engagement, impact on diaspora investment, and contribution to national development.</li> </ul>	
<b>JAMAICA DIASPORA MENTORSHIP ACADEMY (JDMA)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen Diaspora Engagement: Leverage the extensive network and expertise within the Jamaican Diaspora to enhance the JDMA's impact. Actively engage with the Global Jamaica Diaspora Council (GJDC), Jamaican embassies, and Heads of Missions to expand the pool of potential mentors and secure additional funding and resources.</li> <li>Collaborative Programme Development: Foster a collaborative approach to the JDMA's program development and execution. Ensure seamless coordination between the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select 62 students from grades 6-13 across all 14 parishes.</li> <li>Implement monthly mentorship sessions with deliverables, quarterly "Best Practices Mental Meet Ups," and monthly randomised check-ins.</li> <li>Establish a clear communication strategy to ensure ongoing engagement between mentors, mentees, and the JDMA team.</li> <li>Mentorship Recruitment and Training: Continue recruiting mentors from the diaspora, utilising the existing network established through the MFAFT, Embassies, Heads of Missions, and members of the GJDC.</li> </ul>	MESYI, MFAFT, GJDC, GJDYC, Diaspora members

THEME	RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION ITEMS	RESPONSIBLE / EXECUTING ENTITIES
	<p>executing entities, including the Ministry of Education and Youth (MOEY) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade (MFAFT), to align the program with national education priorities and leverage the Diaspora's insights and experiences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustained Diaspora Partnerships: Establish long-term, sustainable partnerships with the Jamaican Diaspora to ensure the JDMA's continued success and impact. Develop a clear funding model and explore opportunities for corporate sponsorship and private funding to support the program's expansion and scaling efforts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a robust mentor training programme to equip mentors with the necessary skills and knowledge for effective mentorship.</li> <li>• Funding and Resources: Secure additional corporate sponsorship and private funding for scholarships, devices/phone plans, participant badges and certificates, website maintenance, scaling (more mentors), and a Zoom license.</li> <li>• Programme Evaluation and Sustainability: Develop a comprehensive evaluation plan to assess the impact of the JDMA on the mentees and the Jamaican education system.</li> <li>• Establish a mechanism for ongoing feedback and improvement based on the evaluation results.</li> <li>• Explore ways to make the JDMA sustainable in the long term, including creating a clear funding model and securing long-term partnerships.</li> </ul>	

Secretariat  
10<sup>th</sup> Biennial Jamaica Diaspora Conference  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade  
April 2025

## CONFERENCE PICTORIAL

A collection of photographs, capturing some of the activities of the Conference, as were available to the Secretariat, may be viewed by clicking on the link below or by placing it in your browser.

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/qz0s7bn652cncjwgzdqhi/Addendum-to-Report-CONFERENCE-PICTORIAL-version-7-2342025.docx?rlkey=mb3f1zew73n5t1krqog2g09rr&st=yf34hzp7&dl=0>

## Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

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Hon Alando Terrelonge, JP	Minister of State
Ambassador Sheila Sealy Monteith, CD, JP	Permanent Secretary
Ambassador Sharon Miller	Chief Technical Director
Mrs. Ariel Bowen	Under-Secretary, Diaspora, Protocol and Consular Affairs Division

### SECRETARIAT – Diaspora Affairs Department

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Mr. Glenroy Smith	Ms Lloydia Walters
Ms Kathy Ann Weller	Ms Melissa Johnson
Ms Natasha de St. Christo	Ms. Akelia Douglas

### IT SUPPORT

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Ms Sharon Marston
Mr. O'Shane Cole

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Ms Carol Hart
Ms Anatassia Balfour

### ACCOUNTS

Mr. Gregory Stewart
Ms Shantae Dunkley

### RAPORTEURS

Mr. Sheldon Barnes
Mr. Gerard Smith
Ms. Brehanna Campbell
Ms. Brittany McCrea
Mr. Rahmone Anderson
Ms Michka Williams

## GLOBAL JAMAICA DIASPORA COUNCIL

## ELECTED MEMBERS

<b>Mr. Nathaniel Peat</b>	Email: <a href="mailto:gjdc@nathanielpeat.com">gjdc@nathanielpeat.com</a>	<b>UK South</b>
<b>Mr. Peter Gracey</b>	Email: <a href="mailto:petergracey@gmail.com">petergracey@gmail.com</a>	<b>USA Southern</b>
<b>Mrs. Michelle Tulloch-Neil</b>	Email: <a href="mailto:miatull@aol.com">miatull@aol.com</a>	<b>USA North East</b>
<b>Ms. Lisa Rutty</b>	Email: <a href="mailto:lisa.rutty@outlook.com">lisa.rutty@outlook.com</a>	<b>Canada</b>
<b>Ms. Rhona Dunwell</b>	Email: <a href="mailto:rdunwell@rogers.com">rdunwell@rogers.com</a>	<b>Canada</b>
<b>Ms. Shauna Chin</b>	Email: <a href="mailto:shaunachin@gmail.com">shaunachin@gmail.com</a>	<b>USA West/Mid-West</b>

## REGIONAL MEMBERS

<b>Dr. Ethel Rose de Vrieze-McBean</b>	Email: <a href="mailto:rosemcbean@icloud.com">rosemcbean@icloud.com</a>	<b>Europe</b>
<b>Dr. Stephanie Fletcher-Lartey</b>	Email: <a href="mailto:stephjeweels100@yahoo.com.au">stephjeweels100@yahoo.com.au</a>	<b>Asia &amp; the Pacific</b>
<b>Mr. David Jarrett</b>	Email: <a href="mailto:consultant@rdjconsulting.co.za">consultant@rdjconsulting.co.za</a>	<b>Africa</b>
<b>Mr. Glenroy McIntosh</b>	Email: <a href="mailto:caribbeanrepgjdc@gmail.com">caribbeanrepgjdc@gmail.com</a>	<b>Caribbean</b>
<b>Mr. Lennox Christie</b>	Email: <a href="mailto:sirlennoxchristie@gmail.com">sirlennoxchristie@gmail.com</a>	<b>The Middle East</b>
<b>Mrs. Nicole Little-John</b>	Email: <a href="mailto:nicolelanguages.cl@gmail.com">nicolelanguages.cl@gmail.com</a>	<b>Latin America</b>

## REGIONAL MEMBERS

<b>Dr. Hugh Simmonds</b>	Canada Email: <a href="mailto:hasimmonds@uwaterloo.ca">hasimmonds@uwaterloo.ca</a>	<b>Arts, Sport and Culture</b>
<b>Mr. Kevin Junor</b>	Canada Email: <a href="mailto:kjunor@rogers.com">kjunor@rogers.com</a>	<b>Citizen Security</b>

<b>Mr. Shaune Anthony Brown</b>	USA Email: <a href="mailto:shauneanthonydbrown@gmail.com">shauneanthonydbrown@gmail.com</a>	<b>Commerce</b>
<b>Mrs. Elizabeth Mullings-Smith</b>	England UK Email: <a href="mailto:mullingssmithe@gmail.com">mullingssmithe@gmail.com</a>	<b>Development Issues</b>
<b>Mrs. Sandra Colly-Durand, PhD</b>	France Email: <a href="mailto:gjdceducation@gmail.com">gjdceducation@gmail.com</a>	<b>Education</b>
<b>Bishop Dr. Glenford Duffus</b>	Canada Email: <a href="mailto:fordville53@outlook.com">fordville53@outlook.com</a>	<b>Faith-Based Community</b>
<b>Mr. Gary Rhule, MD</b>	USA Email: <a href="mailto:gary.rhulex16@icloud.com">gary.rhulex16@icloud.com</a>	<b>Health &amp; Wellness</b>
<b>Dr. Peter Edwards</b>	USA Email: <a href="mailto:peteretedwards@gmail.com">peteretedwards@gmail.com</a>	<b>Environment</b>
<b>Mr. Byron Wills</b>	USA Email: <a href="mailto:jamaicadirect@gmail.com">jamaicadirect@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:wills_byron@yahoo.com">wills_byron@yahoo.com</a>	<b>Agriculture</b>

#### DISCRETIONARY MEMBER

<b>Dr. Sylvanus Thompson</b>	Email: <a href="mailto:thompsonsylvanus7@gmail.com">thompsonsylvanus7@gmail.com</a>	<b>Toronto, Canada</b>
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## GLOBAL JAMAICA DISAPORA YOUTH COUNCIL

<b>Ms. Asha J. Richards</b>	Email: <a href="mailto:ashajrich@gmail.com">ashajrich@gmail.com</a>	<b>USA North East</b>
<b>Ms. Renae Miller</b>	Email: <a href="mailto:GJDYCSO@outlook.com">GJDYCSO@outlook.com</a>	<b>USA Southern</b>
<b>Ms. Vanessa Myrie</b>	Email: <a href="mailto:vmyrie@hotmail.com">vmyrie@hotmail.com</a>	<b>USA West/Mid-West</b>
<b>Ms. Samaya Miller</b>	Email: <a href="mailto:samaya.miller3@gmail.com">samaya.miller3@gmail.com</a>	<b>Canada</b>
<b>Ms. Shermara Fletcher</b>	Email: <a href="mailto:shermara1@outlook.com">shermara1@outlook.com</a>	<b>UK North</b>
<b>Mr. Steven Getten</b>	Email: <a href="mailto:stevengetten@gmail.com">stevengetten@gmail.com</a>	<b>Canada</b>
<b>Mr. Amani Simpson</b>	Email: <a href="mailto:GJDC@amanisimpson.com">GJDC@amanisimpson.com</a>	<b>UK South</b>

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