

*The Courage to Do Things Differently:
A Dialogue of Truth and Reconstruction in Youth and Culture*

PRESENTATION

BY

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MINISTER OF YOUTH AND CULTURE

IN THE

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INTRODUCTION

1. Mr. Speaker, I consider it an honour to be afforded the opportunity to address this Honourable House again as the Member for South East St. Ann and to participate in the Sectoral Debate for the second time as Minister with responsibility for Youth and Culture. In the gallery this afternoon are some of the most resilient and hardworking people that Jamaica has produced. They are my constituents, my staff at my constituency office and my Councillors. I truly could not do what I do without them and I want to express my sincere commitment and appreciation to them for all the support they have given and continue to give me.
2. Over the past year we have spent more than 110 million dollars to patch and rehabilitate roads with retaining walls in the constituency. We have also secured the necessary funding for the rehabilitation of the Moneague post Office (which will commence shortly), the Drumily Community Centre, the Moneague Community Centre, The Rio Hoe Community Centre, Beecher Town Cultural Centre & for the Beecher Town Primary School Resource Centre. The Bauxite Community Development Programme has sponsored our sports programme for netball and cricket this summer for our children and youth to the tune of \$1,275,450.00. Last year we offered free CXC classes in mathematics and we saw 100% passes for those who sat the exams. We have since expanded the programme to include Social Studies & English Language. The initiative is being co-sponsored by the Bauxite Community Development Programme to include the establishment of an Information Technology Centre in Rural Retreat at a cost of \$1.8 million. Through our advocacy the Ministry of Education has also approved the building of second high school in Moneague. We have made an important step in water access and distribution through the signing of an MoU between JBI & NWC giving access to the Lydford Wells. This will improve water access across the constituency once the NWC's K Factor Programme gets underway this year.

Mr. Speaker let me thank the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing for its spearheading and supervision of the North South Highway, which will run through the majority of my Constituency. That project and the jobs to be provided shortly will be transformative both during construction and after completion. We met and toured the area with the Chinese investors last week and they have told us what they need.

3. Mr. Speaker, I am here as a Member of Parliament and Minister of Youth and Culture because of the people in South East St. Ann. I want to express my gratitude to the children and young people with whom I have interacted this past year and who I have the distinct privilege to represent. I thank them for their support, their frank and honest opinions, all of which have allowed me to have an even better understanding of the issues surrounding this generation and what we need to do going forward.
4. Let me also thank my board chairpersons, board members and directors who are providing invaluable leadership to the agencies that fall within this Ministry. My hard working Permanent Secretary (Acting), and the staff members of the Ministry and its Agencies, all continue to provide great service which I appreciate and commend. Much respect is also paid to the representatives of our dynamic culture sector for the dialogue and frank discussions which we have had over the past seventeen months since becoming Minister. Let me also record the Government's appreciation to the international agencies with whom we are collaborating on several projects.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my Prime Minister and colleagues on both sides of the House for their wisdom, advice, and sometimes even the caustic interventions from that side which have made me a stronger public servant. Finally Mr. Speaker I want to thank my family: my mother and sister, my son Alexander, and Richard, for consistently motivating me and giving me the reassurance when the journey gets lonely.

5. Mr. Speaker, the responsibility of the Government is to create a better Jamaica for future generations so that hopefully, when we are gone, those who come after us will, with grateful hearts declare that we were ahead of our time.
6. When Norman Manley declared to an astounded world that Jamaica, even before our political Independence, was prepared to denounce apartheid and to adopt a policy of political, economic and cultural non-engagement with a regime that sought to dehumanise our brothers and sisters in South Africa he demonstrated Jamaica's uncompromising moral conscience and leadership in the world.
7. That action was an unapologetic acceptance that as Jamaicans WE knew the answer, so follow us...a defiance in the face of great opposition as well as an unabashed resolve that no one could or would ever bludgeon us into acquiescence. That we were prepared, because of our principles, to do things differently.
8. I am proud to know that we as Jamaicans led that charge and today as South Africa prepares to celebrate Mandela Day on July 18, we wish for their beloved Madiba peace, comfort and God's blessings.
9. As the Minister of Youth and Culture it is clear to me that for us to be able to achieve a better Jamaica, we need to have a vision around which we are all united and around which we are all motivated.
10. If we are honest with ourselves there are three things that we must acknowledge are missing from the national dialogue:
 - the collective "we" is disappearing;
 - as a country "we" are not united around a vision; and
 - "we" are not motivated as a people whether young or old, green or orange to galvanize ourselves with the courage to do things differently.

11. Mr. Speaker, we will not solve our problems by just incrementally doing things better or by using the same play book but I believe it is necessary to radically change the way we think as a people.

12. Many of our citizens say they want change, but the truth is, we have not taught them how to be confident to take the risk to accept change! So everyone wants a stronger dollar, but few of us are prepared to take the risk of going into foreign exchange earning industries. Change is never easy especially if you are accustomed to hearing and seeing the same thing over and over and over again.

13. Mr. Speaker, the first steps to building a good relationship is by speaking the truth to establish trust so that any reconciliation that is necessary can begin. It is the only way that our people, especially our youth and children will walk the journey with us and prepare themselves to take the responsibility to build the better Jamaica of the future that we all desire.

14. So Mr. Speaker, for my presentation today I wish to do things differently; I will not speak long to give you a report card on all the achievements we have made as a Ministry over the past year.

15. I will, however, focus on a few policy changes that will make critical improvements to the efficiency, productivity and accountability of my Ministry and its Agencies. In speaking to the areas for which I have responsibility as a Minister, I will speak the truth, identify some radical conversations that we must start having as a people, and provide an action plan for moving the country forward in some critical areas.

CHILDREN

16. Mr. Speaker, here is the truth: in this country many of our children are having children and they cannot afford to take care of them let alone have the parenting skills to provide a nurturing and caring environment. No wonder then that neglect is the number one form of abuse as recorded by the Office of the Children's Registry.

17. While we have made some gain in dealing with population growth in general terms and now have a lower average birth rate of approximately 2.4 children born to women between 15 and 49 years, we have not yet solved the problem of still too many of those women and men having children, not providing the care, the love, the nurturing and the guidance that those children need.

18. In the 2005 Bestseller *Freakonomics* by Levitt and Dubner, they established that in the United States there was a direct correlation between crime and unwanted children. They proved mathematically that there was a reduction in crime in those states which had legalized abortion as a result of the Supreme Court decision of Roe vs Wade. Sure enough the states with the highest abortion rates in the 1970s experienced the greatest crime reduction in the 1990s. While the converse was proven for low abortion states.

19. Mr. Speaker abortion is still illegal in this country and a woman's right to choose whether or not to keep her pregnancy is in effect exercised only by those who can afford a private doctor. The law is old but we have been debating whether we are to change it for the past 38 years.

20. Therefore, we must now drill down and turn our attention to changing the mindset of persons who are still having children without the thought of how they will take care of them.

21. Mr. Speaker, the truth is, it is costing the State J\$1.7 billion a year to fund the Child Development Agency, more than the \$1.4 billion which is allocated to the Ministry of Youth and Culture and its other agencies. We spend more than \$436 million to operate eight Government-run children's homes and places of safety which takes into account the weekly cost of \$13,000 per child or \$676,000 per child per year. We currently have 334 children at these facilities. At the same time the Government spends another \$721 million per year or \$6,000 per child per week as a subsidy to take care of the 1,823 children across the 48 privately operated children's homes and places of safety. In addition to this the CDA also provides financial assistance to wards of the state in family environments including 950 children in foster care, 1,119 on Supervision Orders and 809 in the family reintegration programme.
22. Too many parents are taking the easy way out by abandoning their children, otherwise abusing them or carting them off to Police Stations, the Child Development Agency and the Courts for so-called "uncontrollable behaviour".
23. Mr. Speaker, the task of ensuring the wellbeing of Jamaica's children requires the input of all Jamaicans. So here is what we did: We invited a wide cross section of civil society groups and individuals to come on board to assist us with parenting and other interventions as part of a Children Support Taskforce. This summer the Taskforce will be rolling out its counseling workshops for the children in juvenile detention centres along with their parents. Mr. Speaker, let me publicly acknowledge the following persons and groups who are giving critical support and working to enlist wider public participation in the work we must do on behalf of our children. Rev. Dr. Marjorie Lewis (convenor), Dr. Aggrey Irons (deputy convenor), Dr. Glenda Simms, Dr. Oo of the Bellevue Hospital, the National Family Planning Board, the Children Advisory Panel, National Secondary Students Council, Children First, Jamaica Civil Society Coalition, National Parent Teachers Association, Jamaica Teachers Association, Nurses Association, Medical Association, Guidance Counsellors Association, The Police, the Child Development Agency and other volunteers.

24. As we improve the protection of the rights, services and facilities of our children, I continue to engage the several international organizations with which we collaborate at the local and international levels. Mr. Speaker, in addition to several meetings and briefings with local representatives, only last week I met with the leadership of the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) in New York to provide an update on the work being done by the Ministry and the Government on behalf of children.

25 Mr. Speaker here is another truth: In relation to children coming in contact with adults at Police Stations and in Correctional Centres and children being held at Police Stations for more than 48 hours, Jamaica, has for over 22 years been in breach of the United National Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (commonly referred to as the Beijing Rules) which we signed on September 2, 1990. In relation to these matters the country, under different Administrations, has also been in breach of our own national law – the Child Care and Protection Act passed in 2004. As Minister with responsibility for children since January 2012, I pledge to bring Jamaica in compliance by the end of 2014.

26 Mr. Speaker, here is what we have done so far in the past 17 months on our way towards achieving full compliance:

- I ensured that I receive on my desk on a weekly basis a report from the police on children in lockups. We have been able to track the police stations that hold children for more than 48 hours and based on the legal authority of the CDA and my legal authority as Minister with Responsibility for Children, remove those children that are in need of care and protection. Between January last year and May this year we have removed 148 children from lockups for care and protection.

- I invited representatives of all the agencies and ministries which work with children around one table through an Inter-Ministerial Working Group to coordinate Government actions on behalf of children who come in contact with the justice system. The working Group comprises representatives from the Ministries of Youth and Culture, Justice, National Security, Health, Education, and Finance and Planning; Department of Correctional Services; Office of the Children's Advocate; the Office of the Children's Registry; the CDA; Jamaica Constabulary Force; the Attorney General's Chambers; and the Commissioner of Lands.
- Mr. Speaker we are now talking with each other, and working with each other, instead of working separately and learning about what each other was doing through the media as used to be the case.
- The work of the group has resulted in action emanating from recent Decisions of Cabinet.

27 Mr. Speaker, some of these decisions include: the Government's commitment to removing the so-called "uncontrollable behaviour" label from children, putting systems and facilities in place for therapeutic treatment of the underlying causes and removing the option for judges to commit children displaying anti-social behavior to correctional centres. Legislative amendments, including those to "decriminalize" "uncontrollable behaviour" are expected to be completed by the end of the year as priority is being given to the drafting.

28 Facilities at South Camp Road in Kingston are being renovated and retrofitted for the relocation of children being held at the Fort Augusta and Diamond Crest correctional centres. The modifications to the facility will allow for the total separation of the accommodation for juveniles.

The refurbishing of the South Camp Road facility will be completed before the end of the year at a cost of more than J\$110 Million. The Minister of National Security has assured me that the girls will be separated from adults before the end of this year.

29 Mr. Speaker: Children accused of criminal offenses will continue to come in contact with the Police. This is inevitable. The police are also often the first responders to situations involving child abuse and must take children into their custody even for a short while in such instances. It is unlawful for children at police Stations for processing or awaiting appearance before a judge to be kept there for more than 48 hours. It is also unlawful for those children to have contact with adult detainees.

30 Therefore, the Government, through JEEP has approved J\$75 Million for the retrofitting of 5 police stations so that children will not be in contact with adults detainees when they are being processed at Police stations. The work will begin in August to construct units specifically to temporarily house children. This will eventually extend to fourteen Police Stations across the country so that each parish will have a Police Station to accommodate children suitably.

31 Mr. Speaker, many of the children who end up in state care have experienced significant trauma in their lives, including sexual abuse, neglect and exposure to domestic and other violence. Many suffer from depression and other mental illnesses and some try or succeed in harming themselves. A model Place of Safety for the appropriate medical, psychological, psychiatric treatment of such children is to be constructed. We are now identifying suitable premises even as we increase the availability of such treatment to children in institutions right now. We have the support of a dedicated group of medical professionals as part of an advisory council of psychiatrists to assist us in this process.

They include: Dr. Aggrey Irons, Dr. Pauline Milbourn, Dr. Ganesh Shetty, Dr. Myo Oo, Dr. Charles Thesiger, Dr. Judith Leiba, Dr. Clayton Sewell, Dr. Terrence Bernard, Dr. Gillian Lowe, Dr. Yvonne Bailey-Davidson, Dr. Frank Knight, and Dr. Maureen Irons-Morgan. I thank them sincerely.

32 The Ministry of Education has committed to providing teachers for juveniles in correctional facilities which will increase the hours and quality of teaching available to them.

33 Additionally Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Youth and Culture is implementing art therapy for children in State care, with phase one targeting girls in detention, providing them with therapeutic and expressive outlets as well as marketable skills. The programme, "*Art for Life*" will initially involve female children at Fort Augusta , the Horizon Remand Centre and the Homestead Place of Safety in Stony Hill. *Art for Life* will start in September 2013 and will run for one year initially in keeping with our funding from the CHASE Fund in the amount of \$5 million. The Department of Correctional Services, CDA, Edna Manley College, the National Gallery, the Institute of Jamaica and the JCDC are collaborating on the initiative.

Review of the CDA:

34 Mr. Speaker, here are some other truths I speak not to diminish in any way the hard work of our public servants, but to ensure greater efficiency, accountability and optimal service delivery by the agencies I have responsibility for as Minister: In the area of Children, my Ministry is serious about drastically improving the work and effectiveness of the Child Development Agency.

- 35 We have revitalised the Advisory Board for the Agency, I have commissioned a management and process audit, the Corporate Management and Development Division of the Cabinet Office has completed a review of the organization of children's homes, and a thorough operational audit of all children's homes – private and public – is being done.
- 36 It is a fact Mr. Speaker, that in the nine years of the CDA's operation there has never been an external management audit done of the agency until I instructed that one be done. To drive this management audit and to ensure the full implementation of the recommendations of the 2003 Committee which examined conditions of Children's Homes, I retained the services of Mrs. Sadie Keating, who was the Chairman of that Committee and the chief author of the Keating Report. She is a specialist in public sector management and one of the most competent persons to ensure the implementation of the recommendations as well as other improvements in the agency. As the Minister let me be the first to indicate some of the things we have identified that need to be addressed.
- 37 We have to achieve greater cost and expenditure efficiencies in the Agency.
- 38 Mr. Speaker the CDA has a dedicated staff whose members work long and hard at what they do. The Agency has a great body of knowledge in relation to the laws, conventions and policies and has been focused on programme delivery. The audit showed that the entity needs to be more streamlined in terms of service delivery.
- 39 The audit also demonstrated a need for management strengthening and greater corporate governance conformity to the framework document that governs the CDA as an executive agency.
- 40 Mr. Speaker here are a few of the things we have done since we reviewed the management audit:

- We are moving, for example, to correct a situation where the agency's management team did not comprise members of the advisory board or a representative of its responsible Ministry.
- We are working with the Corporate Management and Development Division of the Cabinet Office and the Executive Agencies Unit at the Ministry of Finance and Planning to strengthen the corporate governance and institutional arrangements of the CDA.
- We are helping to re-align expertise and skills at the agency.
- The Ministry is working more closely with the management and staff on improving critical areas of service delivery. This work will continue.

YOUTH

- 41 Mr. Speaker, here is another truth: In our situation analysis conducted with IDB funding among at risk youth, the majority have said clearly that they are unhappy with their present situation and they are not hopeful for the future.
- 42 The Ministry engaged the Centre for Leadership and Governance at the University of the West Indies to conduct a gap analysis to assess the impact of various Government programmes across different ministries aimed at providing service and other benefits to the youth. The analysis shows major gaps in the administration of youth programmes and serious overlaps among them. Many young people say they are not feeling the impact of the youth programmes being implemented by the government for their benefit.
- 43 Mr. Speaker, I have Ministerial responsibility for several of the Government's programmes to empower and ensure the development of 61% of the country's population. We cannot ignore their feedback. We cannot pretend that we have not heard the cries of the youth. We have to do things differently to achieve greater impact among our target audience.

44 Mr. Speaker, I share another truth: For the financial year 2012/2013 the National Centre for Youth Development, which has responsibility for implementing youth activities and running the youth information centres across the country had a budget of \$85 million of which 90% was spent on administration with only 10% representing expenditure on projects.

45 I cannot as Minister continue to preside over such a situation. Therefore I have proposed to Cabinet and Cabinet has approved our recommendation to merge the National Youth Service (NYS) and the National Centre for Youth Development (NCYD).

46 Mr. Speaker, by merging the entities we will reduce overlap and duplication of work, reduce administration costs resulting in a total budget of \$561 million of which 62% will now be allocated to projects and we estimate to impact over 21,000 youths directly.

47 The truth Mr. Speaker, is that when we got into office we found that the NYS had departed from its core mission and objectives of:

- Creating opportunities for self sustainability among youth
- Preparing them for transition to employment and entrepreneurship
- Creating lessons and opportunities for volunteerism
- Being a catalyst for fostering of respect; and
- Building social skills, a positive attitude, civic pride, a sense of responsibility and good citizenship among youth.

48 The sole role of the NYS had become the placing of young persons in 'internships' at a range of state organizations, with the intention that they would at the end be assessed and achieve certification from HEART/NTA. The reality is that only 20% of these participants achieved certification, and less than 5% of them were retained in the jobs they were placed in.

49 During our first year in office the NYS sought to fulfill existing commitments while reviewing its strategic focus to encourage among young people, the spirit of volunteerism, civic pride, and providing them with the critical thinking skills as they make decisions about their personal development and contribution to building our nation.

50 There will be a total 12,004 participants in NYS programmes this year up from 5,742 last year.

- This financial year the NYS summer programme will have an intake of 4,000 youth with 375 being youth with disAbilities (in response to my meeting held with youth with DisAbilities last December).
- We will provide customized workshops for 10,000 and we will provide placement in Information Technology and business administration for over 600.
- The NYS is returning to a programme of long term engagement with 200 young persons who are most at risk, through residential camps, following which they will be assigned mentors for 12 months. The mentorship is designed to enable participants to gain critical skills to enter the formal sector.
- The Summer Camp Pilot Project will benefit 1,500 youth. This targets persons who did not meet requirements of the Summer Employment Programme and provide critical skills which were missing when interviewed for the summer programme.
- Youth Corps Programme (754)
- Financial Assistance (550)
- Graduate Experience pilot project (50)

- Access to High Education pilot (50: Partnership between NYS, NCU, JAMVAT)
- Youth REACH (4,500: NYS in Schools programme that provides students preparation for work and higher education. Our students need support to transition from secondary to post secondary training and from certification to work opportunities
- Mentorship Training (500)
- Community service projects (250 projects)

51 We are training young people to be economically empowered. Two weeks ago I signed in Cuba a Youth and Cultural Exchange Agreement that will see Cuban specialists in movie animation and high quality art and craft for the local and export market, coming to Jamaica to train trainers under a pilot project to be implemented before the end of this year. We intend to utilize the Youth Information Centres (YICs) which we continue to build across the country as the hub of these economic empowerment activities.

52 Among other programmes, the NCYD, through the YICs, between March-May this year referred a total of 4,014 at risk young people to the **Learning for Life programme** in collaboration with Bars to Go Training Institute. The training is geared towards skills development, qualification and employment opportunities in the Hospitality Industry, locally and internationally. It is expected that we will begin a new partnership in July 2013 with 6,000 participants between July 2013 and June 2014.

53 Mr. Speaker, I am particularly pleased and grateful to the Ministry of Finance that in spite of the budget constraints, they responded to our request and gave my Ministry an increased budgetary allocation (100%) to support our uniformed groups; and to promote youth governance and leadership by supporting the youth organizations such as National Secondary Students'

Council (NSSC), National Youth Council of Jamaica (NYCJ), Jamaica Youth Ambassadors Programme (JAYAP) and the Jamaica Union of Tertiary Students (JUTS). Mr. Speaker I have met with these groups and organizations to ensure that these funds are used wisely and efficiently.

Review of the National Youth Policy

54 The Ministry is reviewing the National Youth Policy in response to the changes within the policy environment and the need to take into account the emerging issues that affect youth development nationally. The Concept Paper and Cabinet Submission are to go to the Human Resource Committee of Cabinet before the end of this month. The Policy development process is expected to be completed by August 2013 and the Green Paper presented to Parliament by September 2013.

CULTURE

55 Mr. Speaker, here is the truth about Culture. In spite of our vibrant culture, Jamaican culture is respected more abroad than right here in Jamaica. Overseas we are seen as a Cultural super state. At home, how do we as a people see ourselves? Our culture has been used by Volkswagen, Puma and a host of international institutions and companies to redefine and promote their products. In all this, the truth is Jamaica has not benefited exponentially.

56 In fact, if the truth is told, we have not been able to galvanize our people, particularly our young people, around the potency of our culture and heritage. Many of our young people are still ignorant of our culture, our heritage and those icons that worked so assiduously to create and uphold Brand Jamaica. Just the other day, at the funeral of Dr. Olive Lewin, members of one of the nation's most outstanding cultural groups did not know who she was.

- 57 We must have the courage to do things differently in promoting a national reconstruction of respect and appreciation for our culture.
- 58 We managed last year in a very short time and in the face of limited resources and several shortcomings to implement a successful celebration of the 50th anniversary of our Independence. Indeed, we achieved much of what we set out to do. Jamaicans everywhere reveled in the joy of good presentations and everywhere, both here in Jamaica and in the Diaspora, there was a good feeling.
- 59 One of our greatest successes was the Jubilee Village and the Park and Ride Concept that brought great integration and camaraderie to the celebrations.
- 60 However, in spite of this success we were not able to convert that celebration into sustained commitment to national development and the nation continues to be pervaded by cynicism and apathy.
- 61 It is our determination in the Ministry at this point to initiate some strategic steps to promote a revolution in mindset and cultural action that will result in visible and measureable change in how we operate as a people.
- 62 First of all, we are committed to the implementation of the several **Jamaica 50 Legacy Projects** as part of the process of initiating change, and we are on target.
- 63 Foremost among these projects is the transformation of the National Heroes Park into a Cultural and Economic Development Zone. The Ministry of Transport and Works is leading this dynamic project through public-private partnership. We cannot promote our cultural prowess while devaluing the space that represents the highest level of our cultural acumen and sacrifice. And let the truth be told, the plan to develop National Heroes Circle has been in the making since 1962. I want to thank the Prime Minister, Minister Omar Davies, the UDC and the committed team for the work that they are doing.
- 64 Other projects are in early childhood education (Middlesex Basic School in St. Elizabeth, Marlie Hill in St. Catherine, Ebenezer in St. Thomas, Rock River in Clarendon, Church of Christ in St. Mary, Bannister in St. Catherine, Little

Einstein Learning Centre in Seaview Gardens, Kingston, and Straun in Manchester); community animation (Rocky Point Community Centre in Clarendon) and in music and sports. All these projects should be completed in this financial year.

- 65 In the area of **museums and heritage sites**, we must again speak the truth. Our museums are in dire need of development and our heritage sites continue to suffer from poor maintenance. We cannot boast of a wonderful heritage if we treat these significant spaces with scant regard as a people.
- 66 With this in mind the Ministry of Youth and Culture will be establishing a **National Museum of the Jamaican People** as part of the Institute of Jamaica (IOJ). This will be the space where our children will be able to learn the glorious history of this nation and register pride in our achievement and so develop new confidence and self worth. It will contain among other exhibits the artifacts from our African Heritage now being stored in the IOJ, hidden from the eyes of the Jamaican people. This is not acceptable and this action will resolve this unfortunate situation.
- 67 The IOJ's Museums Division has been cataloguing and storing artifacts and memorabilia that tell the remarkable story of our people. The national collection now has more than 17,000 objects. However, many of these are in storage in the basement of the IOJ building on East Street in downtown Kingston.
- 68 As we build the economic structure of Jamaica we must also build our national cultural identity in order to give every citizen of this country and every curious visitor to our island the opportunity to trace our history and cultural roots through a rebranded and revitalised National Museum.
- 69 In the first instance the National Museum will open right here in Kingston and will give new life to the capital city as the historical, cultural and artistic centre of Jamaica. Additionally, Montego Bay, where much of the struggle for Emancipation was waged and finally won, will host a Museum of the West to be located in the Montego Bay Civic Centre in Sam Sharpe Square.

- 70 In honour of the Jamaican people, we will oversee a three year plan to expand space in our museums for the display of Jamaican artifacts. We will also roll out exciting new exhibitions about our Jamaican experience.
- 71 This project will begin in July this year with the first major exhibition ever to be held in Jamaica on the Rastafari Movement. Every year our National Museums will consider and address another defining part of our history to strengthen our shared understanding of who we are and the national mission we are embarked on.
- 72 These museums will be places where all Jamaicans - young and old, rich and poor – can experience our history. It is a rich history than can guide the present and illuminate the future that is alive with endless possibilities.
- 73 The **Jamaica Music Museum** is another significant space in which we should chronicle for our own people and the world the story of our music. Last year, the Museum staged for Jamaica 50 an exhibition entitled – **Equal Rights: Reggae and Social Change**, which continues to record local audiences as well as students from foreign universities. The collections have grown to the point where we have to put some on hold because of the lack of adequate and proper space. We have an enterprise team now working to develop the business plan. We are searching earnestly for a building as we are aware that we are running a grave risk of losing some of our national treasures.
- 74 Today, I am also pleased to announce that through collaboration with the Government of Spain and the Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF), **the Seville Great House and Museum** will reopen on July 12 with a raft of activities to increase its vibrancy. Again, we are focusing on another space to teach our children about themselves and achieve our Cultural Policy objective of stronger national identity among our people. This space will again take centre stage in the presentation of this year's Emancipation Jubilee in celebration of 175 years of Full Freedom.

- 75 Additionally, The JNHT has been a part of the team that has seen to the restoration of **Roxborough, home of Right Excellent Norman Manley**, in time for the celebration of his 120th birthday on July 4. In this regard, I must pay respect to the TEF, Manchester Parish Council, Institute of Jamaica, JEEP and my Ministry. The TEF will over the next two years be upgrading sites relevant to all our National Heroes.
- 76 Among the manifestations of a powerful culture is the respect for and knowledge of its attributes demonstrated by its people, and, for sustainability, its children and youth. The truth is our children leave secondary school with very little knowledge and appreciation of our culture and heritage. We must take bold steps to change this.
- 77 Among the objectives of our Cultural Policy (which is now being reviewed) is the building out of a Culture and Education Framework to establish curriculum and other programmes to ensure that our children know more about our culture and develop the self concept that will allow them, like our forebears, to stand up and be counted in world affairs and in transformation of our country.
- 78 The truth is, though we celebrate Jamaica Day in a vibrant and colourful way, we cannot escape the view that much of what is done is peripheral to the operations of regular curriculum delivery. In fact, one of the contradictions of Jamaica, is that although our culture is our most dynamic economic export, and although the nation's most celebrated icon, Bob Marley, has made a fortune out of his cultural activism, culture and its expressions are still considered extra-curricular activities in schools, that are to be done after school.
- 79 My Ministry intends to work closely with the Ministry of Education to develop more dynamic programmes that will cause our children to leave school knowing more about our culture. We need to identify together the cultural content that every child must know at each stage of their education.

We must identify what cultural experiences our children must have if they are going to grow up as committed citizens of Jamaica. The truth is too many prefer to live elsewhere or simply cannot wait to go elsewhere and we must face it and deal with it.

80 One of my Ministry's responses to this is to create by August this year a **Culture Card**. This Card will be given to students who are currently on the PATH Programme and will allow them to access free of cost the museums and galleries of the IOJ and Emancipation/Independence Activities. In other words, with this card, based on modalities that we are currently ironing out, these children and young people will have free entry to these facilities on a regular basis. This will include the establishment of a database of new audiences which will then be passed on to the private cultural sector.

81 It is also our intention to invite the private cultural sector, such as theatres, dance companies, etc., to participate in this programme which will ultimately result in a wider access and appreciation of our culture.

82 The Jamaica Cultural Development Commission (JCDC) celebrates 50 years this year as the principal agency for the unearthing, developing and showcasing of talents across the country.

83 We are restructuring the JCDC to serve as an incubator to develop our talent to go on the world's stage. It will take responsibility to register all artists who come through the schools competitions and all other practitioners who wish to use their talents to commercial benefit. In other words, if you need a dance company or band or fine artist, you may apply to the JCDC and a commercial contract would allow you to purchase that product.

84 Mr. Speaker, contingent on exposing our children to the power of our culture is the need to re-establish Jamaica's regional and international leadership in culture. The truth is we have retreated from some of our historical positions of international advocacy and cultural diplomacy. This is not supportive of a culture that brandishes itself as a world power.

85 Of great significance, in this regard, is the work we intend to do in Culture this year through our relationship with UNESCO, the flagship agency of culture in the United Nations System. We are this year strengthening the National Commission for UNESCO, of which I am Chair, to ensure that we are able to access more UNESCO support. Last week I addressed the UN at the High Level Thematic Debate on Culture and Development and launched our lobby for membership on the UNESCO World Heritage Committee. We are determined to have one of our several heritage sites inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Additionally, we intend to seek membership of the Executive Board as we promote the integration of culture within the Post Millennium Development Goals Agenda. The National Commission has therefore been tasked to create strategic opportunities for us to promote this cause.

CONCLUSION

86. Mr. Speaker, imagine more than two hundred and seventy years ago a little black woman decided that she was going to beat the British empire right here in Jamaica. Well she did! Our National Heroine Nanny did not worry about the obstacles. She had her eyes focused on her objective.

87. Who among us believed that a poor young man from Nine Miles in South East St. Ann would end up being one of the ten most inspirational people in a world of more than seven (7) billion people. Well Bob Marley did!

88. Who would have thought that a poor young woman from St. Catherine born in a time of a patriarchal society would become one of the world's 100 most influential people and our first female Prime Minister. Well Portia Simpson Miller beat the odds and the naysayers and did!

89. They achieved those heights of success because they believed in their cause and their sincerity galvanized and mobilized others to follow them.

90. Mr. Speaker, the output of our imagination and creative productivity will be the platforms on which Jamaica will build its future generation of power. Regardless of who we are and where we come from, our desires must be driven by the universal purpose grounded in empathy and love to build this country. It must supersede personal ridicule, rancor and bitterness. We cannot pay our debt with blame or motivate each other through unwholesome value systems that persecute and harm our children and the most vulnerable among us. Like our ancestors and leaders before us, we must ourselves become the revolution by radically changing from a tear down philosophy to a build up philosophy. Our ability to reconstruct our future must first begin by reconstructing our own approaches, our dialogue and acceptance that we need the force of togetherness to get the job done.

91. You know Mr. Speaker, there is a popular African proverb that says "If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." Mr. Speaker, the journey for our next great phase of development will require us to go far, I urge all of us today, let us do it together.

I thank you.