

CABINET AGENDA ISSUES – 20 NOVEMBER 2017

The House is asked to note the following matters which were considered by the Cabinet at its meeting held on 20 November 2017:

1. Legislation;
2. Annual Reports;
3. Board Appointments;
4. Delimitation of the Boundary of the Cockpit Country and the Cockpit Country Protected Area (CCPA);
5. Hosting of Regional/International Meetings; and
6. Reports.

Each matter shall be elaborated on in turn.

1. Legislation

The Ballast Water Management Act, 2017

Cabinet gave approval for the Bill entitled “The Ballast Water Management Act, 2017” to be tabled in the Houses of Parliament.

The Bill seeks to give effect to the provisions of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004, to prevent, minimise and ultimately eliminate the risks to the environment, human health, property and resources, arising from harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens, through the control and management of ships’ ballast water and sediments.

2. Annual Reports

Cabinet considered Annual Reports of the:

- (i) Council of Community Colleges of Jamaica for the Financial Year 2012/2013;
- (ii) Devon House Development Company Limited for the Financial Year 2016/2017;
- (iii) Milk River Bath for the Financial Year 2015/2016; and
- (iv) Universal Service Fund for the Financial Year 2016/2017.

The Reports will be tabled in Parliament at a later date.

3. Board Appointment

Legal Aid Council

Cabinet approved the appointment of Ms. Karen Wilson to the Council, with effect from 20 November 2017 to 7 May 2019, when the tenure of the Council will expire.

4. Delimitation of the Boundary of the Cockpit Country and the Cockpit Country Protected Area (CCPA)

Cabinet agreed on the following:

- (i) the geomorphological boundary of the Cockpit Country as described by Parris Lyew-Ayee, Jnr. (2005) as the “Core Cockpit Country” is to be recognised by the State as the Cockpit Country and be published in the Jamaica Gazette;
- (ii) the area delimited by the geomorphological boundary, excluding the area in the vicinity of Manchester North-eastern and Clarendon North-western, between Troy in the north and Christiana in the south (also described as ‘the tongue’), shall be recognised as the new “Core Cockpit Country”;
- (iii) the forested lands, the hydrological features, as well as the existing forest reserves, that is, Litchfield-Matheson’s Run and the Fyffe and Rankine forest reserves in and within the environs of the Cockpit Country Protected Area (CCPA), should be protected and governed by specific legislation and be closed to mining under the Mining Act;
- (iv) any caves discovered in the path between the sink of Quashies River and the rise of the Rio Bueno at Dornoch Cave should be protected by a buffer;
- (v) the historical and cultural sites in and within the environs of the Cockpit Country should be identified by the Jamaica National Heritage Trust and protected under the Jamaica National Heritage Trust Act; and
- (vi) logging, the production of charcoal, and reaping/harvesting of yam sticks should be prohibited in all the designated protected areas.

Cabinet also requested that:

- (i) the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport pursue the nomination of the CCPA as a World Heritage Site under the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO);
- (vii) the Ministry of Tourism increase its efforts to further develop environmentally sustainable health and wellness tourism and eco-tourism activities within the CCPA as defined, and its environs, as part of the country’s tourism product; and
- (viii) the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation develop a management plan for the areas designated.

This decision reflects the fulfilment of a commitment by the Government of Jamaica to deliver a decision before the end of 2017 on the boundary of the Cockpit Country, based on the best available science, and the resolve to protect and preserve the rich ecological character, including endemic flora and fauna, water resources, and the unique geology and geomorphology of the area.

5. Hosting of Regional/International Meetings

- (i) 11th Meeting of the Caribbean Plant Health Directors’ Forum

Cabinet approved Jamaica hosting the 11th Meeting of the Caribbean Plant Health Directors’ Forum during the period 9 to 13 July 2018.

The core business of the meeting will be the review of the status of implementation of the decisions of the Forum and Ministerial Council in relation to strategic objectives and agreed future plans and activities.

- (ii) International Telecommunication Union Regional Event, "Accessible Americas V". Cabinet approved Jamaica's hosting of the International Telecommunication Union's Regional Event, "Accessible Americas V", to be held in November 2018.

The event will seek to promote further discussion on the use of information communication technology to safeguard and guarantee the rights of persons with disabilities.

6. Reports

- (i) Assessment of the Public Healthcare Delivery System in Jamaica – 2017

The Cabinet considered a report from the Ministry of Health regarding an assessment of the public healthcare delivery system in Jamaica, conducted over the period May to August 2017, within the framework of the development of a 10-year strategic plan for the health sector.

The report reminded that between 1997 and 2003, Jamaica, with the financial and technical support of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), implemented a health sector reform programme that resulted in substantive changes in the public health sector, including the regionalisation of health services provision across the island, and the establishment of four Regional Health Authorities (RHAs) under the National Health Services Act, 1997. Since the introduction of this reform programme, no systematic review of the impact of the reform measures on the health system had been undertaken.

The proposed recommendations for improving public healthcare delivery in Jamaica included:

- (a) expanding equitable access to healthcare by redefining the roles of hospitals to focus on inpatient and acute care, and strengthening the clinical and administrative management capacity in hospitals and primary care facilities;
- (b) strengthening the stewardship capacity of the Ministry of Health via the implementation of a nationally driven change management strategy; utilising Service Level Agreements (SLAs) to steer the system towards national health priorities; and exploiting the process of the development of the national strategic plan for the health sector to advance a shared vision and align existing initiatives;
- (c) improving the governance and efficiency of Regional Health Authorities (RHAs) by:
 - i. centralising some functions for efficiency, for example, procurement;
 - ii. outsourcing certain ancillary general services (laundry, cleaning, security, food services); and

- iii. implementing mechanisms for collaboration and sharing of resources among Regions.
- (d) increasing and improving health financing by:
- i. increasing public investment in health;
 - ii. instituting arrangements to recover some of the costs from insurance companies and tourists; and
 - iii. developing a national health insurance scheme.
- (e) refining and aligning the regulatory framework to:
- i. better define roles, responsibilities and reporting lines and authority of key actors in the system;
 - ii. address duplications and inconsistencies;
 - iii. improve management and accountability processes at all levels; and iv. increase representation of public healthcare in the overall governance structure of the country.

The recommendations from the assessment would be taken into consideration by the Ministry of Health in the development of the Public Health Strategic Plan, with plans to introduce the national health insurance scheme on a phased basis.

The report advised that, in the light of the current focus of the Ministry of Health on developing a 10-year strategic plan for the health sector, the Pan American Health Organization and the World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) were approached to provide technical assistance to conduct an assessment of the public healthcare delivery system in Jamaica, taking into consideration the available evidence and lessons learned from other countries' experiences with different service delivery models, including decentralisation.

(ii) Update on Implementation of the Effective Policing Pillar of the Ministry of National Security's Five Pillar Strategy

Cabinet considered a report from the Ministry of National Security, which provided an update on measures being pursued in the implementation of the Effective Policing Pillar of the Ministry of National Security's Five Pillar Strategy for Crime Prevention and Citizen Security, and the financing therefor.

The report recalled that the 2016 Report of the Economic Growth Council identified improvement in citizen security and public safety as one of the key initiatives for achieving 5% economic growth in four years, as crime was estimated to cost the country \$68 billion; and that resolution required an all-of-government approach.

The report reminded that the five-pillar strategy involved multifaceted approaches that required simultaneous implementation for maximum impact, such pillars being Effective Policing, Swift and Sure Justice, Social Development, Situational Crime Prevention, and Reduced Re-offending.

An update was provided on the activities being undertaken in relation to the effective policing pillar, which were underpinned by the need for more technological and intelligence-driven policing; the legislative amendments being pursued; and the funding requirements over the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 financial years.

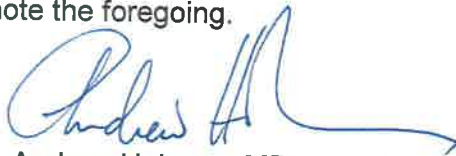
(iii) World Trade Organization (WTO): 4th Trade Policy Review of Jamaica, 13 and 15 September 2017, Geneva, Switzerland

Cabinet considered a report from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade regarding the outcome of the 4th trade policy review of Jamaica by the World Trade Organization (WTO), conducted over the period 13 and 15 September 2017 at the WTO Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

Information was provided on the opening statement by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade to the 4th WTO Policy Review Body, in which the Minister outlined the various policy initiatives and reforms undertaken by the Government of Jamaica aimed at creating an environment for the sustainable development of the Jamaican economy; and the remarks by the discussant, highlighting the improvements that had taken place in the Jamaican economy since Jamaica's last review in 2011, and the challenges that remained, including the need to diversify the export base.

The report advised of the statements by 31 WTO members, which, though mostly favourable and supporting, also raised concerns about Jamaica's compliance with its WTO obligations; the country's numerous duties and charges on imports, including stamp duties and additional stamp duties, particularly on certain agricultural goods; and the country's bilateral trade, notably in agriculture.

The Honourable House is asked to note the foregoing.



Andrew Holness, MP
Prime Minister
10 January 2018

