

CABINET AGENDA ISSUES – 22 JANUARY 2018

The House is asked to note the following matters which were considered by the Cabinet at its meeting held on 22 January 2018:

1. Contract;
2. Annual Reports;
3. Reappointment of the Chancellor, University of Technology, Jamaica;
4. Agreement Between the Government of the Italian Republic and the Government of Jamaica for the Elimination of Double Taxation;
5. The National Forest Management and Conservation Plan 2016-2026;
6. Organization of American States (OAS)/Inter-American Telecommunication Commission (CITEL) ProFuturo Project Workshop 29-30 January 2018; and
7. Reports.

Each matter shall be elaborated on in turn.

1. Contract

Procurement of Reagents and Supplies for Viral Load Machines at the National Public Health Laboratory

Cabinet approved the award of a contract in the amount of US\$775,344.00 to LASCO Distributors Limited for the provision of reagents and supplies for viral load machines at the National Public Health Laboratory.

Viral load machines are used in the treatment of HIV/AIDS patients island wide and they require various reagents and supplies to function properly.

2. Annual Reports

Cabinet noted the Annual Reports for the:

- (i) Financial Institutions Services Limited for the Financial Year 2016/2017;
- (ii) Housing Agency of Jamaica Limited for the Financial Year 2016/2017;
- (iii) Jamaica Racing Commission for the Financial Year 2014/2015;
- (iv) Passport Immigration and Citizenship Agency for the Financial Year 2010/2011; and
- (v) Private Security Regulation Authority for the Financial Year 2015/2016.

The Reports will be tabled in Parliament.

3. Reappointment of the Chancellor, University of Technology, Jamaica

Cabinet gave approval for the reappointment of The Most Honourable Edward Seaga, ON, PC, as Chancellor of the University of Technology, Jamaica, for a period of three (3) years with effect from 7 November 2017 to 6 November 2020.

4. Agreement Between the Government of the Italian Republic and the Government of Jamaica for the Elimination of Double Taxation

Cabinet ratified the approval granted for the signature of the Double Taxation Agreement between the Government of the Italian Republic and the Government of Jamaica for the elimination of double taxation with respect to taxes on income and the prevention of tax evasion and avoidance.

The Agreement was negotiated in the context of the introduction of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Base Erosion Profit Shifting (BEPS) project which has placed a strong emphasis on tax evasion through double taxation agreements and includes minimum standards for existing and new double taxation agreements put forward in a multilateral instrument.

5. The National Forest Management and Conservation Plan 2016-2026

Cabinet approved the National Forest Management and Conservation Plan 2016-2026 and its tabling in the Houses of Parliament.

The Forest Act provides for the preparation of a National Forest Management and Conservation Plan every five years, for forest resource management and conservation.

6. Organization of American States (OAS)/Inter-American Telecommunication Commission (CITEL) ProFuturo Project Workshop 29-30 January 2018

Cabinet approved Jamaica's hosting of a two-day workshop from 29 to 30 January 2018, for the Focal Points of the Organisation of American States (OAS)/Inter-American Telecommunication Commission (CITEL) ProFuturo Project.

The ProFuturo Project initiative is based on incorporating technology, educational content and teaching-learning methodologies for teachers and pupils alike with the aim of transforming the education of 10 million boys and girls by 2020. The purpose of the workshop, which will be held in Kingston, is to facilitate the formal implementation of the Digital Mobile Classroom project in ten (10) selected primary schools to benefit a total of 9,100 students.

7. Reports

(i) Major Project Initiatives 2017/2018 and Beyond – The National Irrigation Commission Limited

Cabinet considered a report from the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation in connection with the major project initiatives of the National Irrigation Commission Limited (NIC) for 2017/2018 and beyond.

The report advised that the NIC had identified priority initiatives to accelerate the economic growth and job creation agenda of the Government of Jamaica through ensuring the availability of adequate irrigation water. This would assist in increased competitive diversified agricultural production and food safety as stated in the Vision 2030 National Development Plan.

The report also provided an update on the National Irrigation Development Plan (NIDP) for 1998-2015 and the projects identified and implemented thereunder; key projects to be implemented for the 2017 to 2026 period for irrigation and agricultural development; and the financing arrangements that included grant and development funding.

(ii) National Water Commission's Achievements for the First Half of the Financial Year 2017/2018

Cabinet considered a report from the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation in connection with the financial achievements of the National Water Commission (NWC) for the first half of the 2017/2018 financial year.

The report provided information on strategic measures and initiatives employed by the NWC to improve overall performance and increase revenue; and factors driving the improved financial performance in the first half of the 2017/2018 financial year, including a 36% increase in operating profit from \$1.6 billion to \$2.2 billion and a 58% decrease in net losses from \$1.9 billion to \$0.8 billion.

(iii) Recommendations of the Multi-Stakeholder Working Group on Plastic Packaging Materials

Cabinet considered a report from the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation regarding the recommendations of the Multi-Stakeholder Working Group on Plastic Packaging Materials.

The report advised of the steady increase in the production of plastics; data from United Nations (UN) Environment that approximately 8.3 billion tonnes of plastics had been produced up to 2015, of which approximately 8 million tonnes were dumped in the oceans on an annual basis; and the launch in February 2017 by UN Environment of a global anti-marine litter campaign "CleanSeas" in response to the environmental crisis, which was aimed at engaging governments, civil society, the public sector and the general public to assist in the fight against marine plastics litter.

It further advised of measures taken by CARICOM Member States to reduce plastics in the marine environment; the establishment of a Multi-Stakeholder Working Group in Jamaica; environmental and industry considerations; the legal and financial implications; the consultations done; and the recommendations of the Working Group, which included that the Government institute a ban within a 5-year period on the manufacture, import and use of single use plastic bags below 25 gallon capacity, except bags used in the retail trade for packaging and finished Styrofoam used as end products.

(iv) Macro Socio-Economic and Environmental Impact Assessment of the Damage and Loss Caused by the March to June 2017 Rains

Cabinet considered a report from the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation in connection with a macro socio-economic and environmental impact assessment of damage and loss caused by heavy rainfall during the period March to June 2017, prepared by the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ).

The report informed that the heavy rainfall experienced in the country from 14 to 18 May 2017 resulted in major flooding and landslides across 11 parishes. Flooding had occurred in the parishes of Clarendon, St. Catherine, and St. Ann. Clarendon was the worst affected parish with one community registering 5.2 metres (17 feet) of flood waters.

The report provided an overview of the findings, including damage to infrastructure and the productive and social sectors, the impact on the population and the environment, the assessment of damage and loss, and the related emergency operations.

The Honourable House is asked to note the foregoing.



Andrew Holness, MP
Prime Minister
29 March 2018