

CABINET AGENDA ISSUES – 11 FEBRUARY 2019

The House is asked to note the following matters which were considered by the Cabinet at its meeting held on 11 February 2019:

1. Contract;
2. Annual Reports;
3. Board Appointments;
4. Joint Venture Partnership Agreement for a Housing Development at Bernard Lodge, St. Catherine;
5. Proposal for Increased Benefits to Government Pensioners; and
6. Reports.

Each matter shall be elaborated on in turn.

1. Contract

Multi-Joint Couplings, Flanged Adapters and End Caps – National Water Commission

Cabinet approved the award of a contract in the amount of €429,916.92, to Georg Fisher Waga N.V for the supply of 980 couplings, 1,480 flanged adapters, and 56 end caps to the National Water Commission (NWC).

These materials to be procured have been specially recommended by consultants, after an extensive review of the existing materials and methods used by the NWC in repairing its distribution network. The use of the items will assist in the reduction of the rate of breaks in the mains and service lines.

2. Annual Reports

Cabinet noted the Annual Reports for the:

- (i) Coconut Industry Board for the Calendar Year 2017; and
- (ii) Independence Park Limited for the Financial Years 2012/2013 and 2013/2014.

The Reports will be tabled in Parliament.

3. Board Appointments

(i) National Education Trust

Cabinet gave approval for the appointment of Mr. Lennon Richards to the Board, with effect from 11 February 2019 and up to 31 March 2019, when the tenure of the Board will expire.

(ii) Veterinary Committee

Cabinet gave approval for the appointment of Dr. Keith Amiel to the Committee, with effect from 11 February 2019 and up to 3 June 2021, when the tenure of the Committee will expire.

4. Joint Venture Partnership Agreement for a Housing Development at Bernard Lodge, St. Catherine
Cabinet approved the recommendation for the Minister responsible for housing and the Housing Agency of Jamaica Limited to enter a Joint Venture Agreement with China Harbour Engineering Company for the construction of 1,650 to 1,900 housing solutions in six phases over a period of 60 months at Bernard Lodge in St. Catherine.

The housing development is intended to create a cohesive and sustainable residential community, targeting low to moderate income earners by providing studio and one-bedroom units.

5. Proposal for Increased Benefits to Government Pensioners

Cabinet gave approval for the increases to Government pensioners, including widows/widowers and dependents, with effect from 1 July 2018 as follows:

Category	Proposed Increase
Up to \$34,999.00 per month	\$28,560.00 per annum (\$2,380.00 per month)
\$35,000.00 to \$39,999.00 per month	\$25,200.00 per annum (\$2,100.00 per month)
\$40,000.00 to 49,999.00 per month	\$20,640.00 per annum (\$1,720.00 per month)
\$50,000.000 to \$67,999.00 per month	\$18,600.00 per annum (\$1,550.00 per month)
\$68, 000.00 and over per month	\$14,440.00 per annum (\$1,200.00 per month)
Widows/Widowers	\$16,800.00 per annum (\$1,400.00 per month)
Dependents	\$19,200.00 per annum (\$1,600.00 per month)

Cabinet also directed that, effective 1 July 2018, eligible persons will include:

- (i) persons on pension for at least 2½ years as at 1 January 2018, who were 55 years of age or older at 1 July 2018; or
- (ii) persons retired on the ground of ill-health, regardless of age, as at 1 July 2018; and
- (iii) widows/widowers and dependents whose pension commenced prior to 1 July 2018.

In July 1991, Cabinet agreed that regular annual pension increases should be granted to pensioners due to the regular increases in the cost of living. Since then increases have been granted effective 1 July 1991 and on the 1 July of each successive year. The last increase was granted on 1 July 2017.

6. Reports

- (i) Eleventh International Civil Aviation Organization Air Services Negotiation Event (ICAN 2018)

Cabinet considered a report from the Ministry of Transport and Mining in connection with a report on the outcomes of Jamaica's participation in the 11th International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Air Services Negotiation Event (ICAN 2018) held in Nairobi, Kenya over the period 10 to 14 December 2018.

The report provided information on ICAN; and advised that representation at ICAN was a continuation of Jamaica's policy to strengthen and promote its aviation sector and highlighted the sessions in which the delegation participated. The report also outlined the results of the discussions held with delegations of 15 countries, which included signing or initialling Air Services Agreements with Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Bahamas, Seychelles, Iceland,

Malaysia, Qatar, Dominican Republic, Luxembourg, Rwanda and Colombia, and signing Memoranda of Understanding with the Netherlands (Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba) and Burkina Faso. It also advised of the potential areas of cooperation with several countries.

(ii) Meeting of Education Ministers Action Group Commonwealth Secretariat Headquarters

Cabinet considered a report from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information in connection with the outcomes of the participation of the Minister of Education, Youth and Information at the Education Ministers Action Group (EMAG) in London, United Kingdom over the period 24 to 27 January 2019.

The report advised of the mandate of the EMAG; the invitation to the Minister to make a presentation on specific areas relating to the Nadi Declaration; the outcomes of the meeting of EMAG; and the other meetings with Jamaica Diaspora groups in London and New York, United States of America (USA), and with City and Guilds representatives of the Bahçeşehir University (BAU) in the Republic of Turkey.

The report further advised of scholarships to be offered to Jamaican students to pursue programmes in Commonwealth countries, activities in relation to the two schools to be refurbished by the BAU, the plans for a teacher migration exercise, and for support to be provided for the teaching of Mathematics in schools in western Jamaica.

(iii) Increased Cases of Fever and Respiratory (Influenza-Like) Illnesses

Cabinet considered a report from the Ministry of Health which advised of a significant increase in the cases of fever and respiratory (influenza-like) illnesses in Jamaica and the initiation of early actions to reduce the impact on the general population.

The report advised of the surveillance and reporting systems in relation to Influenza-Like Illnesses (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infections (SARIs); that Jamaica was in the influenza season; provided data on the current situation; and noted that there was not enough evidence to conclude that Jamaica was in an influenza outbreak, given that the SARI surveillance indicators continued to be below the seasonal levels. It also advised of the recommendation that Jamaica be put on alert for influenza, given that influenza A H1N1 pdm09 circulation was increasing; and outlined the actions which would follow the activation of protocols for an alert status for ILI.

The Honourable House is asked to note the foregoing.


Andrew Holness, MP
Prime Minister
19 March 2019

