

CABINET AGENDA ISSUES – 22 JUNE 2020

The House is asked to note the following matters which were considered by the Cabinet at its meeting held on 22 June 2020:

1. Contracts;
2. Board Appointment;
3. Sale of Land at Lot 1, Part of Great Salt Pond, Hellshire in St Catherine;
4. Study on Social Work in the Public Sector in Jamaica; and
5. Reports.

Each matter shall be elaborated on in turn.

1. Contracts

(i) Renewal of Insurance 2020/2021 for the Braco Resort Hotel, Rio Bueno, Trelawny

Cabinet approved the award of a contract in the amount of US\$503,887.00, exclusive of General Consumption Tax, on behalf of the National Insurance Fund (NIF), to Marathon Insurance Brokers Limited, for the renewal of general insurance for the Braco Resort Hotel for the period 1 May 2020 to 30 April 2021.

The Braco Resort Hotel was acquired by the National Insurance Fund (NIF) in December 2000, with the titles being held in trust by the Commissioner of Lands.

(ii) Provision of \$1.00 Coins

Cabinet approved the award of a contract in the amount of US\$773,945.00, on behalf of the Bank of Jamaica (BOJ), to the Mint of Finland, for the provision of 51 million pieces of \$1.00 coins.

The issue of \$1 coins over the past two (2) years has significantly outpaced redemptions. It is estimated that the supply of re-issue coins along with the stock of new coins held will not be able to satisfy the expected demand in 2020 and moving forward.

(iii) Provision of Consulting Services for the Implementation of GovNet

Cabinet approved the award of a contract in the amount of US\$500,000.00, exclusive of all applicable taxes, on behalf of the Transformation Implementation Unit, to Detecon Incorporated, for the provision of consulting services for Phase 2 of the implementation of GovNet for the Government of Jamaica.

The implementation of GovNet will provide a secure Wide Area Network (WAN) backbone communication infrastructure as a solid foundation for future efficiencies in the delivery of public services. Additionally, GovNet will have a capacity to deliver additional Shared ICT Services.

2. Board Appointment

Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts

Cabinet approved the appointment of Mr. Colin Barnett and Mr. Ricardo Wilks to the Board, with effect from 22 June 2020 to 25 August 2022, when the tenure of the Board will expire.

3. Sale of Land at Lot 1, Part of Great Salt Pond, Hellshire in St Catherine

Cabinet approved the sale of approximately 15.21 hectares (37.58 acres) of land situated at Lot 1 part of Great Salt Pond, Hellshire in St. Catherine by the Urban Development Corporation (UDC) to the National Housing Trust (NHT) at a sale price of \$300 million.

The proposed sale of the property to the NHT by the UDC would provide funding for the expansion of the Hellshire Sewage Treatment Plant; and the property covers approximately 15.21 hectares (37.58 acres). The Hellshire Sewage Treatment Plant serves the Hellshire community and was commissioned to provide a wastewater disposal system for the various UDC developed subdivisions within Hellshire; and the build-out of the related pipeline and complex infrastructure had not been completed and had compromised the ability of the UDC to fully serve the communities, which resulted in some residents building alternative sewage treatment options.

4. Study on Social Work in the Public Sector in Jamaica

Cabinet approved the execution of a study on social work in the public sector. The Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), in collaboration with the Public Sector Transformation and Modernisation Division of the Cabinet Office, had developed the Terms of Reference for the study. The study will examine the social work interventions across Government, with a view to greater streamlining effort and implementing joined-up approaches, to facilitate a structured and cohesive social work programme in Jamaica.

5. Reports

(i) Designation of Seafarers as "Key Workers"

Cabinet considered a report from the Ministry of Transport and Mining in connection with the designation of seafarers as "key workers" providing an essential service, to ensure that ships would keep moving, ports would remain open and cross-border trade would continue, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The report advised of the call by the United Nations (UN), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the global maritime community, for Governments worldwide to designate seafarers as "key workers".

The report further advised of the challenges being faced by seafarers due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including closure of national borders, which had affected the repatriation of these individuals to their home countries, resulting in an extension of their contracts; the recommendation from the IMO for Governments and national authorities to designate professional seafarers and marine personnel, when in their jurisdiction, as "key workers" providing an essential service; and that the designation would enable crew exchanges.

(ii) Postponement of Denbigh Agricultural, Industrial and Food Show 2020

Cabinet considered a report from the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries in connection with the postponement of the Denbigh Agricultural, Industrial and Food Show 2020.

The report informed that the Denbigh Agricultural, Industrial and Food Show had been a critical part of the agricultural landscape of Jamaica since 1952; this annual event was usually held at the Denbigh Showground in May Pen, Clarendon under the longstanding theme "Grow What We Eat...Eat What We Grow"; and the Denbigh Show was usually held in early August during the Independence weekend for three days of activities.

The Denbigh Show is a large event, which attracts over 80,000 patrons in addition to the farmers, vendors, sponsors and staff who would be on location, and would therefore be in contravention of the measures under the Disaster Risk Management (Enforcement Measures) Order, 2020. Additionally, some major sponsors had indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic had negatively impacted their businesses, thus they were unable to commit the financial resources required to fund the Denbigh Show.

(iii) Status of Submission of Annual Reports by Government Entities as at 31 March 2020

Cabinet considered a report from the Cabinet Office in connection with the status of the submission of Annual Reports by Government entities to Parliament for the financial year 2018/2019, as at 31 March 2020.

The report informed of the requirement under the Public Bodies Management and Accountability Act, for public bodies to submit audited Annual Reports to portfolio Ministers and the Parliament; and that the Cabinet Office was currently tracking the reporting status of 163 public bodies.

The report provided a summary of information with respect to the submission of Annual Reports for the 2018/2019 financial year, including that 10 entities (6%) of the 163 public bodies being tracked were current, whilst 18% and 45% were one year and two to four years outstanding, respectively.

(iv) Government of Jamaica (GOJ) Priority Legislation for the 2020/2021 Legislative Year

Cabinet considered a report from the Cabinet Office in connection with the Government of Jamaica (GOJ) priority legislation for the 2020/2021 legislative year.

The report advised that at the commencement of each legislative year, the Cabinet Office compiled the priority legislation programme of the GOJ, which would guide stakeholders' legislative priorities for the year; by way of memorandum dated 27 March 2020 from the Cabinet Secretary, all Ministries were requested to indicate their top three legislative items for 2020/2021; and the Programme reflected the status of legislation, as at 1 April 2020, the beginning of the legislative year.

(v) Analysis of the 2018 Poverty Rate

Cabinet considered a report from the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service on the estimate and related analysis of poverty for 2018, calculated from the Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions (JSLC) data.

The report informed that in 2018, the poverty rate was 12.6%, representing a decrease of 6.7 percentage points compared with 2017; and the decomposition of the poverty rates revealed that the reduction in the national poverty rate in 2018 was driven by the significant increase in consumption expenditure as well as a reduction in inequality.

The report further informed that the decline in the poverty rate may also be attributed to an increase in Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 1.9 % in 2018, which resulted from the highest level of production on record; increased employment; an increase in the proportion of households in the lower quintiles that received remittances; and the slowing in the rate of inflation.

(vi) Celebratory Events to Commemorate the 58th Anniversary of Jamaica's Independence

Cabinet considered a report from the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport in connection with the proposed activities for the commemoration of the 58th Anniversary of the declaration of Independent Jamaica, in light of the coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions.

The report informed that since the attainment of Independence in 1962, Jamaica had staged celebratory activities of varying degrees each year to commemorate the Anniversary of our Independence; the COVID-19 pandemic had forced the cancellation of the vast majority of the events associated with Jamaica's 2020 Emancipation and Independence celebrations, which were usually staged during the period mid-July to 6 August of each year; and with the onset of the pandemic in early March 2020, all activities in the Arts Development Programme (ADP) were discontinued.

The report also informed of the proposed activities and the rebranding of the celebratory period from mid-July to 6 August 2020 as the "Jamaica Festival".

The Honourable House is asked to note the foregoing.


Andrew Holness, MP
Prime Minister
23 July 2020