

CABINET AGENDA ISSUES – 6 AND 13 SEPTEMBER 2021

The House is asked to note the following matters which were considered by the Cabinet at its meetings held on 6 and 13 September 2021:

1. Legislation;
2. Annual Report;
3. Accession to the Patent Cooperation Treaty Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Industrial Designs;
4. Chairmanship of the Inter-American Committee on Tourism of the Organization of American States; and
5. Reports.

Each matter shall be elaborated on in turn.

1. Legislation

The Companies (Amendment) Act, 2021

Cabinet gave approval for the Bill entitled “The Companies (Amendment) Act, 2021” to be introduced into the Houses of Parliament.

The Bill seeks to amend the Act to:

- (i) allow companies to host hybrid, that is, in person and remote, or completely virtual Annual General Meetings (AGMs) where not expressly prohibited in the Articles of the entity; and
- (ii) empower the Registrar of Companies to grant an extension of time for the holding of AGMs in the event of the declaration of a period of disaster.

2. Annual Report

Cabinet noted the Annual Report for the University of Technology (UTech) for the Financial Year 2018/2019.

3. Accession to the Patent Cooperation Treaty Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Industrial Designs

Cabinet approved Jamaica’s accession to:

- (a) the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT); and
- (b) the Geneva Act of The Hague Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Industrial Designs adopted at Geneva on 2 July 1999 (The Hague Agreement).

The PCT is an international treaty that makes it possible to seek patent protection for an invention simultaneously in many countries by filing a single “international” patent application with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), whereas the Hague Agreement allows applicants to register an industrial design by filing a single application

with the International Bureau of WIPO, enabling design owners to protect their designs with minimum formalities in multiple countries or regions.

4. Candidature to the Chairmanship of the Inter-American Committee on Tourism of the Organization of American States

Cabinet approved Jamaica's candidature for Chairmanship of the Inter-American Committee on Tourism (CITUR) of the Organization of American States (OAS) for the period 2021 to 2024.

CITUR coordinates the implementation of inter American ministerial dialogue in tourism and contributes to the execution of OAS policies in the area of partnership for development, in accordance with the Comprehensive Strategic Plan of the organization. Currently, Jamaica serves as Vice-Chair of CITUR. The election of the Chair and Vice-Chair of CITUR will take place during the XXV InterAmerican Congress of Ministers and High-level Authorities of Tourism to be convened by the Government of the Republic of Paraguay on 6 October 2021.

5. Reports

(i) Impact of the August 2021 Tropical Storms on the Agricultural Sector

Cabinet considered a report from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in connection with the impact of the August 2021 flood rains on the agricultural sector, which advised that Jamaica was affected by two major weather-related events, Tropical Storm Grace on 17 August 2021 and Tropical Storm Ida on 26 August 2021.

The report further advised that, following the passage of Tropical Storm Grace, the preliminary assessment revealed damage and losses to crops estimated at \$936,063,336.00, with a total of 9,230 farmers affected island wide; the livestock sector at approximately \$44,108,500.00 with 2,018 farmers affected; and infrastructure, noting the significant damage to road and irrigation networks, with the worst affected parishes being St. Thomas, Portland, St. Mary, St. Ann and St. James, which accounted for 68.3% of total damage.

The report also advised of the damage and losses from Tropical Storm Ida with an estimated crop loss of \$754,060,093.00 affecting 8,593 farmers; losses for the livestock sector at approximately 16,706,440.00, noting that 1,559 farmers were affected with the highest losses from poultry farmers and other significant losses observed for pigs, small ruminant and apiculture farmers; and damage to infrastructure in the parishes of Clarendon, St. James, Manchester, St. Elizabeth, St. Thomas, Portland, St. Mary and St. Catherine.

In support of the immediate recovery of the sector, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries has mobilised and deployed officers for ongoing assessment of the damage and to provide urgent technical support to the farmers; and, in the interim, the Ministry will also be redirecting financial resources from the Production Incentive Programme to immediately support the recovery of the sector.

- (ii) Introduction of a Parametric Insurance Policy for Farmers and Fisherfolk in Jamaica
Cabinet considered a report from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in connection with the proposal to introduce a parametric rain, drought, and wind insurance policy to the agriculture sector for farmers and fisherfolk.

The report informed that in 2019, the agriculture sector accounted for 7.1 % of real Gross Domestic Production (GDP) and contributed to approximately 15.2 % of the country's employment; however, given the structure of the agriculture sector and the ever-increasing threat from climate change related events, the sector is susceptible to various shocks, and often, farmers who are impacted require the assistance of the Government to enable resumption of their operations.

The report also informed of the proposal of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, in partnership with Grace Kennedy Insurance Company Limited, to introduce a parametric rain, drought, and wind insurance policy to provide coverage for farmers and fisherfolk impacted by adverse weather events such as heavy rain, wind and drought; that the policy has a peril overview, and will be available to all registered farmers and fisherfolk; the benefits of the insurance policy.

- (iii) Commemoration of International Day for Universal Access to Information and Right to Know Week 2021

Cabinet considered a report from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information in connection with the commemoration of the International Day for the Universal Access to Information (IDUAI) and the Right to Know Week (RTKW).

The report informed that, in keeping with the declaration of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) General Conference, the Ministry will join the international community in commemorating 28 September 2021 as IDUAI, as well as observe RTKW from 27 September 2021 to 1 October 2021, with a programme of activities being staged in celebration of RTKW 2021. The Government, through the leadership of the Access to Information Unit in the Ministry, will coordinate and execute a programme of activities to commemorate IDUAI 2021 under the theme "*Building Back Better with Access to Information*".

The Honourable House is asked to note the foregoing.


Andrew Holness, MP
Prime Minister
24 2021

