Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology

SECTORAL PRESENTATION 2021-2022

George William Gordon House
Tuesday, May 18, 2021



Hon. Daryl Vaz, MP
Minister of Science, Energy and Technology

Building A Brighter Future

Spectrum Management Authority · Jamaica Post · ICENS · eGov Jamaica Ltd. · e-Jam · Universal Service Fund · SRC Scientific Research Council · Petrojam Limited · Serving Jamaica's Energy Needs · NCST National Commission on Science and Technology

Government of Jamaica

SECTORAL PRESENTATION
2021 • 2022

SCIENCE, ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY
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Acknowledgements

Madam Speaker:

Let me first of all give honour and glory to Almighty God, the Creator of all things. Great is His faithfulness and mighty power which has brought us through a challenging year. I am reminded of Jeremiah 29:11 which states, "for I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future."

I also acknowledge the master builder of our new, bold and brighter future, our Prime Minister the Most. Hon. Andrew Holness. We hail his inspiring and steady leadership in such a tumultuous time.

I am energized by the support of my beautiful family. I am strengthened each day by my wife Ann-Marie, as we work shoulder to shoulder to create a brighter future for the people of Portland. I am grateful for the support of my children and grandchildren who are the wind beneath my wings.

Thank You to:

The people of West Portland, whose unfailing confidence in me as their Member of Parliament fuels my motivation to do this work;

My Constituency Leadership and workers who are advancing the development of our communities and ensuring the lives of the residents of West Portland are made better each day. I have had the honour of representing the people of West Portland for fourteen (14) years for four (4) separate terms.

My internal team headed by Permanent Secretary Mrs. Carol Palmer on whose astute management I rely to implement government policies and programmes with transparency, accountability and in full observance of good governance.

The leadership and staff across all entities in the Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology who are effectively executing the charge for innovation and development to fuel the growth of this country.

My boards and in particular the leadership level, I wish to especially recognize the stewardship of Dr. Parris Lyew-Ayee for the Science Portfolio; Mr. Wayne Chen for Energy and Mr. Keith Duncan for the Technology Portfolio.

I am grateful for the support of the Honourable Michael Lee Chin, my advisor on the National Broadband Initiative and Chair of the Broadband Taskforce.

Our international partners including the:

- United States Embassy
- British High Commission
- European Union (EU)
- Canadian High Commission
- Republic of Estonia
- The World Bank

- Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

Let me at this point thank the former heads of missions of the US, the EU and Canada and to welcome the new heads. I am confident that the good relationship, cooperation and collaboration will continue. I would also like to acknowledge the work of Ms. Therese Turner Jones who leads the IDB team on some critical initiatives with the Ministry.

I could not ignore the pivotal role of our own private sector whose collaboration, cooperation and contribution supported various initiatives during the fiscal year.

Madam Speaker, I am inspired by my Parliamentary colleagues on both sides on the political aisle. Our ability to be in tune with the needs of the people earned us a significant investment in public confidence some eight months ago. I am even more proud of my colleagues on this side.

From the achievements outlined in the Budget and Sectoral presentations so far, this investment has not been squandered. We are encouraged to put pedal to the metal to build a brighter future. Madam Speaker the people of have chosen a winning team and Jamaicans are winning.

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the Clerk to the Houses and her staff as well as the Security Officers who have kept us feeling safe. The year was very difficult but we managed to continue with the nation's business because of the commitment and dedication of the team here. Thank you.

Building A Brighter Future

Madam Speaker:

I rise to make my maiden presentation as Minister of Science, Energy and Technology with the weight of the times on my shoulders, with the uncertainties of today in mind and with the hope of the future in sight. This country stands on the cusp of a new era as we, like the rest of the world, confront the greatest challenge to have faced humanity in our lifetime. It is a challenge that impacts every single Jamaican everywhere; in every nook and cranny of this country no matter their station in life, no matter their circumstance.

It is a challenge that threatens to destroy our optimism, our sense of hope and our confidence as a people and as a nation. I must pause to commend the Ministry of Health and Wellness, the capable team led by the Minister Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Jacquiline Bisasor-McKenzie, Permanent Secretary, Dunstan Bryan and the entire staff of the Ministry especially the impressive complement of diligent health care professionals who rise every day, unrelenting in their efforts to subdue this coronavirus. Their bravery, care and commitment, restores the hope of this nation.

Despite facing at times severe criticisms, we are thankful for where we are today as our situation could have been much worse.

Madam Speaker:

This is a time like no other when we in this Honourable House need to forget our differences and our politics. We need to put our minds together to develop and implement the greatest rescue plan for the people of Jamaica.

We need a whole of country approach – a coming together of our hearts and minds, our creativity, our common will and our common desire to survive and to succeed.

We must forget our different philosophies, our old grudges, the things that divide us and we must remember the confidence that the people of Jamaica have reposed in us to lift them up and to take them into a bold and brighter future. Madam Speaker, on that there should be no division in this Honourable House.

The collective pain of our people, the disruption to our lives, the grief caused by the loss of our loved ones must spur us to action; must motivate us to do the impossible because Madam Speaker, that is what leaders do.

We must find solutions to return the one hundred and twenty thousand (120,000) school children who have fallen out of the system, to the learning space. This is not just the sole responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information. We must find them or face one of the greatest humanitarian disasters that this country will ever see in the not too distant future.

We at the Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology are prepared to move the ground to provide the technological resources to connect those children. That is what the **Last Mile Initiative** is all about.

Madam Speaker, even as we face down COVID-19 we also face a world that is changing at the speed of light across the sectors of Science, Energy and Technology - three significant portfolios on which the future and fortune of this country stands.

The unprecedented global developments in the sectors are disrupting the way businesses operate and the way people connect. Artificial intelligence, gene editing, clean energy are areas that are being impacted in ways that we have not seen in the last fifty (50) years. Madam Speaker, it is within those contexts of a pandemic, of scientific explosion, of energy revolution and of technological advancements that we need to position Jamaica in a new, bold and brighter future.



SCIENCE PORTFOLIO


Fieldtrip

Madam Speaker:

Science is an essential cornerstone in the creation of a modern society.

Policy Framework and ST&I Mapping

In keeping with our commitments from the last fiscal year, we have made progress in advancing the policy framework for science which is required to move the national agenda for the sector forward. The National Science, Technology and Innovation (ST&I) Policy currently at the Green Paper stage, is being amended, based on public feedbackto move to the next policy stage which is the development of a White Paper. Once promulgated, the ST&I Policy will create an enabling and supporting environment for the integration of ST&I in national development. A database of research projects aligned to the ST&I policy priorities will also be created.

The Ministry is in the process of completing an ST&I mapping that will give us a good grasp of the landscape and to assist us in determining the resources that are required to achieve the national agenda in science, technology and innovation. When concluded, we will be in a position to create a strong ST&I ecosystem.

Madam Speaker, these two important developments will underpin our efforts to advance the strategic national priority of the popularization of science in Jamaica with a specific focus on educational institutions starting at the pre-primary and primary level.

We need more Dr. TP Leckys, Dr. Henry Lowes, Harlo Maynes who can impact not just the Jamaican way of life and the financial economy but our global community. We need to scale up our support for indigenous resources not just for our local market but for export.

It is time to get our manufacturing sector firing on all cylinders with indigenous Jamaican products that are sought after in international markets.

We must put our best minds to work and support them in finding solutions to the age old problems that affect us; solutions that will reduce our reliance on imports; solutions that will create decent jobs for people, that will spur growth in the MSMEs sector; solutions that will see the growth of cottage industries and that will help us to create vibrant communities. We need solutions that will address our challenges with climate change and air pollution.

It is time to call upon the natural talent, intellectual capacity and the creative minds of our people. The time is now to look within ourselves and create that path for a new, bold and brighter future. It is within our grasp; it is within our reach.

Improving Air Quality

Madam Speaker:

Last fiscal year we gave a commitment to strengthen support to climate change initiatives. The Ministry has delivered on its commitment.

During the 2020/2021 fiscal year, the International Centre for Environmental and Nuclear Sciences (ICENS) commenced the sampling phase of the regional project known as **“Assessing Atmospheric Aerosol Components in Urban Areas to Improve Air Pollution and Climate Change”.** This is being done under the aegis of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The long-term air quality of the urban

environment in the Kingston Metropolitan Area (KMA) is being sampled. The sampling is done using air quality samplers housed at the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA).

The pandemic also provided a unique opportunity to sample the KMA when vehicular traffic levels were low for protracted periods. This will help to determine the contribution of traffic to particulate matter in the urban environment in Jamaica.

Climate Change and Sustainable Land Management

Madam Speaker, we recorded an important first, with the production of the greenhouse gas inventory for the forestry and other land use (FOLU) sector. This was done through collaborations with the Greenhouse Gas Management Institute (GHGMI) and the Forestry Department. During the year, ICENS also measured soil carbon stocks and monitored soil-based greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from agricultural lands and mangrove forest across the island.

CRP F111021 – Enhancing Nuclear Analytical Techniques to Meet the Needs of Forensic Science

The ICENS has been managing this project since 2017 which aims to use our nuclear analytical techniques to aid in forensics. This has included being able to fingerprint the growing regions of cannabis, coffee and even to identify fake pharmaceuticals. The project was extended by a year due to the impact of the response to the global pandemic but is slated to end in December 2021.

National Commission on Science and Technology (NCST)

The NCST commissioned a survey of the COVID-19 experience in Jamaica. The study interviewed one hundred and six (106) persons affected by the COVID-19 virus and was conducted to encourage more research on COVID-19, tailored to our own reality and provide useful information for public consumption. This was done in collaboration with the National Foundation for Development of Science.

Feasibility Study on Science Park

The NCST has received a draft report on a feasibility study on the concept of a science & technology park in Jamaica. The report is under review and the Parliament will be further updated.

Enhancing Youth Engagement in S&T

The NCST has developed a concept paper to support youth engagement in international science and technology projects. This is being done under the Jamaica-South Africa Bilateral Agreement, in consultation with the South African High Commission and the Centre for Digital and Advance Manufacturing.

Supporting Small Businesses

During the year, the Scientific Research Council (SRC) developed more than forty (40) new food and personal care products; provided food incubation services to facilitate production; provided technical services and marketing for more than sixty (60) entrepreneurs. The entity also provided accredited testing services to local and regional partners.

SCIENCE PORTFOLIO
Outlook for 2021/2022

The Ministry will utilize its best effort to staff the Science Division to allow for proper strategic leadership of the portfolio.

Madam Speaker, I am also putting my colleague Minister of Education, Youth and Information (MOEYI) on notice that we will be implementing a robust plan for popularization of science in schools and I know that is a matter that is very near and dear to her heart.

Madam Speaker:

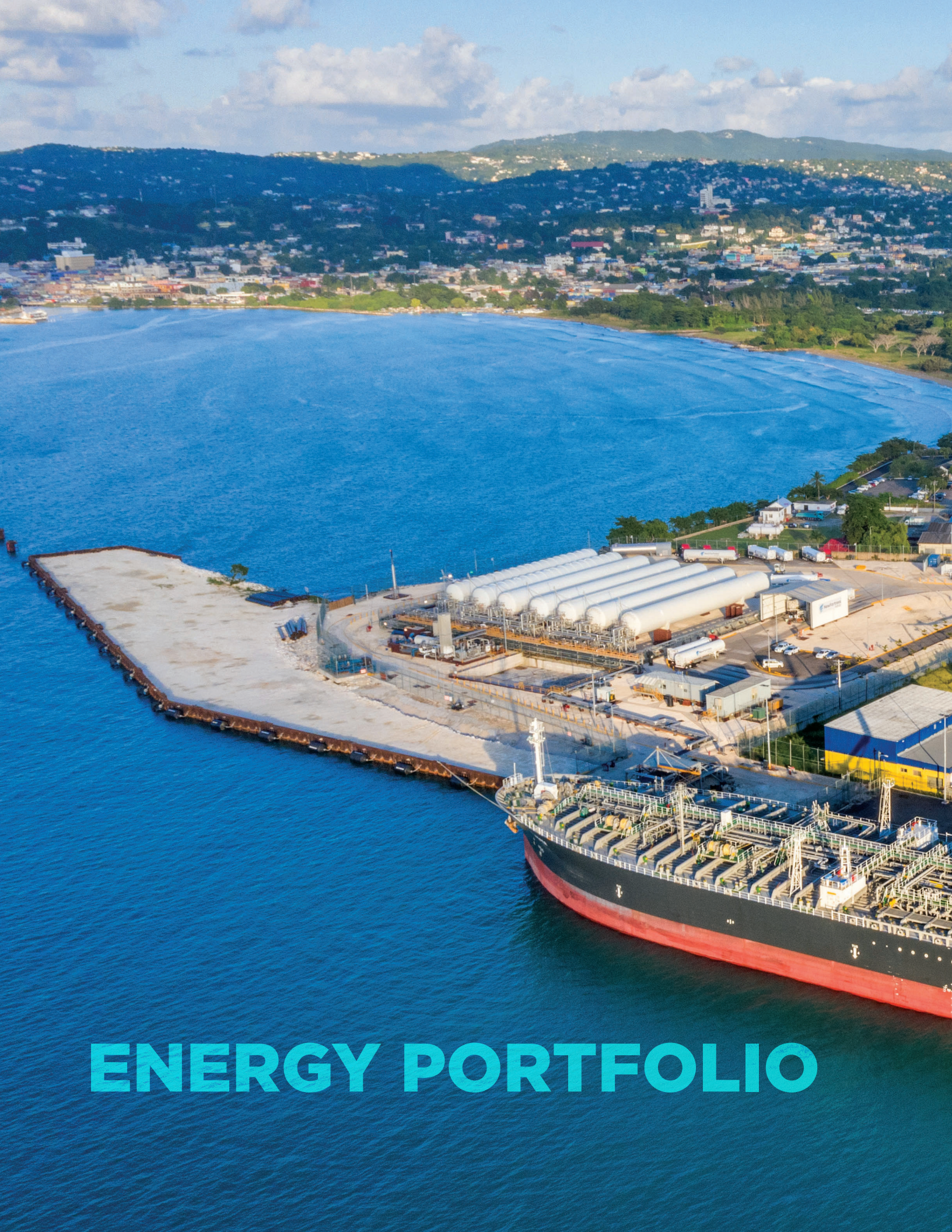
The mandate of the Scientific Research Council includes the popularization of science and assisting MSMEs. We are looking at a more targeted and focused business engagement plan to get research commercialized, especially our different formulations, through public/ private partnerships (PPPs).

This new direction is influenced by a fundamental belief that science is big business and that as we popularize science and get young people excited and energized about the possibilities in the field, we are also fulfilling the promise on the back end of good jobs and good money.

If our science professionals are convinced of a bright future and decent livelihood they would be less likely to leave the profession and Jamaica.







ENERGY PORTFOLIO


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CMA CGM

Madam Speaker:

Let me turn to the energy sector. Again, there are big bold strides being made globally in renewable energy, in e-mobility, and in a whole set of related industries such as advanced batteries and automation.

Madam Speaker, I take note of a number of recommendations that have been placed on the table by the Opposition Spokesperson on Mining and Energy. Let me remind this Honourable House that we re-established the Jamaica Energy Council (JEC). It was set up to achieve consensus and minimize the negative influence of partisan and other forms of special interest groups and individuals in the energy sector.

I believe that it presents the best forum for thoughtful deliberation of the matters raised by the Opposition Spokesperson. Later in the presentation, I will provide an update on the legislative provisions relating to the energy portfolio.

Madam Speaker, here is what I am clear about; the energy sector needs a robust policy, legislative and regulatory framework that addresses matters relating to renewable energy, e-mobility, pricing and competition – the whole gamut of issues relevant to the development of the sector.

Policies, Legislation and Regulations

Petroleum (Downstream Activities) Bill

We are making progress on this legislation. Further instructions have been provided to the Chief Parliamentary Counsel based on input received from the trade.

The Net Billing and Power Wheeling Regulations

The Ministry is in the process of consultations for sign off of the Net Billing Regulations. The Ministry is also preparing drafting instructions for legislative provisions for Power Wheeling. The delays encountered have more to do with the lack of technical capacity within the Ministry but that is being addressed as a matter of priority. In fact, Madam Speaker, we expect significant capacity strengthening in the Energy Division starting in a matter of weeks.

The Electricity Act, 2015

Madam Speaker, the Joint Select Committee on The Electricity Act, 2015 commenced its work some weeks ago to strengthen the legislative provision governing the electricity sector. We look forward to robust discussions in the Joint Select Committee.

The Electricity Act – Regulations

Madam Speaker, recall too that the Parliament approved the (Electrical Work, Registration and Licencing) Regulations in furtherance of The Electricity Act, 2015 in November 2020. The Regulations will ensure transparency and predictability in the electricity sector and enforce improvements in the quality and standards prescribed by the industry.

Madam Speaker, this Administration is on record with its support for competition in the electricity sector but we will not be taking a piecemeal approach to the development of the sector. Conventional wisdom does not support that approach.

The issues are way too significant, there is too much at stake. The real benefits of having a strong energy ecosystem include the reset of our economy and placing our country in a position for sustainable development and wealth creation.

Imagine, Madam Speaker, if we could reduce our dependence on oil by just twenty per cent (20%) that would represent a saving of nine hundred million US dollars (USD 900M) over the last three years. Imagine, Madam Speaker, what that could do to bring back one hundred and twenty thousand (120,000) children into the school system. Imagine what that could do to support our **Last Mile Initiative** to bring broadband access to every community in Jamaica. Think, Madam Speaker, what that could do to expand access to renewable energy not just for the poor but for all Jamaicans. Think of the contribution, Madam Speaker, to reduce our carbon footprint; to provide ICT assets to our schools and to poor children.

Madam Speaker we can't afford piecemeal; this pandemic does not give us that luxury. We intend to run big and bold into a new and brighter future.

So I look forward to the robust discussion and a quick path to implementation working through the Jamaica Energy Council and working shoulder to shoulder with my colleague on the other side.

Electric Mobility

Madam Speaker, 2020 was considered a tipping point for electric vehicles, globally. The world is in the fast lane to accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles which is understandable as road transport accounts for thirteen percent (13%) of global carbon emissions. Zero-emission vehicles will therefore be the most efficient lever to reduce carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions. Decisions have been taken by the automobile manufacturers to discontinue the manufacture of fossil fuel vehicles by 2030. Jamaica must not be left behind. We cannot become the dumping ground of the world for fossil fuel vehicles that will no longer be allowed in other jurisdictions.

We have established an Electric Vehicle (EV) Council to oversee a consultative process on the introduction of electromobility.

Madam Speaker, I am happy to report that the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service has concluded its review of the fiscal regime to develop the e-mobility architecture and will proceed to seek the input of the Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology. Given the importance of e-mobility to the economy, I am confident that the Ministry of Finanace and the Public Service will propose an effective fiscal regime.

Madam Speaker, we continue to lay the foundation for an electromobility environment. We have established an Electric Vehicle (EV) Council to oversee a consultative process on the introduction of electromobility. The Council is not a decision-making body but rather, will give oversight and:

- Review any policies, legislation and regulations related to the deployment of EVs in Jamaica;
- Comment and provide feedback on matters relating to safety and suitability of EV technologies contemplated for Jamaica;
- Respond to queries or concerns from stakeholders within a reasonable time period;
- Advise the Minister with responsibility for Energy, the extent to which the strategic framework is being implemented.

The Council held its first meeting on May 14, 2021 and approved the e-mobility strategic framework.

A working group was also established to oversee the implementation of the policy for this fiscal year. The strategic framework, which will include the fiscal regime will be placed before the Cabinet for its consideration. Meanwhile the Ministry intends to seek the approval of the Cabinet for the overarching policy framework. Madam Speaker, I will update the Parliament accordingly.

In addition, the Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) will also be embarking on public consultations to examine proposals on a regulatory framework to facilitate the penetration of EVs.

Jamaica is redefining the energy landscape to allow us to scale up actions to achieve energy security, energy efficiency, energy resilience and greater energy investments in the country. As we speak global investments are being leveraged to advance climate/energy resilience and support the achievements of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) especially those related to affordable and clean energy, climate action and sustainable cities and communities.

It is very encouraging to see the reports of the establishment of charging stations in Jamaica. The development of the infrastructure is an important pillar in the e-mobility ecosystem. Madam Speaker, the scope and magnitude of the work that is required to implement e-mobility is wide ranging including policy and legislative framework for sectors such as the financial, transport, energy and environment sectors. We must consider matters such as fuel economy standards and economic instruments that support the deployment of e-mobility infrastructure.

Madam Speaker, this is a big deal. If we can achieve twelve to sixteen percent (12-16%) conservatively e-mobility of our private and public fleet, the savings to Jamaica will be equal to two percent of GDP, according to the IDB. Let's break down the figures Madam Speaker. Based on 2020 GDP of fourteen point two three billion US dollars (USD 14.23B), that savings would amount up to approximately two hundred and eighty-four million US dollars (USD 284M). Madam Speaker, we are not about piecemeal approaches. We are about making big, bold strides into a brighter future for the Jamaican people.

Electricity Sector

Madam Speaker:

The work to modernize the electricity sector continues. During 2020, the renewable energy share increased by 1% with the first full year of operation of the Eight Rivers Energy Company Limited's 37 MegaWatt (MW) Solar PV Plant and commendable operation by the other Independent Power Producers (IPPs).

Electricity Losses

Madam Speaker:

The age old issue of electricity theft continues to dog the sector. It is estimated that theft accounts for about fifteen to seventeen per cent (15-17%) of net generation. Over the years, several strategies have been implemented to address the issue which have not resulted in a sustained reduction in theft.

The electricity theft in Jamaica is in poor areas but also includes residential, commercial/industrial customers who avoid paying their fair share of electricity. Because electricity theft is so complex, entrenched and involves many players, and at times significant collusion, its solution will need a focused, scientific/technical led answer plus significant moral suasion. Unfortunately, terminating electricity theft is not as simple as throwing a switch by using the hedge funding to purchase solar kits for those less able to self fund.

The Ministry is approaching the issue from a policy perspective with help from the IDB and a targeted community-based initiative in collaboration with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Generation Procurement Entity (GPE)

The Cabinet appointed a new leadership for the GPE, with a mandate to undertake procurement of new electricity generation capacity, in accordance with The Electricity Act, 2015. The entire energy sector hangs on the work of the GPE. The review of unsolicited proposals and Request for Proposals (RFPs) to the market for new generation must be accorded urgent priority by the GPE. We have recruited a Chief Technical Expert to support the GPE and we expect onboarding by July 1, 2021. The GPE has been given the charge to get moving. We want to see a significant increase in our generation capacity and our renewable energy share based on the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP).

The IRP envisions thirty-two percent (32%) of generation and (net load) in 2030 to be met with renewable mix and forty-nine percent (49%) of generation by 2037. The renewable mix resources include solar, wind, hydroelectric, waste to energy and biomass.

Let me remind this Honourable House that the IRP is the electricity roadmap for Jamaica under the period 2018-2037. It describes the preferred resource mix over two decades which meets reliability of service, reduce cost of operations, fuel source diversity, electric grid flexibility and the lowering of the environmental (carbon footprint).

To place the work of the GPE in context, the country anticipates two point eight billion US dollars (USD 2.8B) in investments over the life of the plan which will serve to modernize the electricity infrastructure, diversify the fuel source and institutionalize energy conservation and efficiency. There can be no delay in the work of the GPE to procure additional generation capacity to move the energy agenda forward into a new, bold and brighter future. The IDB is providing assistance with procurement.

Madam Speaker, I am well aware of the level of public interest about the delay in reviewing several unsolicited proposals which could not have been acted upon until the GPE was settled. The public can expect Requests for Proposals within six (6) months.

Public Sector Energy Efficiency and Conservation Programme (EECP)

Madam Speaker:

The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Programme (EECP), ended in the fiscal year 2020/2021. It was designed to raise awareness and increase energy efficiency in the public sector.

One of the final activities under this project was an Energy Efficiency and Conservation Survey for Public Sector Workers, which was done under a contract valued at thirteen point four million dollars (JD 13.4M). The survey concluded that the level of awareness within the public sector was seventy-three percent (73%).

Energy Management and Efficiency Project (EMEP)

Madam Speaker, a major development under the EMEP is the signing of a contract valued at five hundred and fifteen million Jamaican dollars (JD 515M) for the implementation of the Urban Traffic Management System (UTMS) in the Kingston Metropolitan Area (KMA).

The implementation timeline is ten months. The UTMS is a centrally controlled intelligent transportation system that will be able to provide real time information to motorists in an effort to reduce travel time on roads and be more efficient.

Oil & Gas Exploration

Madam Speaker, our oil and gas exploration continues. In the first quarter of the 2020/2021 financial year, Cabinet approved United Oil and Gas's (UOG's) acquisition of Tullow's eighty percent (80%) interest and operatorship to continue the exploration of the high potential prospectivity unlocked by the new 3D seismic data acquired over the main drill prospect, Colibri.

UOG has identified twenty-one (21) possible reservoir targets within the Walton-Morant Basin. To further reinforce the potential, an independent Competent Persons Report was performed by renowned Gaffney Cline & Associates where they estimate that the acreage is capable of containing a potential mean, unrisked prospective resource of over 2.4 billion barrels of recoverable oil across 11 of those identified leads and prospects.

UOG has now commenced their global marketing campaign to attract an investor to commit to funding the drilling of an exploration well before January 2022 and executing that well by January 2024. The cost of such an exploratory well is estimated to range between thirty to forty million US dollars (USD 30–40M). To provide context, the entire exploration journey since 2014 costed just over thirty-five million US dollars (USD 35M).

Madam Speaker, if this exploration is successful and properly managed, the potential for Jamaica would indeed be transformational.

Findings of Public Consultations on Petrojam

Public consultations were conducted by the Caribbean Policy Research Institute (CAPRI) regarding the strategic direction for Petrojam. The consultation comprised representatives from four professional constituencies – engineers, entrepreneurs, investment/finance professionals and ordinary citizens deemed to be without material interest in Petrojam. The public perspectives revealed the strategic importance for Petrojam's assets to the country.

However, there was the consensus for the establishment of a public-private partnership in terms of the preferred strategic direction of Petrojam's operations. The major findings were linked to public dissatisfaction regarding:

- Petrojam's brand image
- Petrojam's leadership and governance structure
- The absence of private sector involvement
- Petrojam's operational practices and high fuel costs
- Misalignment between global and local oil prices blamed on Petrojam

The Company has been mandated to take the required steps to address the issues that have been adversely impacting its image.

Petrojam is procuring the services of a Communications Specialist but I have instructed that a critical function of that engagement must include addressing what the public views as a lack of transparency in the pricing mechanism used by Petrojam to determine fuel prices and providing ongoing explanation to the public on the process that is involved. Jamaicans deserve to know and to understand the formula that is used in calculating fuel prices which fluctuate based on world oil prices. From the Ministry's side, we are getting technical assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which has access to pricing mechanisms in many countries to analyze the impacts of changes to Petrojam's pricing regime. This support is expected within four to six weeks. This will allow the government to intelligently weigh the merits of contestable policy advice and to make informed decisions in the interest of economic and social agendas of the country. Petrojam has a critical role to play in keeping prices affordable and smoothing out the peaks and troughs as the world market experience significant volatility.

The report of the IMF will be reviewed with Petrojam and a fullsome presentation on pricing will be brought before Cabinet.

Transfer of Rural Electrification

Madam Speaker:

During the fiscal year, the rural electrification function was transferred to the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development. All house wiring and poll line related activities now reside in that Ministry.

ENERGY PORTFOLIO
Outlook for 2021/2022

Regulatory and Legislative Framework

Madam Speaker:

For the new fiscal year, we will run a Usain Bolt sprint to complete some key legislation such as the:

- The Petroleum (Downstream Activities) Bill and Regulations;
- The amendments to The Electricity Act, 2015
- The Electricity (Net Billing) Regulations;
- The Electricity (Electric Power Wheeling) Regulations; and
- The Electricity (Auxiliary Connections) Regulations.

During the new fiscal year, omnibus legislation will be drafted to address the increase in monetary penalties and custodial sentences in a modernization of our portfolio legislation. This is an entire portfolio matter.

Institutional Reform

The establishment of the Government Electrical Regulator (GER) has commenced with the Licensing, Examination and Registration Branch coming into operation. A three-month transition to fully operationalize the GER commenced on April 1, 2021. Activities such as recruitment of staff, the determination of separation costs for the staff who will not be employed in the new entity, development of the online system and training in the use of the system by both staff and stakeholders will be undertaken.

The closure of Petrojam Ethanol Limited (PEL) and the transfer of the residual functions under Petrojam took effect April 30, 2021.

Madam Speaker, once the Ministry is supported in terms of the fiscal regime for e-mobility, the work of developing the electric mobility infrastructure and the strengthening of capacities of key institutions will be advanced. The private

investment has started with the installation of charging stations. There is need for active and sustained engagement of the HEART/NSTA Trust and other training agencies to upskill the island's mechanics.

Procurement of the electricity generation capacity

The Generation Procurement Entity (GPE) commencing this fiscal year, will procure the next tranche of electricity generation capacity. The GPE will manage the procurement process, by means of competitive bidding from prospective Independent Power Producers (IPPs), under established rules and protocols.

CLARENDON



ST. ANN







TECHNOLOGY PORTFOLIO

Madam Speaker:

Technology is the catalyst for the building of a brighter future for all. We live in a digital era where technology has redefined and reshaped our realities. With the onset of the global pandemic, the Government had to respond quickly to the needs of citizens by providing much needed relief due to the economic impact of the pandemic while accelerating its digital agenda.

National Broadband Initiative

Madam Speaker:

Maybe the most significant of the country's COVID-19 response will be the growth of the broadband infrastructure. The pandemic has exposed global structural broadband weaknesses in many countries, including Jamaica. Countries with good broadband infrastructure in terms of high internet penetration among their population combined with available online services from private and public sector are able to weather the economic impact of COVID-19. These countries have kept essential areas of their economies operational by quickly migrating essential services online. Their economies are expected to bounce back much more quickly than those countries that lack adequate broadband infrastructure.

Jamaica is not in the same category as those countries. Instead, the pandemic has served as a dramatic wake up call for the nation to accelerate its digital agenda from mere words on paper to actions on the ground. We are far behind in many of the critical benchmarks used to measure broadband success. We are behind the Caribbean Region in practically all of the broadband metrics (Mobile Data, Cost, Internet Access and Fibre Optic Cable penetration). We have a lot of ground to make up and very little time to do so.

The National Broadband Initiative must therefore be seen as a strategic investment that will have an immediate, direct and long term impact on the lives and livelihoods of the Jamaican people; provide support for businesses especially in the MSME sector to improve productivity and reduce cost; and improve the efficiency of public services.

It is against that background that I will be requesting the Cabinet and the Parliament to designate the National Broadband Initiative as a national development project and will be funded by the Government of Jamaica. This is a signal to the bureaucracy that the procurement is to be treated as a priority. This designation will also signal to the country the full support of the project at the very apex of government. Madam Speaker, The Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology has allocated five funded and fifty million Jamaican dollars (JD 550M) from across its portfolio. In addition, World Bank/Planning Institute of Jamaica will provide one hundred and seventy-seven point six million Jamaican dollars (JD 177.6M) and GovNetand other existing ICT projects funded by the loan arrangements with the IDB will provide just over eighty million dollars (JD 80M) in support. Earlier this month the Prime Minister mandated several ministries to allocate resources to this national initiative. Following that instruction, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information has made a commitment to the tune of two hundred and fifty million Jamaican dollars (JD 250M). Madam Speaker, Plan 1 is therefore fully funded.

Madam Speaker, as a former Prime Minister once said "it takes cash to care".

Madam Speaker:

We are proceeding on two fronts:

1. **Plan 1** – (The **100-Day ICT Plan)** which seeks to address the immediate and short term needs to coordinate a COVID-19 ICT related response to the public sector. This plan is being implemented in two phases and will be **completed by September 2021**
2. **Plan 2** – The longer term plan which will see us rolling out the **Last Mile Initiative to achieve universal access.** This is expected to be **completed by 2025,** as I announced in December in a statement to the Honourable House.

Plan 1 – The 100-Day ICT Plan

Madam Speaker, we are moving with lightning speed to execute on the 100-Day Plan which will involve providing connectivity between eight Municipal Authorities in Portland, St. Thomas, St. Catherine, Clarendon, Manchester, St Elizabeth, Westmoreland and St. James. Existing GovNet fibre optic cable will be extended from the KMA to all parishes using each Municipal Corporation as an aggregation point. This National Communication backbone will require simultaneous installation of microwave and fibre optic communication systems to ensure network redundancy and reliability.

The completion of the National Communication Backbone will allow the connection of four hundred and sixty-one (461) public entities including, one hundred and ninety-six (196) schools, one hundred and sixty (160) ministries, departments and agencies, sixty-two (62) major health facilities, forty-one (41) major police stations and eleven (11) Spectrum Management Authority sites. We will complete connectivity to the schools in the new school term starting with the term which begins September.

Madam Speaker:

Island wide coverage provided by the National Infrastructure Communication Backbone will enable the use across all parishes of the following applications:

- The Traffic Management system allowing connectivity for Police Stations, Courts, and Tax Administration Jamaica
- The Amanda application
- Central Treasury management systems
- HR Management systems
- Shared applications/ services
- Jamaica Eye

Plan 2 – Last Mile Initiative

Madam Speaker, let me just say that the 2025 timeline that I announced in my statement in December is no political bluster. I meant every word of that statement because it is grounded in the reality that when we are challenged as a nation we always rise above the occasion. The statement was informed by the facts on the ground in regards to the availability of broadband infrastructure in Jamaica.

The challenge therefore is for the Government to develop legislative, policies and regulatory frameworks that are reflective of the Government's goal of universal access. We are awaiting some expert assistance from the European Union (EU) and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). We are in a hurry to build a brighter future for our people with lightning speed.

The long term National Infrastructure Communication backbone will build on the 100-Day Plan. This Commercial model will be designed to leverage the public/private partnership model with the intention

of increasing competition and attracting foreign direct investments and new players to enable increased and affordable access.

Madam Speaker:

The National Broadband Initiative is the biggest economic enabler during the pandemic and for the post-pandemic recovery. It is estimated that when fully implemented the national broadband backbone will contribute approximately eight hundred million Jamaican dollars (JD 800M) annually to the economy. Madam Speaker, we are moving with lightning speed to a new, bold and brighter future.

Third Telecommunications Provider

As I said last December, we expect a third telecoms provider because, Madam Speaker, we believe and support competition as the best way to achieve quality service at affordable prices.

I am happy to report that the Cabinet approved a third telecoms provider yesterday – four months later. That is lightning speed. The company Rock Mobile, is a wholly owned Jamaican company.

The Request for Proposal (RFP) was shaped to align with government policy objectives to:

- increase broadband access to unserved and underserved areas;
- promote competition, innovation and diversity in the telecoms industry; and
- ensure optimum return in the shortest possible time for the spectrum assigned

The third mobile provider will be required to deploy its network in keeping with the coverage, quality of service and implementation timing in the bid, including the provision of:

- 95% population coverage of the entire country at a specified minimum download data rate
- 95% population coverage of communities classified as unserved or underserved at a specified minimum download data rate
- Service launch date of no more than 12 months after grant of licence.

The company is expected to achieve full roll out of the service within two (2) years. Madam Speaker, the criteria willl be monitored closely. Simply put, Madam Speaker, use the licence or lose it.

Providing Technological Solutions

Madam Speaker:

Through eGov Jamaica Limited, we provided much needed behind the scenes support to the Government's efforts in this regard. This support resulted in the successful development and deployment of several solutions, which included the Tax Administration Jamaica's (TAJ) Mobile Application, WeCare application platform used by the Ministry of Finance and Public Service (MOFPS) and the Own Your Own Device Programme in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information (MoEYI).

Madam Speaker, the pandemic highlighted the great digital divide existing within our nation. With the closure of schools and the shift towards remote learning, many of our students lacked internet connectivity and ICT assets, with which to continue their education. An urgent response was required.

e-Learning Jamaica Limited

Through e-Learning Jamaica Limited (e-LJam), we embarked on several major projects designed to increase access to connected devices across publicly funded schools, with the objective of ensuring that our children and teachers had adequate access to the use of innovative educational technology solutions.

Tablets in Schools Roll-Out Project (TIS Project)
40,000 tablets procured for PATH students
JD 982M invested
Tablets for Teachers Programme (TTP)
26,000 tablets procured and distributed
JD 805M invested
Laptops for PATH Students
15,000 laptops for PATH students
JD 1.3B invested

Tablets in Schools Roll-Out Project (TIS Project)

During the period under review, e-LJam procured and distributed approximately forty thousand (40,000) tablets to benefit grades four to six (4–6) students in the Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH), who are preparing for the Primary Exit Programme (PEP) examinations. This initiative represented a total investment of nine hundred and eighty-two million Jamaican dollars (JD 982M) inclusive of procurement and distribution.

Tablets for Teachers Programme (TTP)

Madam Speaker, our teachers were not neglected. e-Learning Jamaica Limited procured and distributed approximately twenty-six thousand (26,000) tablets to public sector teachers island-wide, representing a total investment of eight hundred and five million Jamaican dollars (JD 805M) inclusive of procurement and distribution.

Own Your Own Device (OYOD)

Madam Speaker, e-Learning Jamaica Limited in collaboration with the MoEYI and eGov Jamaica Limited, e-Learning Jamaica facilitated the development and roll out of the Own Your Own Device (OYOD) incentive programme. This programme is aimed at assisting thirty-six thousand (36,000) students to purchase a laptop or tablet from over one hundred (100) approved vendor locations island-wide. Under this programme, each student receives a voucher valued twenty thousand Jamaican dollars (JD 20,000). A total of seven hundred and twenty million Jamaican dollars (JD 720M) has been earmarked for this programme which will continue into the 2021/2022 fiscal year.

As at May 5, 2021 approximately ten thousand (10,000) beneficiaries have redeemed their vouchers totaling two hundred million Jamaican dollars (JD 200M).

Laptops for PATH Students

Madam Speaker:

Fifteen thousand (15,000) laptops for PATH students in grades ten to thirteen (10-13) were procured and distributed during the 2020/2021 fiscal year. The devices are equipped with tracking and remote management capabilities to guard against theft. The total investment was one point three billion Jamaican dollars (JD 1.3B) inclusive of procurement and distribution.

This is how we build a brighter future for Jamaica; by equipping the next generation with the tools to "tech charge", create more possibilities within the digital space and future-proof their careers.



53,929
people benefitted from Community Access Points

Universal Service Fund

Connect Jamaica (Public Wi-Fi)

Madam Speaker:

Even as we provide ICT assets, we also need to provide access to the internet. Through the Universal Service Fund (USF), we continued the provision of internet access and facilities in unserved and underserved areas.

Madam Speaker, we promised three new locations for this year. I am proud to report that we established five new locations in Chapleton, Ocho Rios, Port Antonio, May Pen and Annotto Bay and restored to functionality, the Olympic Way site.



34,093
people benefitted from Public Wi Fi Hotspots

Community Access Point (CAPs)

Madam Speaker:

For the fiscal year, the USF increased the number of Community Access Points (CAP) by seven and advanced work on an additional eleven (11) which we expect to complete by the end of the second quarter of the new fiscal year. Delays were experienced because of the unavailability of computer systems on the global market.

Support to the Tablet Initiatives

Madam Speaker, the total support provided by USF for the Tablet for Teachers programme and the Tablets in Schools programme one billion Jamaican dollars (JD 1.0B). In addition, more than two hundred and forty million dollars (JD 240M) was spent to support the public Wi-Fi hotspots, Community Access Points and the provision of devices to the education sector.

Special Groups Initiative (Disabled Community)

Madam Speaker:

In the digital society, we cannot afford for anyone to be left behind, especially the most vulnerable among us. During the 2020/2021 fiscal year, the USF targeted five (5) disabled groups to support. The USF outfitted a computer lab for Genesis Academy (School of Excellence for Students with Physical and Intellectual Learning Disabilities) to the tune of five point four million (JD 5.4M). The remaining projects will be completed in this fiscal year due to the challenges associated with procuring large volumes of computer systems.

Supporting ICT Education

Madam Speaker, supporting ICT Education was a major initiative in the 2020/2021 fiscal year. The USF launched a Research Grant project to promote innovation in ICT. Three projects have been identified for funding to build out and contribute to the ICT landscape of Jamaica. This project will extend into 2021/2022.

USF PEP Bursaries and PATH Scholarship

The USF also provided twenty-eight (28) PEP bursaries valued at one point two million Jamaican dollars (JD 1.2M) to support the purchase of ICT devices for the top boy and girl in each parish for the Primary Exit Profile Exam (PEP). One scholarship valid for a three-year degree programme was also awarded to a PATH beneficiary pursuing an ICT related course of study at the tertiary level.

Technology Advancement Programme (TAP)

Under the Technology Advancement Programme (TAP), the USF partnered with Caribbean Maritime University (CMU) and the Heart Trust/NSTA to train four hundred and eighty-two (482) youths in Digitization, Computer Administration and Repairs.

The programme included an internship phase where organizations in the public sector received persons from this cohort to assist the entity in its digitization of documents. Organizations such as the Bureau of Standards Jamaica, Kingston and St. Andrew Municipal Corporation, the Jamaica Library Service and the Post and Telecommunications Department benefitted from this programme.

Spectrum Management Authority

The Spectrum Management Authority (SMA) provided assistance to the National Broadband Initiative by redirecting fifty million Jamaican dollars (JD 50M) from the Remote Monitoring Directional Finding System (RMDFS) project. With this initiative, the SMA would be fully integrated with the national microwave and fibre optic network infrastructure being implemented by the COVID Plan, designed to expand the GovNet Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS) backbone island wide.

The benefits for the SMA partnering with GovNet will result in:

- Leveraging the existing infrastructure, network and technical capacity of the NWA (GovNet).
- Reducing RMDFS project spend and
- Scalability to expand RMDFS network.

Spectrum Services

Madam Speaker:

During the 2020/2021 fiscal year, the SMA embarked on the establishment of a Spectrum e-Licencing System in order to achieve various efficiency gains through the spectrum licencing process for internal and external stakeholders.

This e-Licencing system will allow for better reporting, faster processing times, improved access to information and online payments. Applications for the use of Jamaica's spectrum will be more accessible to customers worldwide and across varying time-zones.

Spectrum Pricing Policy

Madam Speaker, Cabinet approved the revised Spectrum Pricing Policy that will see the removal of spectrum caps. The MSET is now preparing regulations and a review of all spectrums allocated. This is to prevent what is known in the industry as hoarding.

All future spectrum allocations will have performance targets and timelines to ensure that valuable spectrum is used to improve telecoms services in the country. Failure to meet the performance standards will incur sanctions.

Madam Speaker, it is simple, use it or lose it.

Licencing of the 700 MHz Band 13

The SMA prepared the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the 700 MegaHertz (MHz) Band 13 during the 2020/2021 fiscal year. This RFP was developed to promote increased competition and bridge the digital divide in areas where our citizenry has no access to internet or data services.

Improving our Cyber Infrastructure

Madam Speaker, data is king in the digital age and every user of technology is at risk of cyber-attacks. As a Ministry, we are improving our capacity to respond to cyber-attacks in the public service.

The Organization of American States (OAS), through its Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism (CICTE), working with the Jamaica Cyber Incident Response Team (JaCIRT), has implemented an Early Warning System which will assist in protecting Jamaica's Cyber infrastructure through the use of Security Information and Event Management (SIEMs) to facilitate timely intrusion detection.

This will enable the JaCIRT to provide alerts as soon as there is exploitation of known vulnerabilities or zero-day events. Through active cyber threat research, near real-time information is provided to public and private entities resulting from its persistent horizon scan of new and emergent threats that present a clear and present danger to Information Technology Systems in Jamaica. These systems are helping to fortify Jamaica's Cyber infrastructure by according a more proactive approach in dealing with cyber threats.

JACIRT Website

The JaCIRT website is being revamped to allow for the anonymous reporting of cyber breaches, as well as the uploading of artefacts for analysis, by the team. This will significantly improve the ability to respond more effectively to specific cyber events. Under the Plan Secure Jamaica umbrella, the capability of the JaCIRT will be significantly bolstered to provide increased capacity for effective service delivery.

Joint Select Committee – The Cybercrimes Act, 2015

Madam Speaker:

You will recall the establishment of the Joint Select Committee to review The Cybercrimes Act, 2015. While that process is continuing, I will use this platform to once again indicate the fundamental importance of Jamaica having a strong legislative framework that addresses current cybersecurity realities as well as any future developments that may occur. A strengthened legislative provision will assist the work of JaCIRT and bolster our efforts at improving the cyber security ecosystem in the public sector. Madam Speaker,

this is extremely important given the move to eGovernment, eParticipation and most important of all a National Identification System.

Jamaica Post – Post and Telecommunications Department (PTD) and Postal Corporation of Jamaica (Post Corp)

Madam Speaker: Prior to this fiscal year, the Post and Telecommunications Department/Postal Corporation of Jamaica came under new leadership on March 1, 2021 with the appointment of a new Postmaster General/CEO in the person of Mr. Lincoln Allen.

Modernization of Jamaica Post

The modernization of Jamaica Post has been long overdue as a result of several factors. As the Postal Service moves towards its 350th Anniversary milestone, the implementation of various initiatives will assist in optimizing efficiency, service delivery and profitability. However, to transition the Department into becoming a 'logistic giant', a paradigm shift in service delivery and operations is needed to achieve a competitive advantage over others in the local logistics market. It is therefore imperative that Jamaica Post swiftly digitizes its operations, along with other transformational activities, to meet the needs of our stakeholders, and exceed their expectations.

In this regard, a review of the organizational structure of the Postal Corporation of Jamaica was completed and submitted to the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service for approval in May 2021.The strengthening of the human resource capacity with additional skillsets and competencies, among other things, within the Jamaica Post will help to drive the implementation of the strategies/ initiatives necessary to transform the entity into one that leverages technology to improve efficiency and customer service delivery as well as increase revenue.

Counter Automated System

The pursuit of technological solutions to automate the services offered at the Post Office counters is an ongoing process, which, upon completion and adoption is expected to provide real-time data sharing of the administrative and operational performance, and related activities throughout the Department. The counter automated system will help to promote efficient, transparent and accountable service delivery as well as ensure connectivity throughout most locations islandwide. The Public Procurement Commission (PPC) granted permission for the commencement of negotiations between the preferred bidder and the Department. Negotiations are now complete, and the recommendations are being finalized for submission to the PPC Committee for endorsement. After receiving same, it is projected that the counter automation technology will be acquired for adoption and implementation within the Department during this financial year.

Public / Private Partnerships

We intend to place the transformation of Jamaica Post on a fast track with the development of a modernization plan with timely implementation thereafter. To this end, the Ministry has issued instructions to the Post and Telecommunications Department to develop a mechanism that replicates the concept previously adopted which resulted in the establishment of the Liguanea Post Mall.

Madam Speaker, I have given instructions for similar type arrangements to be adopted throughout the island at postal points that are strategically located and geographically suited for similar economic activity. The aim is to: optimize the use of these postal points, create jobs in communities, increase economic activity while at the same time maintaining postal service.

In that development plan, value and location of property helped shape the decision to go forward with the project. It is our intention to conduct assessments islandwide to identify the post offices which are in need of significant repairs and renovation which would benefit from a public/private partnership. The desired end result is the development of facilities which are transformed to be user-friendly, customer centric and modern to serve the communities. This will also augur well to the benefit of the private entity and its own business model. The nature of the public/private partnerships may also have revenue earning potential for the Department.

Portugal, United States of America, Spain and the Caribbean Postal Union (PUASP-CPU) Multilateral Agreement Signed

Madam Speaker, the postal service is undergoing changes in other major jurisdictions, such as the United States, which is impacting our operations locally. Jamaica signed a Multilateral Agreement in December 2020 with Portugal, United States of America, Spain and the Caribbean Postal Union (The PUASP-CPU).

The Agreement mandates countries to submit the Customs Declaration Information for mail items prior to the arrival of said items. This has contributed to greater efficiency in 'end-to-end' processing time and improved border protection through the advanced screening of packages based on this information received prior to arrival.

As at March 2021, Jamaica, through Jamaica Post, has been compliant with the terms of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) Data Sharing requirement for mail transport, along with the USA Synthetics Trafficking and Overdose Prevention (STOP) Act.

Jamaica – A Transshipment Hub

In addition, Jamaica was shortlisted by the Universal Postal Union (UPU) as one of three Caribbean countries, the other two being Barbados and Trinidad & Tobago, to assist with the efficient transshipment of mail items throughout the Caribbean to the rest of the World. The hub would facilitate the processing of all mail items destined to the Caribbean, and from the Caribbean to the rest of the world.

This process, however remains in the embryonic stage for further discussion and finalization by the UPU. The benefits of the hub include: providing additional employment opportunities for Jamaican citizens, facilitating greater efficiency in the processing and dissemination of mail items globally, and ultimately, rebrand and restore the corporate image of Jamaica Post.

TECHNOLOGY PORTFOLIO
Outlook for 2021/2022

Madam Speaker, we have several big-ticket initiatives to advance Jamaica's digital agenda for the 2021/2022 fiscal year.

Establishment of a Cybersecurity eGovernance Academy

Madam Speaker, Cabinet approved the establishment of a CyberSecurity eGovernance Academy in Jamaica by the Inter-American Development Bank and the Republic of Estonia. The academy is to assist Jamaica in improving its technology and to enable the country to harness technology similar to that of Estonia.

The establishment of the entity will be at no cost to the Government of Jamaica except for the provision of office space.

Establishment of the Office of the Information Commissioner

Madam Speaker, this Honourable House will recall the passage of The Data Protection Act, 2020 that, among other things, makes provision for the establishment of the Office of the Information Commissioner. The recruitment of the Commissioner is at an advanced stage.

This Parliament, will shortly consider the compensation for the staff of the Office of the Information Commissioner which will pave the way for the finalization of the recruitment of the rest of the staff.

Data Protection Regulations

Madam Speaker, The Data Protection Act, 2020 empowers the Minister to make regulations for the purpose of giving effect to the provisions of the Act. Additionally, The Data Protection Act, 2020 provides specific areas which require prescription by Notices and Orders either by the Minister or the Commissioner. In furtherance of the operations of The Act, the Ministry has sought the assistance of The International Telecommunications Union to

engage a consultant to assist with the preparation of drafting instructions to inform the drafting of the relevant Notices, Orders and Regulations. The consultant is scheduled to commence work on May 31, 2021 for a two-month engagement.

Transition to the ICT Authority

The transition of eGov Jamaica Limited to the new ICT Authority is in process. The full transition team is in place and transition matters relating to structure, staffing and compensation are being implemented as we speak.

This Honourable House will recall the passage of The Information Communication Technology Act 2019, which provides for the establishment of a new ICT authority. The new entity will be a consolidation of eGov Jamaica Limited and the Office of the Chief Information Officer (CIO). This will allow for greater streamlining of the ICT processes in the public sector on the path to developing a digital society.

Tablets in Schools Programme

Madam Speaker, we will continue the distribution of devices and the **Last Mile Initiative** in the 2021/2022 fiscal year.

e-Learning Jamaica Limited will continue the procurement and distribution of sixteen thousand (16,000) tablets for high school students in grades seven to nine (7-9) on the PATH Programme. This is estimated to cost approximately three point five two million US dollars (USD 3.52M).

Under the Tablets in Schools Project, e-Learning Jamaica Limited will provide eleven thousand (11,000) student tablets, four hundred and forty (440) laptops and one thousand three hundred and eighty-nine (1,389) content servers. The USF will fund the procurement of these devices at a cost of seven hundred million (JD 700M).

e-Learning Jamaica Limited will also procure a Mobile Device Management System for the tracking and remote management of tablets already deployed to students, as well as for those to be procured during the new fiscal year through an RFP Process.

Tablets for Teachers Programme

The USF will provide funding to the tune of four hundred and forty thousand Jamaican dollars (JD 440,000) to procure an additional two thousand (2,000) tablets under phase two of the Tablets for Teachers Programme.

Partnership with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information

The Own Your Own Device Project, will continue in the new fiscal year.

In addition, e-Learning Jamaica Limited provide support to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information (MOEYI) in the process of developing the Learning Management System (LMS) and School Management System (SMS).

Community Wi-Fi initiative

Madam Speaker, in keeping with the Government's National Broadband Initiative to ensure that within five years there is universal access to broadband, the Universal Service Fund has embarked on an additional initiative to increase access to the internet for all. This new initiative called "Community Wi-Fi" will see the USF outfitting at least 3 areas in each constituency with Wi-Fi. It is envisioned that approximately one hundred and eighty-nine (189) locations will be identified and outfitted over the period.

Community Access Points

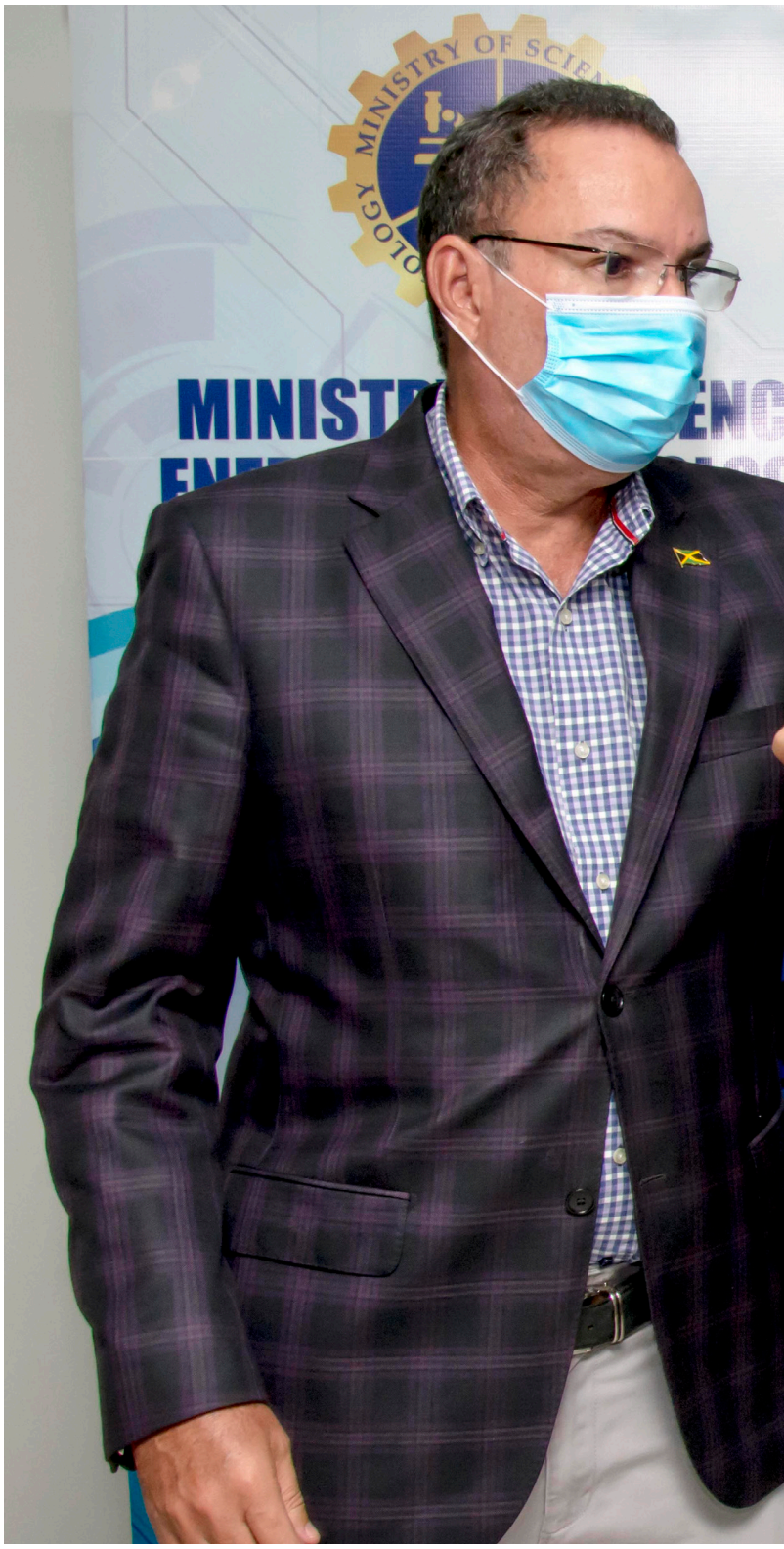
For the 2021-2022 fiscal year, the USF will be identifying Community Access Points (CAPs) that can be upgraded/expanded with Access Points outside the location to provide greater access to more persons. This conversion will also support the Community Wi-Fi project.

Connect Jamaica (Public Wi-Fi)

Under the Connect Jamaica Programme, the USF will continue to place public Wi-Fi hotspots in parish capitals and heavily trafficked town centres for use by the public. For the 2021-2022 period, the USF will add six (6) more public Wi-Fi in St. Thomas, Westmoreland, St. Elizabeth, Hanover, Trelawny and St. Catherine. This will bring to nineteen (19) the number of public Wi-Fi hotspots across the island.

Expansion of the GovNet Infrastructure

The USF will support, through funding, the build out of GovNet which is spearheaded through eGov Jamaica Limited and the National Works Agency (NWA). This build out will also see the USF being able to leverage the infrastructure for its suite of projects under Community Wi-Fi, Connect Jamaica and Community Access Points wherein these internet services will be migrated onto the government infrastructure for greater efficiency and reach in keeping with the provision of internet as a public good.




MINISTRY OF SCIENCE, ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY
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Closing

Madam Speaker:

The Ministry will bolster its capacities and capabilities across the three portfolios to support the country's repositioning strategies to recover from COVID-19 and to build a new and brighter future for the people of Jamaica.

We will scale up activities to popularize science in Jamaica and to unleash the talent, ingenuity, creativity and innovation that come so naturally to the Jamaican people.

Madam Speaker, we will implement the new institutional arrangements in the energy and technology sectors to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Ministry to execute on its mandate.

We are advancing the development of the e-mobility infrastructure because we are hungry for that two hundred eighty-four million US dollar prize (USD 284M) to help us build a brighter future for the Jamaican people.

We are moving with lightning speed to complete the **Last Mile Initiative** because every Jamaican deserves to have access to the internet and we are determined to bring back one hundred and twenty thousand (120,000) school children who have fallen out of the system. They deserve a brighter future.

Madam Speaker, last year we spent more than three billion dollars (JD 3B) to increase access to the internet and provide ICT assets to poor Jamaicans because they deserve a brighter future.

This year the investment in the expansion of internet access and ICT assets will be even more significant as we roll out the National Broadband Initiative, consolidate existing programmes and introduce new ones.

Madam Speaker, I have spent the last eight months in this Ministry:

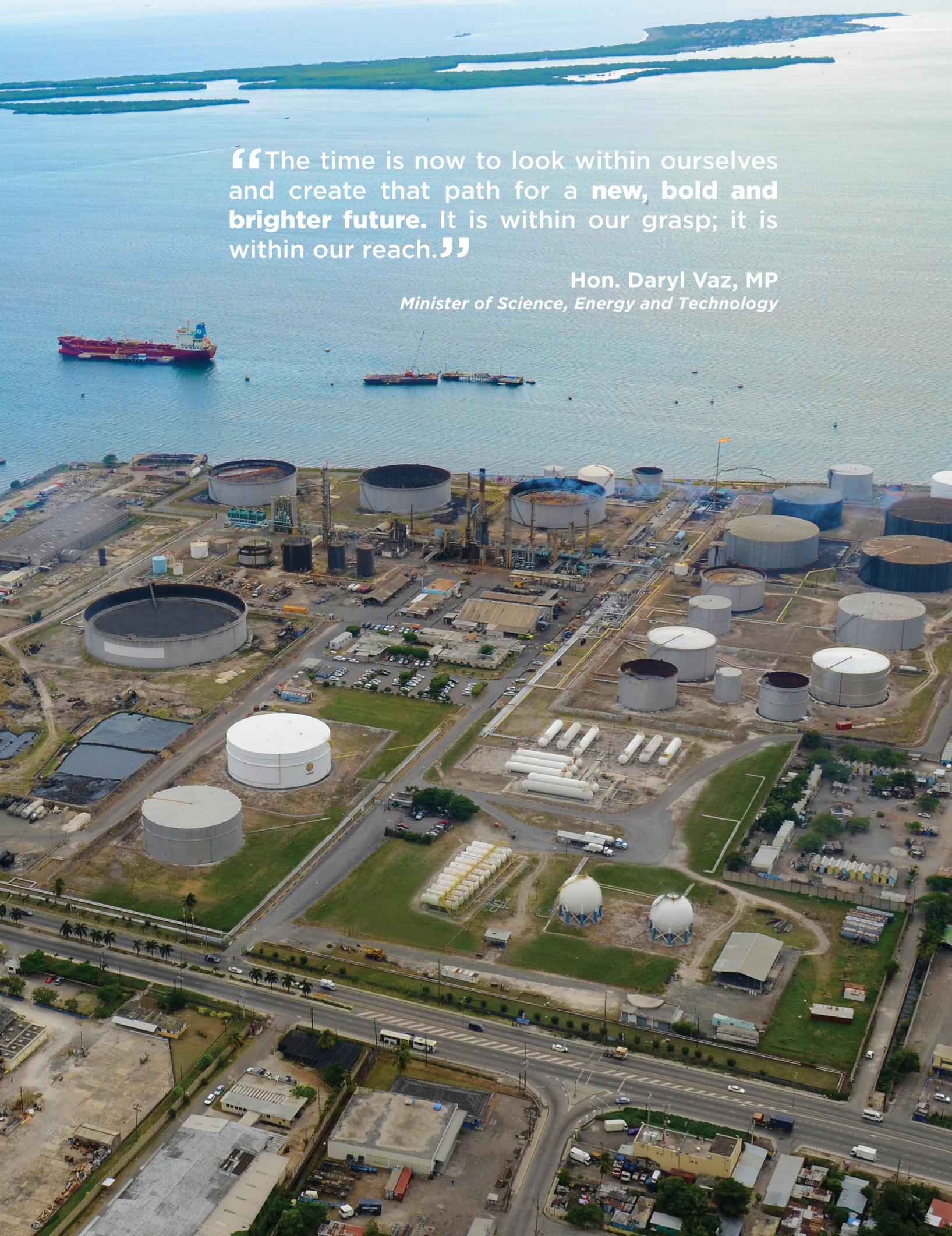
Bringing some of the best minds within and without Jamaica, to shape the landscape of the three portfolio areas.

Bringing the international community on board to support the Government's **Last Mile Initiative**.

Garnering the support of the regional and international community to strengthen the Ministry's technical capacities to respond to the country's rapidly changing needs.

We are in stride and on our way Madam Speaker to a lightning speed finish as we chart a new path to a bold and brighter future for Jamaica land we love.

I thank you, Madam Speaker.



“The time is now to look within ourselves and create that path for a **new, bold and brighter future.** It is within our grasp; it is within our reach.”

Hon. Daryl Vaz, MP

Minister of Science, Energy and Technology