



Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries

**Hon. Leslie Campbell, MP
Minister without Portfolio
Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries
Launch of the
Promoting Community-Based Climate Resilience in the
Fisheries Sector Project and Sensitization Meeting
Treasure Beach Sport Park, Treasure Beach, St. Elizabeth
Friday, July 24, 2020
11:00 a.m.**

SALUTATIONS:

- Mr. Howard Bromfield, Chairman, Chief Fisheries Instructor
- Hon. Floyd Green, Minister of State, MICAFA
- Mr. Demon Spence, Permanent Secretary, MICAFA
- Mr. Courtney Cole, CEO, National Fisheries Authority
- Ms. Selena Ledgister, Project Manager, Promoting Community-Based Climate Resilience in the Fisheries Sector Project
- Mr. I.W. Wilson, Project Development Specialist, MICAFA
- Mr. Stephen Smikle, Director, Marine and Aviation Affairs, National Fisheries Authority
- Representatives of the National Fisheries Authority of MICAFA
- Representatives of the Fisheries sector
- Stakeholders

- Members of the media
- Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning.

I am pleased to join you this morning at this launch, Promoting Community-based Climate Resilience in the Fisheries Sector Project and Sensitization Meeting.

Let me take this opportunity to recognize and, indeed commend, the invaluable contribution of our fisherfolk to nation building.

The fishing industry plays a critical role in the Jamaican economy, and is one that is particularly susceptible to the vagaries of climate change such as sea warming, sea level rise and storm surges. This could have a significantly negative impact on our estimated population of 2.7 million, 60 per cent of whom, including our fisherfolk, reside within 5 kilometres of the coast of the mainland.

Also, with climate change, it is anticipated that that there will be large-scale changes to the marine ecosystems with far-reaching consequences for our fishers and other associated livelihood activities.

We therefore want to thank the World Bank for this grant of US\$4.875 million, which will go towards The Promoting Community-based Climate Resilience in the Fisheries Sector Project to be executed over a 5-year period by the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries (MICAF), through the National Fisheries Authority.

This project aims at enhancing community-based climate resilience among targeted fishing and fish farming communities of Jamaica and against this background, we see it as a boost to the industry. In fact, it will certainly strengthen the fisheries policy and regulatory framework for climate-resilient fisheries and aquaculture management as well as build capacity to promote sustainable fisheries management.

Ladies and gentlemen, we must establish effective measures to protect our marine and coastal ecosystems and build resilience to climate change in the sector as an important input in sustaining the country's economic growth and rural livelihoods.

I believe this project will be key to accomplishing this objective in the most vulnerable fishing communities in the country. I understand that part of this project will include implementation of surveys. I urge you all to participate fully in this exercise so that the conclusions derived from the surveys will have maximum impact on the sustainability of our fisheries industry.

We have to look at community-based development to ensure that our fishing and aquaculture communities become more resilient to the menacing realities of climate change.

As Government, we are committed to providing the fishing industry with the necessary support to ensure its sustainability. We recognize the critical and important role being played by the fishing industry in creating a livelihood for fishers throughout the country, and the unlimited potential it possesses to significantly contribute to the development of the national economy.

Ladies and gentlemen, many of us are aware that fishing provides employment for a vast number of Jamaicans, especially in coastal communities such as here in Treasure Beach. But what many people may not know is that the vast majority of the 24,366 registered fishers are small-scale, artisanal fishers, like you, operating from open canoes.

According to the World Bank, approximately 90% of Jamaica's Gross Domestic Product is generated in coastal areas with both fisheries and tourism being a major source of the country's revenue.

Over the past two years, the fisheries sector contributed US\$79 million to the country's gross domestic product, with exports totalling over 1,000 metric tonnes, valued at approximately US\$12 million.

MICAF continues to play an important role in positioning our fisheries sector to further fuel growth in the economy.

The Government is also committed to putting in place the legislative framework, which includes the promulgation of the new Fisheries Act in December 2018 and the development of the Fisheries Authority that will assist with managing the sector and aligning it to global standards.

Ladies and gentlemen, the overarching aim of the Ministry is to create an enabling environment to support the growth in capture fisheries and aquaculture through improved competitiveness locally and globally, and diversification along the value chain.

So as we move towards a more sustainable and vibrant fishing industry, we want to also look at areas that can be leveraged for the advancement of the

sector. We are committed to ending poverty in Jamaica and providing prosperity for all by supporting communities most vulnerable to climate change.

The Government is pushing for increased investment in aquaculture and mariculture and other aspects of the blue economy.

We recognise that the potential for wealth creation from the sustainable use of our oceans and seas is vast. Jamaica's maritime space is approximately 274,000 square kilometres, about 25 times the size of mainland Jamaica. In addition, there is a vast ocean space that is not under the jurisdiction of any country - the so-called High Seas or Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) that must be tapped into.

Jamaica cannot afford to treat this opportunity with scant regard. Leveraging our Blue Economy is of paramount importance.

We have been working assiduously to put the necessary legislative and institutional frameworks in place in order to tap into this potential multi-million dollar industry.

Ladies and gentlemen, since April of this year there has been a decline in the fisheries sector as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, with fish production moving from 1,098.39 metric tonnes in March to 730.39 metric tonnes in April. This has adversely affected the livelihoods of fishers, fish farmers and their dependents.

In light of this, the Ministry has put in place a COVID-19 Strategic Intervention for the fisheries industry with an allocation of J\$67 million to

the sector mainly as a production incentive for the provision of fingerlings, fish feed, and fishing equipment.

This also includes procurement and installation of 10 refrigerated containers (reefers) at major fisheries facilities across the country.

In addition, the NFA will provide seed funding valued at J\$15 million for financing new fisheries development projects. These projects will facilitate the diversification of fisheries production, including the introduction of value-added fisheries products and services, targeting the export markets and, where possible, local substitution of imported fish product.

The proposed intervention measures, although small, will greatly assist in recuperative efforts and boost economic activity for the sector.

Let me take this opportunity to urge our fisherfolk to partner with the authorities in preserving the environment by adhering to the guidelines set out by the Government. We cannot afford to be over-fishing, especially as our fish stock represents your livelihood and sustenance for your families.

In light of this, we have to redouble our efforts to engage fishers and conduct enforcement activities to stop irresponsible and unsustainable fishing practices in the industry. We must get to the point of a modern and coordinated fishing industry that will help us all achieve our aspirations for wealth creation and economic growth.

I encourage you to practice sustainable fishing to preserve our fish stock for a long time to come.

Once again, on behalf of the Ministry I must extend my appreciation to the World Bank. We believe in partnership and we thank you for your continued assistance and partnership over the years.

I hope that this project will be a great success as it can only redound to the betterment of a viable fishing industry for the country. .