

NATIONAL PLANNING SUMMIT

A GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING (GDP) ALLIANCE

In a bold and collaborative move, the Government and the Private Sector are taking a "fresh new" approach to driving the implementation of the 2007 National Planning Summit (NPS) initiatives in an effort to spur economic growth and development. Building on the partnership and work already being carried out as a result of the National Planning Summit in November 2007, the Government has moved to establish Expert Teams as a part of the monitoring framework in order to support the NPS Monitoring Board's effort to drive the successful implementation and monitoring of the priority initiatives identified at the Summit. To date six (6) such

Teams are operational and draw upon the knowledge and expertise of some of leaders and senior persons from both private and public sector.

This framework is supported by the National Planning Summit Programme Management Office (PMO) at the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). The NPS/PMO provides programme management and technical assistance where necessary to the Teams and the various initiatives/projects that are being implemented by the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of the public sector. The work of the Teams will help to shape the Government's plans and priorities going forward.

At the recently convened 2009 General Assembly of the NPS Monitoring Board and Expert Teams, the Honourable Prime Minister called on all present to "think outside of the box" and be innovative in identifying solutions to today's challenges. He noted that the 2007 Summit had been an opportunity for new thinking, resolve, commitment and engagement with the private sector;

urged the Assembly to remain committed to the principles agreed during the Summit; and emphasised that the public-private sector dialogue continues to be imperative. He reaffirmed the Government's determination and willingness to take whatever steps were necessary to lead the country successfully into the future.

Chairman of the Monitoring Board, the Honourable Karl Samuda, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce, indicated that the Initiative, which started in 2007, has borne fruit. "It is working and many persons

have dedicated a significant amount of their time in working to implement the goals of the



2009 General Assembly of the National Planning Summit Expert Teams

Summit." He reiterated the need for the Teams to focus on the prioritisation of those areas of greatest concern, which if addressed, would lead to national development; and to continue their work as final success would

(Continued on Page 2)

National Planning Summit Special Projects

Under the NPS, there are some special large-scale investment projects which were identified and recommended as the most attractive and immediate opportunities for generating jobs and economic stimulation in the country. The ones currently being implemented are listed below:

- ⇒ **International Financial Services Center (IFC)**
- * **Lead Entity: Ministry of Finance & Public Service**
- ⇒ **Caymanas Economic Free Zone (CEFZ)**
- * **Lead Entity: Ministry of Industry, Investment & Commerce**
- ⇒ **ICT Park in Portmore**
- * **Lead Entity: Ministry of Industry, Investment & Commerce**

More on these projects in upcoming issues

The 411 Inside this issue:

Chairman's Commentary	2
Private Sector Point-of-View	2
NPS Feature Presentations	3

Upcoming Events of Interest:

- JTI's Opportunities Jamaica '09, March 26, 2009
- EPA Development Programme Workshop, March 2009
- OPM/Planning & Development Division Roundtable, April 2009

Jamaica
Tomorrow

imagine

NATIONAL PLANNING SUMMIT PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT OFFICE

...A “GDP” Alliance

ultimately hinge on continued willingness to work on the critical issues identified.

The Assembly, which was organised by the PMO and held with the Honourable Prime Minister on January 7, 2009; had as its key objective the evaluation and assessment of the Teams' progress to date and to ensure the alignment of the work of these Teams with the national framework and priorities.

Mr. Chris Zacca, President of the Private Sector Organization of Jamaica (PSOJ), in addressing the meeting on behalf of the private sector partners, emphasized the benefits of the partnership approach which has increased the optimism of the



“Development Dialogue” at its Best.

private sector in the process. “The NPS is working to address the major issues and problems being faced by Jamaica today. The work has started and there is real cooperation taking place. We believe that the Government is committed to advancing the issues.”

Chaired by key Ministers and private sector leaders the Teams fall under several planning theme areas of the 2007 Summit including: i) Tax Reform/Balancing the Budget/Debt Reduction: Minister Don Wehby; ii) Education and Training: Minister Andrew Holness; iii) Governance and Reducing Bureaucracy: Minister Dwight Nelson; iv) Land Titling Reform and v) Development Approvals Process: Minister Daryl Vaz; and vi) ICT/Job Creations: Mr. Mark Myers, Jamaica Chamber of Commerce. The Investment Promotion and Crime and Violence Teams among others will become operational this quarter.

Chairman’s Commentary

Minister Karl Samuda, Chairman /NPS Monitoring Board

The National Planning Summit held in November 2007 played an important role in providing a context for intensified public-private dialogue. The meeting ended with the consensus that the success of the initiatives identified would be a priority for both public and private sector leaders.

Since that meeting much has been accomplished, aspects of which have been highlighted in this newsletter. In keeping with the importance placed by the Government, dedicated resources have been provided for the establishment of the Programme Management Office in the Office of the Prime Minister to drive and monitor the implementation of

the agreed initiatives. In addition, key ministers have joined with private sector leaders to lead the development and implementation of the priority initiatives through expert teams. We are pleased also of welcoming trade union representation in the partnership. The work of the teams is helping to

inform government’s policy and to shape our priorities for the next financial year.

Emphasis has also been placed on developing special projects geared towards future job creation opportunities. The planning for the Caymanas Economic Zone and the International Financial Services Centre are two

such projects, which have the potential to generate significant investment thereby transforming the economy.

We are aware that you are eager to keep abreast of the status of the implementation of the initiatives and this Newsletter is the first of several new communications strategies aimed at updating stakeholders about the progress being made.

There is still much work to be done and we are committed to building on the progress that has already been made. We look forward to your continued partnership in this process as we seek to build a better future for all Jamaicans.

“The work of the teams is helping to inform government’s policy ...”

Private Sector Point of View

Christopher Zacca, President/PSOJ

The National Planning Summit had its genesis in November 2007 when The Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica (PSOJ) initiated and organised a weekend of high level discussions among the key stakeholders responsible for Jamaica’s growth and development in the public and private sectors. It was 16 months ago that the focussed discussions, research, strategizing and careful planning led to the creation of a Monitoring Board and, later, Expert Teams devoted to addressing seven areas of focus that would help to jumpstart the economic recovery process: Job Creation & Investment Promotion, Balancing The Budget/Debt Reduction, Tax Reform, Land Titling Reform, Crime & Violence,

Education and Training, Governance & Reducing Bureaucracy.

We salute the members of the Government, in particular the Prime Minister the Honourable Bruce Golding, members of his Cabinet, as well as public sector officials who have worked with the members of the private sector team as partners in this process. Jamaica is our country ...where we have chosen to live, operate our businesses, work and raise our children. It is therefore imperative that we pool our expertise, experience and resources in an effort to achieve the level of national development for which we all yearn.

“..committing our energies and resources to continue this important work...”

As President of the PSOJ, I join with my colleagues in committing our energies and resources to continue this important work with the public sector to achieve these key national objectives that, we believe, will drive our nation’s economic growth.

“NPS Feature Presentations”

New Plans afoot for the ICT Sector

Following on the private-public dialogue that started at the NPS, it was decided that the initial focus for job creation activities would be within the ICT sector. The ICT/Job Creation Expert Team, headed by Mark Myers, the immediate past President of the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce, is pursuing the strategic expansion and diversification of the sector through the further development of the Business Processing Outsourcing (BPO) industry.



The Team has developed a draft strategy paper which was presented at the NPS General Assembly and is to be finalized and submitted to Cabinet for approval in April 2009. Private sector consultations regarding ICT infrastructural development, especially as it pertains to the development of an ICT Park on the basis of a public-private sector partnership are ongoing. Collaborated with HEART/NTA on the development of BPO specific training programmes for the sector is being pursued and discussions are ongoing with the Ministries of Justice and National Security regarding the expedited passage of the Cyber Crime Bill (final draft to be completed March 2009) and the revision of the Proceeds of Crime Act. In order to guide the process, the Team has also commissioned a market assessment (Completion date March 31, 2009) that will provide a benchmark for Jamaica in relation to its main competitors in the key target niche service areas.

The ICT sector is globally one of the faster growing productive areas and Jamaica's competitive advantages (proximity to USA; trainable/customer oriented workforce; telecoms infrastructure) makes it the leading BPO location in the English-speaking Caribbean, capable of providing 9,000 new jobs over a 4-year period; and significant increases in government revenues.

Education Transformed

Several new initiatives are on-track to improve the delivery of education, have been outlined by the Minister of Education, Andrew Holness, chair of the NPS Education & Training Expert Team, which includes Milton Samuda (President/JCC), Mark McKenzie (PSOJ) and several Ministry personnel.

The Team's focus is on the establishment of a National Education Inspectorate (NEI), a National Education Trust (NET) and a National Parenting Support Commission (NPSC).

The NEI is expected to bring greater accountability to the education system by providing rigorous, independent evaluation of the standards and quality of delivery in education institutions. Already established as a project within the Ministry, a Chief Inspector, Mrs. Elaine Foster-Allen, is in place and the initial scoping of inspection programmes completed. The appointment of senior staff is to be completed by April 2009 and assessments of schools will begin in September 2009.

The NPSC Bill has been drafted by the Office of the Chief Parliamentary Council and the policy is at the White Paper stage. This is key as it will serve to advance the Ministry's thrust to re-emphasize our children as "Priority One" for parents and the Nation as a whole.

Cabinet has approved the establishment of the NET, which will be a secure source for on-going capital investment for infrastructure development in education. Part of the Trust's functions will be to manage a National Education Endowment Fund. It will also be the focal point through which the Ministry interfaces with the Diaspora and international organizations to raise donations. Also, in keeping with the mandate of the NPS, public/private partnerships are being targeted for the construction and maintenance of schools.



Tax Reform:

Simple, Equitable and Competitive

The Matalon Report of 2004 and several other reports have highlighted the need for comprehensive tax reform in Jamaica. All these studies have argued that Jamaica needs a tax system that is simple, equitable and competitive. The Tax Reform/Balancing the Budget/Debt Reduction Expert Team—headed by Senator Don Wehby—has focused significant attention on this area. Brian Denning (PWC) serves as the Tax Reform Lead, and he is joined by representatives from the private sector, academia, and the government.

The Team does not intend to re-invent the wheel as there is already widespread acceptance of the findings and recommendations of the Matalon Report and there is general consensus that there is a need for extensive tax reforms. In view of this, the Tax Team has reviewed existing studies and is currently working to finalize a blueprint for tax reform in Jamaica that provides both short-term and long-term strategies to implement tax changes.



Senator Wehby has noted that the recommendations of the NPS Tax Team will inform the 2009/2010 budget to be tabled in Parliament in April. The work of the Tax Reform Team underscores the importance of the public-private dialogue in helping to shape the policies of the government and highlights the continued relevance of the NPS initiatives agreed to in November 2007.

(In our Next Issue we will be featuring the significant and ongoing work of three (3) other NPS Expert Teams and/or Special Project Teams)



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Planning Today for Jamaica Tomorrow!

*A Branch of the Planning &
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THE MONITORING BOARD

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We are on the Worldwide Web!
www.nationalplanningsummitja.org

Coming Soon!!!

The NPS Programme Management Office (PMO)

The NPS Programme Management Office (PMO) is responsible for reinforcing and supporting the monitoring framework which provides leadership and technical guidance to the overall NPS process. Our role is one of coordinating and providing administrative and technical assistance to ensure the successful implementation of the strategic initiatives identified at the 2007 Summit; and rationalizing their implementation in the Public Sector and across Ministries.

Our work with the Monitoring Board - which is charged with driving the entire NPS imple-

mentation process, the seven (7) technical Expert Teams and three (3) Special Projects Teams, has proven to be both challenging and fruitful.

In addition to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the PMO has a dedicated staff complement of four that includes a Programme Director, two (2) Coordinators and an Administrative Officer. We also draw on additional technical expertise from the Planning & Development Division of OPM.

Our aim is to be a dynamic force behind the successful

implementation and achievement of the NPS developmental objectives; to provide a central point for communication, discussion and coordination between key stakeholders; and to lead the process of national dialogue around the NPS planning themes and key initiatives identified.

To this end we are focused on continuing to move the process forward, to reinforcing the trust among the partners and keeping the lines of communication open. By fostering communication we hope to make NPS the recognized voice of Private-Public Dialogue on the various issues related to the NPS planning themes.

*"...the recognized voice of
Public-Private Dialogue"*

Your "2 Cents" Worth

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Write in or send us an email and tell us what "GDP" issues are important to you.

- ⇒ What problems are you experiencing in doing business in Jamaica today?
- ⇒ What opportunities can Jamaicans take advantage of in these challenging times?
- ⇒ What do Jamaicans need to know in order to Survive 2009?
- ⇒ What should be the theme of the next National Planning Summit?

Partners in Dialogue

Useful Link-ups!!

- www.mic.gov.jm
- www.opm.gov.jm
- www.mof.gov.jm
- www.psoj.org
- www.jamaicachamber.org.jm
- www.moeyc.gov.jm
- www.pioj.gov.jm
- www.jamaicatradeandinvest.org
- www.takingresponsibility.org

Right click on the link and select "open Hyperlink" to connect to webpage

imagine Our Future

IMAGINE THIS!

Here's what to look out for in our Next Issue:

- ⇒ Clearing the Bottlenecks
- ⇒ Tackling Crime & Violence
- ⇒ The Benefits of Land Titling
- ⇒ and More.....