

Chairman's Statement

JSIF's 18th Annual General Meeting

In 2003, the Government of Jamaica launched Vision 2030 which is geared towards practical outcomes that will provide better place for Jamaicans to live, work and raise families. JSIF continues to be guided by Vision 2030 and has focused on projects designed to contribute to achieving those goals. In February 2014 a new Board of Directors was appointed. I welcome our eight new Directors who will use their expertise and collective experience in guiding the JSIF policies towards the growth and development of Jamaica and congratulate and thank the previous Board of Directors for their stewardship role in JSIF's achievement of the Vision 2030 goals to date. Since its inception JSIF has contributed to meeting the *Vision 2030: Goal 1: Jamaicans are empowered to achieve their fullest potential*. Up to December 2013 JSIF has supported education by investing in construction, rehabilitation and equipping of 544 schools, 277 of which are early childhood facilities.

Capacity building and training are major complementary areas of focus. The JSIF has financed such activities as skills training among school leavers; an undertaking through the World Bank funded Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI). The urban areas were similarly assisted by social intervention programmes in

entrepreneurship, remedial education, vocational and tertiary scholarships, and employment internship and personal development techniques under the European Union supported Poverty Reduction Programme (PRP). The Inner City Basic Services for the Poor Project which ended in 2013 also offered education related designed for children in urban schools through its Youth Education & Recreation (YER) programme. Persons who left the formal system were also assisted under the Alternative Livelihoods & Skills Development (ALSD) component.

In the past year, JSIF partnered with the Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA) to provide Agro Business Technical Assistance training for those farmers benefiting from sub projects financed by the Caribbean Development Bank funded Community Investment Project.

With a number of the communities that JSIF works in being considered “hot spots” by the Ministry of National Security and so the Fund has integrated violence prevention components in some of the sub projects which will assist the residents in meeting *Vision 2030: Goal 2: The Jamaican society is secure, cohesive and just*. The JSIF implemented European Union funded Poverty Reduction Programme III (PRP III) is aligned to the Community Renewal Programme (CRP) to improve access by residents of volatile communities to basic Socio-economic infrastructure and services.

As part of the GOJ’s thrust to improve agriculture and rural development the JSIF is implementing the Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) to provide

funding to rural groups engaged in building micro enterprise in agriculture and community tourism. The REDI project through it's targeted within rural communities has been successful in both driving the rural economy and creating much needed employment. This project will help Jamaica toward meeting *Vision 2030: Goal 3: Jamaica's economy is prosperous.*

In the area of tourism, the government embarked on a drive to integrate community tourism in the local tourism product offering and consequently, REDI supported the development of the Green Paper on Community-Based Tourism Policy that was tabled in Parliament in 2013.

Environmental sustainability is a national priority and is at the core of the JSIF operations. JSIF's Environmental Management System (EMS) has been certified to ISO 14001 standards since January 2009. JSIF's commitment to environmental sustainability is concomitant with its mandate for sustainable development in the Jamaican society and all projects are designed to protect the environment, human health, and minimize operational cost. These actions should have a trickle-down effect in the communities and through the knowledge gained more citizens will have the tools to support *Vision 2030: Goal 4: Jamaica has a healthy natural environment.*

The JSIF's commitment is aligned with the Government's thrust towards the establishment of strategies to drive rural development inclusive of creating economic opportunity. JSIF is currently working with other agencies on the Rural Task Force piloted by the Prime Minister to formulate a Sustainable Rural Development Strategy for the Cabinet's consideration and approval within the 2014/2015 financial year.

Currently, the organisation is working to advance and support industries in agriculture, by rehabilitating agricultural feeder roads, and improving the capabilities of farmers by introducing them to new farming techniques in the form of greenhouse farming and drip irrigation technology. JSIF will also improve community tourism through providing institutional training; infrastructure and equipment that will enable persons to provide services which will meet the needs and expectations of the local and overseas visitors.

In its 18th year, JSIF continues to strive to contribute to meeting national development goals, seeking earnestly to make Jamaica the place to work, live and raise families. The legacy inherent in work done through JSIF, to date, is one which has indeed created a strong foundation on which communities will continue to experience development. On behalf of the Board of the Directors, I thank our staff, our clients, our donors, our partners and supporters for a year in which we showed our resilience while maintaining our integrity and accountability.