

# Chairman's Statement

## Introduction



Wesley Hughes, CD, PhD

The Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF), celebrating its tenth (10th) anniversary, was established as a project under the Government of Jamaica's National Poverty Eradication Programme (NPEP). Under the NPEP, the JSIF's main aim is the provision of proper physical and social infrastructure to promote sustainable development and build social capital. While the goal remains the same, the Fund's evolution has been tremendous as the life span of the JSIF grew from the initial four years.

Poverty reduction and its eventual eradication is an almost universal objective, as is evidenced by the priority given in the Millennium Development Goals. Of the eight goals enunciated by the United Nations General Assembly in 2000, the first addresses the need to improve human welfare and halve levels of extreme poverty by 2015.



Prime Minister, the Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller, ON, and JSIF's Managing Director, Mrs. Scarlett Gillings, CD, discussing the blueprints for the construction of the Care Bear Basic School. Looking on are (left) KSA Engineering Consultants Financial Controller/Project Coordinator, Mr. Neville Williams, who is responsible for the construction of the new school and (right) Principal, Ms. Cynthia Roche.

Jamaica has developed a set of consistent strategies to achieve this aim through the coordinated efforts of the many government

agencies, non-governmental organisations as well as the private sector. Despite many challenges, there have been significant successes. The success measured in broad terms are demonstrated in the Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions 2004 which states that Jamaica's poverty levels have been reduced from 24.4% in 1993 to 16.9% in 2004.

## Achievements

The Jamaica Social Investment Fund has been successful in meeting assigned targets and implementing projects in a non-partisan and transparent manner over the years. For this reason the organization has retained its credibility along with a high degree of public acceptance.

This achievement is widely perceived at the local, national and international levels and has resulted in tangible returns. Additional grants and loans have been made available to the organization by other governments and international organisations, thereby allowing the Fund to further assist Jamaica's most underserved communities.

As at March 2006, the JSIF has approved eight hundred and sixty two (862) projects and of this number, six hundred and fourteen (614) have been completed. Of the approved projects, 383 or 44.43% are school projects ranging from rehabilitation to fencing, equipping and construction.

This is significant as education is one of the key strategies of the NPEP to achieve the objective of poverty alleviation. Furthermore, JSIF's direct intervention in the education sector is in keeping with Government's renewed thrust for the early childhood education sector. As a result, 24.48% of the JSIF's budget has been committed for this purpose.

Another major achievement for the JSIF this year was its designation by the Government of Jamaica as the agency to carry out the procurement activities related to the establishment of the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Initiative (CCRRI) facility.

*Minister of Finance and Planning, Dr. the Hon. Omar Davies and Counsellor of Political Science and Public Affairs at the Japanese Embassy, Katsumi Maruoka, signing the Policy and Human Resource Development grant agreement for the establishment of the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Initiative (CCRII) facility.*



The CCRII is aimed at assisting CARICOM countries to gain access to affordable and effective disaster risk financing arrangements by providing:

- An efficient risk transfer mechanism through parametric instruments;
- Optimal pricing from reinsurers through risk pooling and economies of scale (that is a larger and better diversified portfolio);
- Shared administrative and operational costs.

Emboldened with this trust and responsibility, the Jamaica Social Investment Fund has managed to widen its scope of operation by adopting new perspectives and strategies to further assist the nation's underserved. One key element of these strategies is ensuring that communities play a greater role in the implementation of their projects.

To this end, in 2005 JSIF expanded the Community Driven Development modality of project implementation. With this approach, the success of projects is greater as communities are involved in all aspects of the process. In addition, they contribute their sweat equity and this results in them showing ownership of

*Former Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. P.J. Patterson, ON, PC, QC receiving a warm welcome from students of the Holly Hill Primary School, one of four projects that were handed over in the parish of Westmoreland to launch activities in JSIF's 10th year Anniversary celebrations.*



the project. However, this does not mean that the JSIF has abandoned its traditional method of project implementation where a contractor is hired to carry out the project.

## Looking towards the future

The Jamaica Social Investment Fund will soon commence the implementation of the innovative Inner City Basic Services Project (ICBSP).

This project diverges from our traditional method where the project implementation process has been on a demand driven basis. The new approach will use a community based contracting method (where the community is the primary implementer of the project). However, contractors will be hired to carry out some aspects of the project. The ICBSP is a US\$32.3 million undertaking funded by a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and Government of Jamaica counterpart resources. Its aim is to improve the quality of life for residents of twelve inner city communities in the parishes of Kingston & St. Andrew, Clarendon, St. James and St. Catherine.

The ICBSP will target four key areas - Basic Infrastructure, Crime and Violence Prevention, Access to Micro-Finance and Tenure Regularization. Through the utilization of these broad categories, the selected communities will benefit from improved basic infrastructure, access to financial services, enhancement of public safety, and improved community capacity to participate effectively in the community development process.

As a means of ensuring the success and sustainability of the ICBSP interventions, Memoranda of Understanding have been signed with key service providers such as the National Water Commission, the National Solid Waste Management Authority,

the Jamaica Public Service Company Limited, the Rural Electrification Programme and the relevant Parish Councils.

## Conclusion

Partnerships play an important role in ensuring the success of projects undertaken by the Jamaica Social Investment Fund. These partnerships start from the benefiting communities and run the gamut of community based organisations, non-governmental organisations, the private sector and other state agencies. The commonality that governs these partnerships is the strong desire to improve the social and physical infrastructure of Jamaica's underserved communities.

An example of this type of partnership is the Poverty Reduction Programme (PRP), which is a project of the European Union and the Government of Jamaica.

Through the PRP, a 6 million Euro grant was made available to improve living conditions in deprived communities by improving access to quality basic infrastructure and services, especially in the field of sanitation, water and health.

This funding has resulted in the implementation of 28 projects benefiting over 34,000 persons. Generally, it is accepted that factors like economic growth and greater equity in opportunities are major contributors to poverty alleviation.



*JSIF's Managing Director Mrs. Scarlette Gillings, CD hands over a signed copy of the Memorandum of Understanding between the JSIF and the National Water Commission to (ICBSP partner) NWC President, Mr. E.G. Hunter.*



*Head of the European Delegation Mr. Gerd Jarchow, cutting the ribbon to officially hand over the Gladys Sherriff Basic School. Looking on are JSIF's Internal Auditor Mrs. Carol Perry and students of the early childhood institution.*

While their effects are not always certain or timely, the projects offered through the Jamaica Social Investment Fund provide tangible returns.

Hence, policies and programmes like the JSIF, which have been established by government to target the underserved, require wide commitment. It is in this regard that I thank the Board of Directors, Management and staff of the JSIF, as well as our many partners for contributing to the success of the Fund.

I look forward to our continued partnership as we embrace the goal of investing for community development in the coming period.

Wesley Hughes, CD, PhD  
Chairman

October 4th, 2006