



REMARKS

BY

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AT THE

JAMAICA COMMUNITY ACCESS POINT NETWORK  
CONFERENCE

*“IGNITING AND SUSTAINING COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY”*

AT

THE JAMAICA CONFERENCE CENTRE,

**KINGSTON**

**WEDNESDAY MARCH 12, 2008**

Salutations:

- Dr. Jean Dixon – Chairman
- Hon. Clive Mullings – Minister of Energy, Mining and Telecommunications
- Hon. Olivia Grange – Minister of Information, Culture, Youth & Sports
- Mr. Isidro Fernandez-Aballi – Advisor for Communication and Information in the Caribbean, UNESCO
- Mrs. Elizabeth Terry – Director of Project & Partnership, HEART/NTA & Chair of ICT4D Jamaica
- Mr. Richard Gordon – Project Manager, ICT Project the Jamaican Experience
- My Colleague Stakeholders
- Other distinguished guests
- The Media

Good morning:

It gives me great honour and pleasure to address this conference today on Jamaica's Community Access Point Network, especially as it relates to the theme ***“Igniting and Sustaining Community Development in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”***.

Ladies and gentlemen, there are two realities facing us when we speak about sustainable community development and the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

- Firstly, that the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is a globalized reality that impacts every national economy regardless of political or economic systems.

- And Secondly that the most significant impacts of the global economy are not at the national or even the regional level. The greatest impacts will be local. Or "Global Localization" as stated by Akito Marito, the founder of Sony.

With this in mind, it is essential that we recognize the importance of communities in effecting and initiating change as well as promoting sustainable development in this technologically driven age.

When the Jamaica Social Investment Fund was established in 1996 under the National Poverty Eradication Programme, its mandate was, and continues to be, assisting low-income neighbourhoods in improving their social and

economic infrastructure. This was to be done in manner that ensured the utilization of cutting edge technology in the delivery of social infrastructure projects in an effective and efficient manner.

As a result, we have over 10 years of experience in all parishes delivering projects to communities in the areas of:

- Early Childhood Education
- Farm Feeder Roads
- Health Centres

And other social infrastructure investments aimed at improving the wellbeing of our most at risk populations, the poor.

This conference on Community Access Point Networks is a golden opportunity. This is embodied primarily in the information access that will be provided at the local levels and the use of different technologies to empower communities in their quest to enhance and build their own capacity.

This is in keeping with the spirit of the National Poverty Eradication Programme and the mandate of JSIF in general, as it is our core value that development can only take place if individual communities are empowered and given the appropriate tools to marshal their own development.

Furthermore, we must all recognize that the overall economy is becoming more and more based on

services and information; hence, communities that are not attached to the information highway will be left behind in the new economic paradigm. It is therefore our obligation to prepare our people for the realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

We at the JSIF rely tremendously on our own Management Information System (MIS), which provides critical support for the entire organization. This is a direct result of a strategic decision to ensure the use of technology in the delivery of projects to our target population; however, our commitment to technology is seen in a broader context as development must always be sustainable.

As such we have embarked on a path to ISO 14001 certification. Through this process we will develop an Environmental Management System that will monitor, measure, and manage the positive and negative environmental impacts of our operations. This is to ensure that the remedies, which we provide, are truly rooted in the principles of sustainable development and Good Governance.

Coupled with this effort by the Ministry of Energy, Mining and Telecommunications it is our belief that we will provide to these communities a package of Holistic Development that will ensure that our strategies and programmes will serve generations to come.

We at the JSIF commend the various Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Community Development Committees (CDCs), who have, in their own way, started the process of transformation. With the successful implementation of the CAP, the stage will be now set for a quantum leap in the role of these organizations in the developmental process.

With 21st century support from local governments, nonprofit institutions, and the private sector, these organizations can step up to a new level of performance, bringing vitality back to urban and rural neighborhoods.

I therefore take this opportunity to commend the Ministry of Energy, Mining and Telecommunications for taking this progressive step in the quest for igniting sustainable community development and wish you all the best for the rest of your conference.

Thank you