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REMARKS

BY

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Jamaica Social Investment Fund

at the

The St Elizabeth Homecoming Foundation Ltd.,

Official launch of the parish website for St Elizabeth

Everglades Conference Centre

Parrottee, Black River

Thursday, January 19, 2012

11:00 a.m.

Salutations:

- Mr. Hugh Buchanan Member of Parliament South West
 , St. Elizabeth
- His Worship Councillor Jeremy Palmer Mayor of Black
 River
- Hon Wilfred Nembhard Custos Rotulorum St. Elizabeth
- Professor Hopeton Dunn Director, Telecommunication
 Policy and Management Programme
- Mrs. Donna Parchment-Brown – Chair, St. Elizabeth
 Homecoming Foundation
- Mr. Kenrick Jackson – Chairman, Homecoming Week
 Celebration Committee
- The Media
- Other Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Afternoon:

On behalf of the Board, Management and Staff of the Jamaica Social Investment Fund, we wish to congratulate the St. Elizabeth Homecoming Foundation on the launch of the St. Elizabeth Website. (www.visitstelizabeth.com.jm/)

The website is a major component of the Foundation's tourism marketing plan to showcase the varied and unique treasures of St. Elizabeth, or as the Foundation would say, the Best of St. Bess!

This project began officially with the signing of the Financing Agreement in October of 2010 at the exotic Riverside Dock. On that occasion the vision and objectives of the project to be funded by JSIF to

Develop a Tourism Marketing Strategy for St. Elizabeth by the St. Elizabeth Homecoming Foundation was outlined. The objectives as stated then were JSIF would provide grant funding of JA\$4.925 million with the Foundation providing community contribution of JA\$2.58 million. The funds would be used to (1) develop an interactive website highlighting accommodation, attractions, heritage sites and places of interest; (2) provide training to at least 20 persons in customer service and marketing leading to certification from TPDCo for community tourism players in the Parish; (3) purchase of equipment to aide administration of the Foundation.

Today, the JSIF Board, Management and Staff are indeed quite pleased that we can say objectives achieved. We are delighted that our partnership and funding has aided the securing of the necessary skill-sets needed to provide among other things the research and legal advice on St. Elizabeth and the development of a website and database to serve as a strategic marketing tool for the parish. The website will allow, for example persons locally and internationally to obtain information on tourism accommodations, culture, history, flora, fauna, nature, geography, attractions, places of interest and industries in the parish. Of course we acknowledge that a website is a 'live' product and as such the Foundation is expected to keep populating the website with new information. Therefore, for persons

that have tourism offerings or know of interesting and historical sites that are not now on the website I would encourage you to contact the Foundation and share your information.

This subproject is one of twenty-eight that REDI has funded to-date. REDI provides assistance to small and micro groups engaged in agriculture and community tourism. The grant fund can also be used to strengthen national organizations to enhance their capacity so that they in turn can assist rural enterprises.

In closing, I want to reiterate that the JSIF is delighted with this investment and believes that it can be a

model for other parishes to promote and market their community tourism products and services. We live in an internet age and if we do not keep abreast and utilize the technology we will be left behind. However, every business may not be able to or want to have their own website and therefore central portals such as the www.visitstelizabeth.com offers a necessary opportunity to these enterprises to still have a presence on the worldwide web without the expense of establishing an individual site.

Ladies and gentlemen, we will continue to monitor the project and provide assistance to the Foundation as they seek to promote the Best of St. Bess!

Thank You.