

REDI – New Initiative for Rural Economic Development Launched

The Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF) has launched a series of sensitization and information workshops for a new project entitled the Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI), to be implemented in rural parishes.

Presenting the overview of the programme at the launch which was held recently at the Tropic View Hotel in Manchester, Project Manager, Stephannie Hutchinson-Ffrench stated that, “REDI will be investing in rural communities by supporting projects in agriculture and tourism that will create economic and employment opportunities, with funding from a World Bank US\$15 million loan”. She added that the aim of the proposed investment is to stimulate rural economic growth and increase the nation’s overall competitiveness.

If Jamaica is to advance in keeping with the goal of the National Development Plan - Jamaica 2030, the REDI Project Manager pointed out that the development of rural areas must at least keep pace with development in urban areas. Mrs. Hutchinson-Ffrench also informed that although poverty rates in Jamaica have declined overall over the past two decades, rural poverty has remained stubbornly high. As a result, REDI will target the tourism and agriculture sectors, which JSIF research has shown hold the most significant potential for rural growth and development.

Also speaking at the launch of the workshops, President of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce Mr. Winston Lawson said, REDI represents hope renewed and a critical step, in linking two major industries, agriculture and tourism, which can and must play a significant and dominant role in the local economy. “Agriculture and Tourism,” Mr. Lawson added “are critical not just to the future of Manchester but our country Jamaica as well.”

Representatives from the support agencies for the programme, including the Rural Agricultural Development Agency, Tourism Product Development Company, the Jamaica Business Development Centre and the Department of Cooperatives and Friendly Societies provided salient information to some fifty representatives from community groups and Non Government Organizations in South Manchester on how REDI will work and how they can access the project. The sensitization and information workshop series will continue in the targeted rural parishes across Jamaica.

Lawson- “REDI represents hope”

President of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, Winston Lawson has said that the Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) represents hope renewed and a critical step, in linking two major industries, agriculture and tourism, which can and must play a significant and dominant role in the local economy.

“Agriculture and Tourism,” Mr. Lawson added, “are critical not just to the future of Manchester but our country Jamaica as well.”

Mr. Lawson was speaking at the launch of a series of sensitization and information workshops for the programme at the Tropics View Hotel in Mandeville recently. REDI is an initiative of the Government of Jamaica and is being funded by a loan from the World Bank to the tune of US\$15 million. It is being implemented by the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF).

According to REDI Project Manager, Stephannie Hutchinson-Ffrench, “the programme aims to stimulate rural economic growth and increase the nation’s overall competitiveness. She noted that that if Jamaica is to advance, as is the goal of the National Development Plan - Jamaica 2030, then development of rural areas must keep pace with development in urban areas.”

Mrs. Hutchinson-Ffrench also highlighted that although poverty rates in Jamaica have declined overall over the past two decades, rural poverty has remained stubbornly high. REDI will therefore be investing in rural communities by supporting projects in agriculture and tourism that will create economic and employment opportunities. She said that JSIF research has shown that these sectors hold the most significant potential for rural growth and development.

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