



ADDRESS BY

**RHONDA LUMSDEN-LUE,
GENERAL MANAGER
HUMAN RESOURCE AND ADMINISTRATION,**

JAMAICA SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND

AT

**RETREAT PRIMARY AND JUNIOR HIGH
SCHOOL
SPONSOR SIGNING CEREMONY**

ON

WEDNESDAY JULY 14, 2010

Salutations:

- Chairman
- The Hon. Robert Montague - Member of Parliament and Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister, the Department of Local Government
- Cllr. McKenzie-Rattigan
- Mrs. D Gilmore - Teaching Education Officer, Ministry of Education
- Mr. P Irons – Chairman and his team, Retreat Primary and Junior High
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen
- Boys and Girls
- The media

Good Morning:

On behalf of the Board, Management and Staff of the Jamaica Social Investment Fund, it is indeed a great pleasure to share in this landmark occasion for the Retreat Primary and Junior High School. Why? Retreat is not only benefiting from the construction of an additional five classrooms for the 980 students but also, through creating a more enabling environment for the creation of sustainable and viable income and employment opportunities. The students of the Home Economics department will be trained in product development and marketing, which will introduce them at an early age to a means of diversifying income and developing greater self-sufficiency. The award winning Home Economics

Department will also be equipped to better utilize the harvested products of the existing school farm.

It is situations like these that have really motivated the Fund to have invested approximately \$3 billion dollars in the education sector since inception, benefiting some 146,000 children and teachers.

Today, we commit approximately \$20 million which we have obtained as a grant under the European Union Banana Support Programme funded by the European Union. The project will enhance the Rural Development efforts of the Government of Jamaica and is specifically aimed at improving access to social and economic infrastructure in rural traditionally banana growing communities.

An additional \$2.1 million will be contributed by the Retreat Primary and Junior High School PTA making the total cost to construct these 5 classrooms over a five month period by contractor Alfrasure Structures and Roofing Ltd. \$22.1 million.

Ladies and gentlemen such an investment from the community members is indicative of the commitment to ensure sustainability of the project. The Retreat Primary and Junior High School PTA will facilitate the storage and security of the construction materials and equipment, providing a site office and shed, preparing this very ceremony as well as the handing over ceremony to come, among other things that a value will be placed on and tallied up to make up the \$2.1 million.

Ladies and gentlemen – when we have successful collaborations like these it says: **When it comes to our children – nothing but the best is good enough.**

In so doing we are also acknowledging that:

1. Education is indeed a ladder to social mobility
2. To succeed in the modern world, we need trained and professional people.
3. It is skills that will be the global currency of the future; and the skills of our children will determine whether they can secure jobs of the future.

Therefore, if ever there was a time to rally around our nation's schools, it is now. We have more children in our nation's classrooms than ever before and each year they become more crowded. For example, look at the recent GSAT scores. Our students are indeed doing much better than they have been doing over the years as according to the Minister of Education “The results in Language Arts showed a 6.6 percentage point increase over the 2009 results, with an average of 1.7 percentage points higher in other subjects over last year”. So to the parents, teachers and students here today – let’s work to keeping these statistics on an ever upward trend and if you have not yet gotten involved in your child’s education – do so now. There is absolutely no substitute for a parent who will make sure their child is in school on time and help him/her with their homework after dinner and attend those parent-teacher meetings. How else can we achieve success and realize the goals enshrined in our ***National Development Plan***

Vision 2030 which states – to make **"Jamaica, the place of choice to live, work, raise families and do business."**

I therefore urge each and everyone to help build Jamaica's future. Invest in our children. Give our young people who want to soar, the grounding and security of a quality education that prepares them for the 21st century.

Let's win this war on ignorance and make the education of all of our children this nation's first priority.