



GREETINGS BY

MR. OMAR SWEENEY

MANAGING DIRECTOR-JSIF

AT THE

Handing over Ceremony

for

ICDP-II Enterprise Development Grants-August Town

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 04, 2021

Salutations:

- Master of Ceremonies, Mr. Gerrard McDaniel
- The Hon. Fayval Williams, Minister of Education, Youth and Information, and Member of Parliament for Eastern St Andrew
- Hon. Dr. Patricia Dunwell, Custos Rotulorum of St. Andrew
- His Worship the Mayor, Senator Councillor, Delroy Williams, Mayor of Kingston
- Councillor Venesha Phillips, Councillor for the Papine Division
- Mr. Marlon Nesbeth, Senior Superintendent of Police/Joint Force Commander for the Zone Of Special Operations in August Town
- Ms. Sheryl Mighty-Ellis, Secretary of the Greater August Town Community Development Committee
- Members of my JSIF team,
- Specially Invited Guests,
- and most especially those who will receive equipment to boost their small enterprises today.

I am pleased to bring you warm greetings on behalf of the Board,

Management and Staff of the Jamaica Social Investment Fund.

After 25 years of investing for community development, we at the JSIF are never daunted by the mission of enabling all members of our beneficiary communities, including the poorest and the most disadvantaged, to develop skills and competencies so as to take greater control of their own lives.

Through the unwavering support of the Government of Jamaica, with an overall investment of \$20M Jamaican dollars for the implementation of the second cycle of the Integrated Community Development Project, the Enterprise Development grants that will be presented today will provide some solace for 25 small business owners in August Town. It is hoped that the support that you will receive will assist you to progress to the next step you take towards elevating your enterprises and your community.

Today, 25 recipients will be presented with equipment, valued at \$3M Jamaican dollars, to enhance their respective enterprises, which comprise a very diverse group. August Town is a community of

innovators. I am impressed by how many of these businesses that will benefit belong to the manufacturing sector. Just imagine that this community, which is 4.7 square kilometres, is home to enterprises that manufacture soaps, herbs, pastries, clothing, and construction materials. Here we also have businesses dedicated to agro processing, poultry farming, multimedia production, beauty services, landscaping, haulage and transportation, and the list continues.

I recall this community's stance in 2020, to rebrand August Town. The JSIF is on board to help you realize your vision for this community. We are aware that unemployment and low economic activities continue to be issues which affect this community, so the JSIF through the Government of Jamaica's Integrated Community Development Project, aims to support your efforts to change the image of your community, by supporting sustained employment for the persons who reside here. It is envisioned that these small enterprises will grow to the point

where they are able to each employ at least one person from the community.

I know that this might seem ambitious, given the challenges we are all facing. I know that this vision will not be achieved overnight. As entrepreneurs who have all been in business for over a year, I am sure you know the level of commitment, endurance, motivation and especially patience that goes into just keeping your businesses afloat, especially in these extremely challenging times.

Sometimes success is like a Chinese bamboo tree. Let me give you a brilliant anecdote on the Chinese bamboo tree. Just like the Chinese bamboo tree, your business needs nurturing. In its first year you might not detect any visible signs of growth. In the second, third, or even fourth year, still nothing. Your patience might become tested. You might begin to wonder if all your efforts will ever be rewarded. And finally, in the fifth year, a miracle! You experience growth. And what growth it is! The Chinese bamboo tree has grown 80 feet in just 6

weeks. But let's be serious, does the Chinese Bamboo Tree really grow 80 feet in six weeks? Did the Chinese Bamboo Tree lie dormant for four years only to grow exponentially in the fifth? Or, was the little tree growing underground, developing a root system strong enough to support its potential for outward growth in the fifth year and beyond? The answer is, of course, obvious. Had the tree not developed a strong unseen foundation it could not have sustained its life as it grew. The same principle is true for your business ventures.

To fortify the foundation of your enterprises and prepare you for success, a business development component is also available to our beneficiaries here today, to build their capacity and enhance their entrepreneurial abilities.

I urge you to take advantage of the opportunity you are being given, especially the capacity development training that will help to strengthen your capacity to operate successful enterprises that will create wealth and jobs for August Town.

The JSIF looks forward to continuing to work with August Town as you work to make this the community of choice to live, work, raise families and do business.