



Speaking Notes

For

The Most Honourable Andrew Holness, ON, MP
Prime Minister of Jamaica

At

The Handing Over of the Epworth Rural
Feeder Road in St. Ann

On

April 21, 2023

Salutations

Master of Ceremonies,

Custos Rotulorum for the Parish of St. Ann, The Honourable, Norma Walters.

His Worship, The Mayor of St. Ann's Bay Sydney Stewart.

Member of Parliament for South-East St. Ann Ms. Lisa Hanna

Chairman of the Board for JSIF, Dr. Wayne Henry, CD, JP

Managing Director of JSIF, Mr. Omar Sweeney, CD, PE

President of the Epworth Community Development Committee, Mr. Raymond Grant

Other members of the Epworth Community.

Members of the Media,

ALL

Good Morning,

Today, I am exceedingly happy to be officially handing over the Epworth Feeder Road. The story of this road, and how the residents lobbied for its rehabilitation, is a testament as to how the community's voice can be heard, and action taken. It is a testament for others who contend that their voices are not being heard; so, they make no effort; but you, the residents of Epworth, have shown the power of the community spirit and advocacy.

On a rainy evening in 2017, some residents of Epworth made their way to a town hall meeting held by the government, at the Ocho Rios High School, in parish. One resident got up and stated the plight of many others in the community, who had been contending with horrible road condition.

The resident pleaded for something to be done to remedy the situation which had gotten out of hand, due to decades of neglect.

Hearing the cry, a pledge was made at that time, that although the Epworth Road was not under the purview of the National Works Agency, efforts would be made by the government, that a multi-agency approach would be taken to get the road repaired.

Six Years later and the promise is now fulfilled...

The condition of the Epworth Road hampered the efforts of farmers in the community for years, **as they were unable to** access more markets for their goods, due to the inability to transport produce to the town or even to the nearest area where they could be sold.

Hotel workers who make up a large number of residents in the community, moved out to more urban areas because sky rocketing taxi fares drove them out, as they tried to maintain a livelihood.

Today, I am pleased to be officially handing over this road which means so much to so many. The rehabilitation work done here today is a testament to how this government's constant effort to

hear the masses can aid in not only infrastructural development, but social development.

Talk with any resident of Epworth today and they will tell you of the improvements in taking their goods to and from the market. Shopkeepers have seen a boost in their businesses and people are coming back home.

The school saw declining numbers as parents in neighbouring districts did not see Epworth as an option because the road was too bad, and the child or children would have to go through way too much to go to school. However, now the numbers are rising steadily again as the road has brought hope and new life to the community.

3. 1 kilometers of road way was rehabilitated with the surface being graded and shaped with a marl base and pavement done with asphalt, valued at over 109 million Jamaican Dollars.

Additionally, curbs and channels were created, and proper drainage was constructed so that the perennial problem of rain damage would now be a thing of the past.

The Government of Jamaica is thankful that the project was completed within budget and in a timely manner. The funds allocated by our partners at the CDB were well spent. The impact of the rehabilitation of this infrastructure is evident. The residents of Epworth, I know you are proud of this new road and I trust that you will protect this new investment.

With new developments like this comes new opportunities, and this is evidenced by the interest of new investors in your community. Let us embrace this change and continue to be beacons of hope in our various communities; always lobbying for development and change. Epworth has taught us that our voices can be heard, and positive change can be made.

I Thank You.