



Speaking Notes

For

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

At

The Handing Over of the Montego Bay Fire
Station.

On

May 13, 2022

Salutations

Master of Ceremonies,

His Worship the Mayor of Montego Bay, Councillor Gerald Lee

Custos Rotulorum of St. James, Honourable Bishop, Conrad Pitkin

Dr. The Honourable, Horace Chang, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security

Minister of Local Government and community Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie

Member of Parliament for West Central St. James, Hon. Marlene Malahoo- Forte.

Hon. Homer Davis, Minister of State in the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development

Head of the Jamaica Country Office, World Bank Jamaica, Gail Richardson

Chairman of the Board of the Jamaica Social Investment Fund, Dr. Wayne Henry

Managing Director of the Jamaica Social Investment Fund, Mr. Omar Sweeney

Commissioner of the Jamaica Fire Brigade, Stewart Beckford

Members of the Fire Brigade

Contractors,

Members of the project team from JSIF.

Members of the Media

I am extremely pleased to be here for today's historic handing over of the Montego Bay Fire Station. The fire brigade has a rich history in Jamaica dating from as far back as 1879... a history of over 150 years, in which the Jamaica Fire Brigade has played a crucial role in the development of Jamaica's disaster prevention, management and response. As we in this year, 2022, celebrate our 60th year of independence, we look at the opening of this impressive building, the centre of operations of the Brigade in the Western part of the island, as another important milestone in the life of the Brigade, and another important accomplishment in Jamaica's history.

The previous station, known to many as the Barnett Street fire station, that served Montego Bay and greater St. James for several years, was in state of disrepair and became an uncomfortable place for members of the fire brigade to carry out their work.

This building where we stand today transports the brigade into the 21st century, as with its features and amenities which are not comparable with any other fire station in the Caribbean, the brigade will be able to advance its services not only in firefighting, but in public awareness and the training of its officers.

The station which has been built through funding from a loan made available by the World Bank under the Disaster Vulnerability Reduction Project, DVRP

has been constructed at a cost of over 580 million Jamaican dollars. The construction of the fire station was capably implemented by the Jamaica Social Investment Fund, JSIF.

This 34,073 square feet super structure in which we now stand, is 4 stories high and is constructed with a steel reinforced concrete frame. This exemplifies the GoJ's commitment to not only speak of disaster preparedness but put it into action.

The building also boasts:

- **5-engine Bays**
- **Emergency vehicle Bay**
- **Dormitory Facilities for male and female fire fighters (70 male and 70 females**
- **Office spaces**
- **Kitchen and pantry facilities**
- **Well-equipped Conference centre**
- **Electro-mechanical room**
- **A Library**
- **Officers' lounge**
- **Gymnasium**
- **And An**
- **Underground water tank**

All this is of extreme value to the brigade that will be better equipped to respond swiftly to emergency calls and will also be better able to carry out their job of increasing awareness on fire prevention. The brigade in the West will be fully armed to train not only fire fighters in the parishes of St. James, Hanover, Trelawny and St. Elizabeth, but can be a hub for island- wide training.

I am anxious today to cut the ribbon and declare this building opened as I am fully aware of its significance to the people of St. James and to the nation, as this historic opening of the fire station is in directly aligned with the government's plan to improve services to the people of Jamaica in local government and community development and in all other sectors.

As we strive to do this, two other fire stations which have been rehabilitated will be opened shortly. The Yallahs Fire station in St. Thomas and the Port Maria, Fire Station in St. Mary are both over 90 percent completed and will significantly improve the Jamaica Fire Brigade's ability to effectively carry out their mandate. Again, reaffirming our commitment to improving disaster risk management.

This Montego Bay fire station which towers over the city is indeed a pearl in the West and I implore you as fire fighters to effectively use these facilities and continue your work in keeping the people of

Jamacia safe and aid in the prevention of disasters, striving always to play your part in the advancement of your country.

Thank you