

SPEAKING NOTES  
FOR  
Mr. Omar Sweeney  
Managing Director of the  
Jamaica Social Investment Fund  
at  
The Contract Signing & Ground Breaking  
Ceremony for Kirkvine Cold Storage  
Facility  
On  
Thursday, February 20, 2025.

Master of Ceremonies, Ms. Dahlia Harris,

Honourable Floyd Green - Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries & Mining,

Honourable Franklin Witter - Minister of State, Agriculture, Fisheries & Mining,

Mr. Dermon Spence – Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Mining,

Ms. Rhoda Moy Crawford– Member of Parliament – Manchester Central,

His Worship the Mayor – Councillor & Chairman of the Manchester Municipal Corporation - Mr. Donovan Anthony Mitchel,

Lt. Col. The Honourable Garfield S. Green - Custos Rotulorum of Manchester,

Councillor Mario Mitchell - Councilor for the Bellefield Division,

Mr. John Bryant Collier, Senior Environmental Specialist and a Program Leader at the World Bank, representing Ms. Lilia Burunciuc, World Bank Country Director – Caribbean Countries,

Ms. Dionne O'Connor – Operations Officer, World Bank,

Mr. Vivion Scully – Chief Executive Officer, Agro-Investment Corporation,

Mr. Garnet Edmondson – Acting Chief Executive Officer, RADA,

Mr. Andre Lindsay - General Manager, Jamaica Bauxite Institute,

members of the JSIF team,

Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Guests, Partners.

Good afternoon.

It is an honour to be here this afternoon, as we sign the Contract and break ground for the construction of the Kirkvine Cold Storage Facility; an initiative that promises to significantly boost Jamaica's agricultural sector.

The JSIF, as the body responsible for executing the government of Jamaica's development mission within underserved areas of the island, has been working at the level of the community for over 28 years.

Since 2020, in responding to the increased needs of the communities for economic generating projects, the JSIF under the mandate of the Government of Jamaica, through a loan from the World Bank began implementation of the second Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI-II). The REDI-II project aims to enhance access to markets and support climate-resilient approaches for targeted beneficiaries in the tourism and agricultural sectors.

Agriculture is not just an economic driver for Jamaica; it is also a cornerstone of our heritage and identity. However, while we may have rich soils and dedicated farmers, we face critical structural challenges—chief among them, inadequate cold storage, which often results in significant post-harvest losses, that can reach up to 30-35% of annual production.

In response to this urgent need, the Government of Jamaica through the Jamaica Social Investment Fund's Second Rural Economic Development Initiative responded to the Agro-Investment Corporation's call for support. The result: the Kirkvine Cold Storage Facility, which is poised to become a key hub in Jamaica's agricultural value chain.

Jamaica's tropical climate and susceptibility to hurricane threats, coupled with insufficient storage infrastructure has led to considerable spoilage and significant financial losses for players in

the industry. The Kirkvine facility will directly tackle these issues by increasing cold storage capacity, thereby extending the shelf life of agriculture produce.

This facility will help to address some of the Supply Chain inefficiencies that are being experienced. By providing a centralized storage and processing hub, this facility will streamline logistics and stabilize prices, benefiting both producers and consumers.

Expanding cold storage means we can better manage surplus, maintain stable prices, and ensure a consistent food supply year-round.

This JMD 123.8 million investment involves the construction of Cold Storage Units, to accommodate 135.1 cubic meters of storage for both Ethylene-producing and non-Ethylene-producing crops; installation of 67.54 cubic meters of dry storage capacity, and an enclosed Processing Area. To support sustainability and operational efficiency, a grid-tied Photovoltaic system will be installed. An eco-friendly measure that will lower water expenses will be utilized and will see the roof of the facility being used to collect rainwater for storage. Additional Infrastructure will include the construction of Changing rooms, Restrooms, and a Wastewater Treatment system, to maintain occupational health standards.

Designed with scalability in mind, this facility can be expanded through the addition of retrofitted containers to meet future demands. Once completed, this facility will be managed and operated by the Agro-Investment Corporation, thereby ensuring seamless integration into Jamaica's broader agricultural framework.

Approximately 1,500 farmers and aggregators in Kirkvine, Content, and surrounding regions, 40 greenhouse operators who are associated with the Jamaica Bauxite Institute (JBI)/JSIF Greenhouse clusters in Manchester, and Private investors who will lease the facility and boost agricultural value chain development, will benefit from this facility.

Ultimately, this project will enhance Jamaica's agricultural resilience. By reducing post-harvest losses and ensuring a consistent food supply, we become less vulnerable to climate and market shocks.

The Kirkvine Cold Storage Facility represents a transformative step in Jamaica's journey toward agricultural self-sufficiency, food security, and economic vitality. By providing modern, sustainable, and efficient cold storage solutions, we will empower our farmers, bolster our agro-processors, and ensure our produce remains top-quality from farm to table.

Today, I encourage each of you—be it as community members, farmers, investors, or development partners, to rally behind this initiative. Your unwavering support, whether through spreading the word, leveraging the facilities, or providing additional expertise, will be crucial to the success of the Kirkvine Cold Storage Facility.

Together, we can reduce Post-Harvest Losses, so let us strive to minimize waste by fully utilizing the modern amenities that will be offered here. By consolidating and properly storing produce, we can strengthen market stability and ensure that local markets remain robust all year-round.

Together we can advance agricultural innovation, by embracing new opportunities like greenhouse operations, advanced packaging techniques, and value-added processing, to diversify our agricultural output and revenue streams.

In closing, I ask that we view this project as a beacon of hope for Jamaican agriculture. With the Kirkvine Cold Storage Facility, we are reinforcing our commitment to feeding our people, empowering our farmers, and showcasing the best of Jamaica's produce to the world. I am confident that with our collective efforts, we will usher in a new era of agricultural prosperity that benefits every Jamaican household.

Thank you and may the Kirkvine Cold Storage Facility stand as a testament to the resilience, innovation, and collaboration that define our great nation. Let us move forward together, ensuring

that Jamaica's agricultural future remains bright and bountiful for generations to come.