

Speaking Notes

For

Prime Minister Dr. The Most Honourable
Andrew Holness, ON, PC, MP

At

The Handing-Over of the
Annotto Bay Coastal Protection Project

On

Friday, May 16, 2025, at 2:00 pm

Salutations:

Honourable Dr. Norman Dunn, Member of Parliament, St. Mary South-Eastern and Minister of State in the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.

Your Worship, the Mayor Councillor Fitzroy Wilson,
Boscobel Division, St. Mary

Lieutenant Colonel Honourable Errol Johnson, CD, JP Custos Rotulorum for the Parish of St. Mary

Dr. Wayne Henry, Chairman, Jamaica Social Investment Fund

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

Representatives from The World Bank.

Ms. Ethlyn Douglas, Chief Executive Officer, St. Mary Municipal Corporation

Mr. E.G. Hunter, Chief Executive Officer, National Works Agency, Supervisors for the project.

Ms. James Sampson, Operations Director, S&G Road Surfacing Material Limited, Contractors for the project.

Representatives from Smith Warner International (Consultants of the Project)

Representative from the Jamaica Social Investment Fund

Community Members

Members of the Media including the JIS

Good afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I stand before you today, to mark the successful completion and official handing-over of this vital coastal protection and beach nourishment project here in beautiful Annotto Bay.

This project is more than just a stretch of sand and sea defences—it represents the government of Jamaica's commitment to safeguarding the very heart of communities that are vulnerable to storm surges and other such natural disasters.

The Annotto Bay Beach area has been experiencing moderate to severe shoreline erosion since 1988, threatening not only the now fragile environment but also the homes, businesses, and futures of so many who live and work along here.

This project is a true example of the Government of Jamaica's drive to urgently implement projects which promote climate and disaster risk management in the wider context of sustainable development.

With Jamaica experiencing several weather events over the years, this intervention here in Annotto Bay was well needed to protect from damage to the shoreline.

Today, we celebrate a milestone in resilience and renewal. This beach nourishment effort restores and reinforces our coastline, providing a much-needed buffer against the powerful forces of the sea. It is a shield that will protect us from the worsening impacts of climate change—stronger storms, rising tides, and unpredictable weather patterns.

This Beach Nourishment project will have a far-reaching effect on many in **Annotto Bay** with over **Five Thousand Four Hundred (5,400) residents including the Fisherfolk** being directly impacted by this improvement that has been made.

There is no doubt that this is a very important and essential project which involved approximately **Two Hundred and Forty-Four million Jamaica Dollars (JMD\$244 Million)** being spent to ensure protection of the area.

The scope of works completed involves:

- Placement of sand (beach nourishment) along **244 metres** of sand for the existing beach. This nourishment extends **12 metres** seaward from the existing scarp. The beach is now approximately **1.5 metres** above sea level.
- Construction of **three (3)** rock armoured groynes (the groynes function is to trap and hold the sand in place).
- Installation of **fifty (50) metres** of hardscape recreational area.

The sea is not just a backdrop to life in Annotto Bay; it is life itself. Our hardworking Fisherfolk depend on these waters for their livelihoods, and the health of our beaches and marine ecosystems directly affects their ability to sustain their families and contribute to our local economy. By restoring our beaches, we are

also preserving the delicate marine habitats that are essential for fish breeding and biodiversity.

Through this project we as a government is ensuring that future generations can continue to rely on the sea just as their ancestors have for centuries.

I want to extend heartfelt thanks to all the stakeholders—especially to the **Jamaica Social Investment Fund** for the successful implementation of this project and having it completed in record time. I also would like to thank

The World Bank which provided financing via an agreement with the **Government of Jamaica.**

Thanks also to the National Works Agency for providing supervision of the Project, the residents and fisherfolk of Annotto Bay. Your voices, your input, and your resilience have shaped this project from the ground up.

With all this said, let us remember; while today marks an achievement, it is also a beginning adhering to good environmental practices. Coastal protection requires continuous care and vigilance. We must work together to maintain these defences and to embrace sustainable practices that keep our marine environment thriving.

Together, we are not just rebuilding our shores—we are strengthening our community's future.

Thank you.