



GREETINGS BY

MRS. SCARLETTE GILLINGS

MANAGER DIRECTOR

JAMAICA SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND

SATURDAY, JUNE 23RD, 2012

SPONSOR SIGNING CEREMONY

CHARLES TOWN MAROON SPONSOR AGREEMENT SIGNING

Salutations:

- Hon. Damion Crawford, MP Minister of State
Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment
- Benny White His Worship the Mayor Councillor
Portland Parish Council
- Colonel Frank Lumsden Charles Town Maroon
Council
- Marcia Lawrence Chairperson, Portland Resort
Board JHTA Portland Representative
- Beverly Price Executive Training Manager
Tourism Product Development Company
- Members of the Community
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Day to you all.

I bring you greetings on behalf of the Board, Management and Staff of the Jamaica Social Investment Fund.

This signing ceremony is really a significant and symbolic day, as today June 23, 2012 is exactly 273 years after the Maroons signed their treaty with the British to secure their freedom from slavery, their independence, the right to their own lands, preservation of their ancient customs and their special status in the Caribbean.

We at the Jamaica Social Investment Fund feel elated that the signing of the Community Agreement for the Charles Town Maroon Council Infrastructure Rehabilitation, Marketing and Promotion project is happening today.

The Charles Town project is being implemented under the World Bank funded Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) which is managed by JSIF. REDI was established to stimulate and support development of viable micro and small economic community projects in agriculture and community based tourism. Both are

growth sectors as they offer rural communities with an opportunity to utilize its natural assets to generate sustainable livelihoods for its people. Specifically, community based tourism offers tourists with an opportunity to experience the Jamaican history and culture. This experience is in high demand and even more so after Usain Bolt's achievements. Many visitors want to eat the Jamaican Food, Dance to our music and truly live the Jamaican life.

It is without doubt that the Charles Town Maroon Council's Heritage Tour offers this opportunity and is an important component in the tourism landscape of Portland. As a community based tourism enterprise this tour helps to generate income within the community. It is for this reason the Board of JSIF approved the funding of over \$17 million for the implementation of this project. Specifically, the work to be undertaken will include:

- rehabilitation of the museum and rest rooms at the Asafu Yard;
- construction of a craft display area;

- rehabilitation of the kitchen;
- Improvement in the labeling of artifacts;
- Contracting a marketing and promotion consultant to provide a marketing strategy and promotional tools (like brochures, flyers, and business cards); and
- Provision of business management tools and software to include a computer, printer and business management software along with related training.

Upon completion of this project the Charles Town Maroon Council will be able to manage and operate a tour that is considered to be 'market ready', that means, it meets local and international standards of a tourism attraction. This will include introducing this heritage tour to potential domestic and overseas tour operators and being ready to accept advanced reservations.

This project fits into the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment's plans for community tourism and the draft Community Based Tourism Policy and Strategy which seeks to develop a vibrant community tourism sector that will offer diversified and quality products.

Today, as we forge a new relationship and new ways of making development happen, we are encouraged in knowing that we are helping communities to become more sustainable economically. Within Charles Town the project will benefit not only the members of the tour but also farmers, the craft vendors and producers, taxi operators, shop keepers and others.

In closing, I look forward to the successful completion and handing over ceremony of this project.

I Thank You.