



## **JAMAICA SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND**

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**Press Release  
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### **WORLD BANK VISITS RASTAFARIAN INDIGENOUS VILLAGE**

World Bank Vice President, Jorge Familiar, Caribbean Country Director, Sophie Sirtaine and Country Director Galina Sotirova accompanied by a team of other World Bank officials visited the The Rastafari Indigenous Village (RIV) in Porto Bello, St. James on Thursday May 19.

The attraction is one of the enterprises funded under the Jamaica Social Investment Fund's Rural Economic Development Initiative project (REDI).

The REDI project is funded by the Government of Jamaica with a loan US\$15 million loan from the World Bank and is intended to provide market access for micro and small rural producers and tourism product and service providers.

With the JSIF's investment, the projection is for visitors to increase by 20% in 2016-; the RIV tour is priced at US 20 or J\$2,500 for locals.

JSIF's Consultant/Tourism Specialist Beverly Stewart who was also on the tour explained that JSIF's infrastructure investment and facilitation of 'Team Jamaica' and Tour Guide Training through the Tourism Product Development Company (TPDCo), allows the Rastafarian Indigenous Village to obtain a Jamaica Tourist Board license and maintain its export market ready status as designated by the Community Tourism Policy and Strategy.

Edward Wray 'First Man' of the Village who conducted the tour says the JSIF investment is a major step forward for Rastafari, he added that the Rasta Village was once just a vision but thanks to JSIF and the Nelson's family who made the land available for the attraction, it became a reality.

According to JSIF Managing Director, Omar Sweeney the JSIF is seeking to assist the government's growth agenda with the development of market access which was not previously available to small enterprises such as RIV.

Kemeisha Batchan, REDI Project Manager explained that the findings of an assessment on the development of a Community Based Tourism Policy and Strategy for Jamaica, indicated that there is a vast market for authentic Jamaican experiences in tourism.

She also mentioned that the tourism aspect is only one part of REDI which creates economic opportunities in both Agriculture and Tourism. Some important developments are taking place in agriculture as the rural agriculture is being transformed through greenhouse technology, drip irrigation, agro-processing and other technologies. Some of agricultural groups have embraced these technologies and are reaping benefits.

The link between tourism and agriculture has been very positive as the hotel sector has embraced the consistent production of high quality agricultural products.

This twinning of the sectors has been enhanced through partnerships with the Ministry of Tourism and their agencies the Tourism Product Development Company and the Jamaica Tourist Board, the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association, the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Noranda, Alpart and Windalco Bauxite Companies, the Jamaica Bauxite Institute, all of whom have worked together to make REDI a success.

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