



REMARKS BY

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MANAGING DIRECTOR

JAMAICA SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND (JSIF)

FOR

JSIF/NIC BRACO PMO DRIP IRRIGATION SIGNING CEREMONY

AUGUST 13, 2015

SALUTATIONS:

- Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries -Hon Derrick Kellier
- Member of Parliament, North Trelawny and Attorney General - Hon Patrick Atkinson
- His Worship the Mayor - Councillor Garth Wilkins
- Custos of Trelawny - Hon Paul Mushett
- Chairman, Mr. Wayne Barrett – Director of Commerce (NIC)
- Mr. Lenworth Fulton CEO -Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA)
- Chairman, National Irrigation Commission- Dr. Conrod Douglas
- Ms Loy Malcolm, General Manager-Project Management-JSIF
- All other JSIF team members
- Members of the Braco PMO
- Ladies and gentlemen

Good Morning.

I bring greetings on behalf of the Board of Directors,
Management and Staff of the Jamaica Social Investment
Fund (JSIF).

Since 1996, the JSIF - a development agency within the
Office of the Prime Minister, has been executing the
Government's strategy for the upgrade of social and
economic infrastructure; within areas where they are most
needed in Jamaica. To date we have spent J\$10 Billion
pursuing this awesome and worthwhile mandate, in the
areas of:

- Education
- Community Development
- Sanitation
- Crime and violence/Public safety and

- Social Capital Development
- Wealth Creation
- Development

This leads me to the focus of this morning's proceedings.

The Drip irrigation project here at Braco, falls under the area of rural development, growth and wealth creation, and is funded under our Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI). The REDI programme focuses on income generating interventions, within the tourism and agriculture sectors.

These interventions support infrastructure and technological improvements, training, production, service and business development support, as well as equipping and marketing.

Critical to the programme, are the linkages between agriculture and tourism. The success of the project will be

assessed by the extent to which, income is increased and Jobs are created.

To date, the REDI projects have supported 844 persons employed to rural micro enterprises and groups engaged in the agriculture or tourism sectors.

This Braco project aims to address a common and often critical challenge facing agriculture in Jamaica. I am referring to the challenge of inadequate irrigation for farm lands across the sector.

In addition to improved access to water for irrigation, the project also supports the efficient and effective delivery of fertilizer inputs with the installation of a fertigation system. These combined inputs have seen farms improve production outputs by more than 50%.

To date, Water User Groups served by the NIC across Manchester (New Forrest Duff House), St. Elizabeth (Hounslow, Beacon Little Park), St. Catherine (Colbeck), St. Thomas (PGR Agropark) and Trelawny (Braco PMO), have benefited from projects such as these.

The communities identified produce a wide range of vegetable crops, such as escallion, thyme, onion, watermelon, tomato, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli and hot pepper, which require consistent water supply. During the dry season, January to April and June to August, farmers are severely restricted in their production because of a lack of water to irrigate their farms. The JSIF's REDI project has provided approximately 1 acre of drip lines to each of the 475 famers in these communities, as well as 225 one thousand gallon water storage tanks and 190 fertigation kits inclusive of 190 forty five gallon drums.

The installation of on-farm drip irrigation systems will address the following challenges that the farmers currently face because of low levels of rainfall:

- Their production is not market-driven but rather influenced by the rainy season.

- Their inability to plan for production which leads to frequent market gluts and shortages.

- Inconsistencies in the price of produce because of the dependency on rainfall.

- Disease and pest infestation of some crops during the dry season (for example, cabbage)

- Increase in overhead costs for the farmers who plant during the dry season and have to purchase water, therefore resulting in reduced earnings

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The objective of the project is to incrementally contribute to domestic food security and promote market-driven production, resulting in greater consistency in yield and price of the produce cultivated by the members of the Braco PMO. In order to achieve this, we have installed a drip irrigation (fertigation) system on 15

acres of land. The National Irrigation Commission (NIC) has provided the water for irrigation, as well as giving a No Objection to JSIF for the construction and installation of the Food Safety Infrastructure a part of which we now occupy.

The project includes the provision of equipment to include:

- ✓ 15 acres of 16mm drip lines
- ✓ 17 Fertigation drums
- ✓ 17x 1000 gallon black storage tanks
- ✓ 300 harvesting crates

Beyond the irrigation that is projected to increase the production; it is also critically important that the outputs of the farmers can access any market, local and international. It is with this increased access in mind that the JSIF also invested in on farm food safety infrastructure to include sanitation on farm, pesticide storage and packing sheds.

The farmers within this group have received equipment, infrastructure, and technical assistance of approximately JMD 11.7

million. The project will benefit 18 active members of the Braco PMO, all small farmers, and their dependents as beneficiaries.

Projects such as these depend on the support inputs and strong partnerships among the Government and Private Sector; and I must therefore take the opportunity to recognize and thank the:

- Department of Cooperatives and Friendly Societies
- Ministry of Agriculture
- RADA and
- NIC

We will be taking a tour of some of these farms at the end of this exercise this morning. I look forward to seeing the commencement of what I envisage will be an exciting and fresh start in the process of changing the lives of each and every one of the participants in this innovative project.

I urge you all to keep working together. This is the only sure route to the success of this venture. Challenges there will be, but it is in community that you will see the successes you seek and deserve.

Let me remind you that this is a marathon, not a sprint. I wish for you, all the success that this venture can achieve.

Thank you.