

REMARKS
BY

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SALUTATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to have been invited to deliver the keynote address at this the opening of the first European Conference for the International Institute for Peace through Tourism. The goals of the IIPT, tourism initiatives which contribute to international understanding and cooperation, an improved quality of environment, the preservation of heritage, and through these initiatives, helping to bring about a peaceful and sustainable world, are in many ways the goals of the tourist industry in Jamaica.

Tourism is important to us in Jamaica, and many of us have been speaking about working together to grow our tourist industry. Tourism is the engine that drives Jamaica's economy, and is the single most important contributor to putting food in the mouths of each and every Jamaican today, and to creating a safe and secure future for our children. Like the United Nations World Tourism Organization, we believe that tourism, the world's largest industry, is devoted to promoting the development of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism, paying particular attention to the interests of developing countries. It is the view of the UNWTO that tourism is a means of achieving the millennium development goals, geared towards reducing poverty and fostering sustainable development. This is the route to bridging the north-south-divide.

Earlier this year, Jamaica hosted the first IIPT International Community Tourism Retreat, organized by Country Style in collaboration with the International Institute for Peace through Tourism (IIPT) and a number of others. We were honoured to host this retreat in Jamaica, and felt that it presented a perfect venue for us to talk about Jamaica's plans to develop our tourism sustainably and ensure that the benefits of tourism reached into every corner of our country. In Jamaica, the *Spruce Up Jamaica, Nice Up Yusef* programme is that vehicle, and we were pleased to share the details of the programme with the participants at that Conference, and are happy to share them with you here.

Spruce Up Jamaica, Nice Up Yusef is an all encompassing programme introduced by the Ministry of Tourism in 2007. *Spruce Up Jamaica* marks a giant step forward in a very targeted two-year drive to build community tourism in Jamaica, and to inspire the support and active participation of every Jamaican in this important industry.

CATALYST FOR CHANGE

Spruce Up Jamaica has become the buzz word for THE NEW TOURISM, with its focus on forging creative partnerships to deliver results that benefit each and every single Jamaican, and the nation at large. To underscore the value of *Spruce Up*, and to encourage continued participation, the Ministry of Tourism will be actively promoting the programme in communities that are located near the nation's six tourist resort areas, and the capital city, Kingston.

Spruce Up Jamaica is intended to drive and reinforce the new tourism, encourage changes in attitude and behaviour, ignite greater pride among Jamaicans in keeping our country clean and attractive. It is also intended to strengthen and encourage the delivery of high-touch service that will secure ongoing leadership for Jamaica as the Caribbean's most inviting tourist destination. The net result of this is that Jamaicans from all walks of life will through increased tourism earnings, be able to have better lives.

THREE LEVELS OF *SPRUCE UP JAMAICA, NICE UP YUSELF!*

Spruce Up Jamaica is a multi-faceted programme that works on three levels: the national level; the community level; and the individual level.

- **At the national level**, this initiative joins all Jamaicans together in activities that will grow our tourism and inspire national pride.

- **At the community level**, it underscores the importance of a clean environment, and of working together with a sense of civic pride to improve and beautify our surroundings, and to also address environmental issues.

- **And at the individual level**, the *Nice Up Yuself* component instills personal pride and fosters a positive attitude towards appearance and demeanour. It bolsters the desire for an attractive environment for every resident – and one that is also attractive and welcoming to our visitors.

SPRUCE UP JAMAICA – THE BEGINNING

Let me go back a moment to the origins of *Spruce Up Jamaica, Nice Up Yuself!*

Introduced in 2007, this programme is dear to my heart because it **puts people at the centre**.

In my role as *Chief Salesman* for Jamaica, I feel my greatest priority is to create an understanding among our people that tourism:

- involves every Jamaican;
- benefits every Jamaican; *and*

- requires the active support and participation of every Jamaican.

Phase One of our programme has gone a long way towards realizing that objective. **In a truly spectacular effort**, communities in designated areas all over the country worked together to improve the appearance of their surroundings through a combination of clean-up, painting and landscaping. In Jamaica, people were said to be sprucing up the place! The support for the programme so far encourages our belief that our goals are achievable. And so we move forward with them in mind.

The areas that were “spruced up” included:

- Kingston
- Montego Bay
- Ocho Rios
- Falmouth
- South Coast
- Portland
- Negril

Though much is left to be done, we are all proud of the results, and are seeing a very noticeable improvement in the comfort level for both residents and visitors. **And I am especially proud that the Jamaican people** are coming together with such a magnificent display of energy, enthusiasm and dedication to the task at hand. What we saw in Phase One was **the power of the people in full force**, and a **true feeling of unity** in implementing a plan designed to **benefit every one**.

FOSTERING GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF TOURISM’S ROLE

The programme continued through our ***Spruce Up Jamaica Maintenance Programme***. This is a six-month project geared at ensuring that the areas that benefited remained spruced-up. As we move forward now into the maintenance phase, a primary objective was to promote a better understanding of **the role of tourism** in the life of every Jamaican.

People were asked to pause and ask the question: ***What does tourism do for me?*** And then consider **how tourism dollars are at work**. **They were reminded that tourism dollars are used to:**

- Strengthen our infrastructure;
- Improve our highways;

- Expand our airports;
- Develop our shipping ports;
- Improve our education system;
- Enhance healthcare;
- Create more jobs with new hotels and attractions;
- Provide training for those jobs through projects like our new Hospitality School;
- Create links to other industries key to our economy, including manufacturing, agriculture and crafts.

THE FIVE FACES OF *SPRUCE UP*

Spruce Up Jamaica embraces many areas of our lives. Because tourism has such a wide impact on the daily lives of Jamaicans, we explained that the *Spruce Up Jamaica* programme really has five “faces” as follows:

- The Environment
- The Community
- Craft Development
- Heritage Link
- and Mind, Body, Spirit Connect

The Environment

Spruce Up plays an important role in the management of environmental aesthetics as we move forward with the beautification of our resort areas. It additionally creates awareness of environmental issues that affect the sustainability of our tourism product.

With a budget of approximately 90 million Jamaican dollars, and alongside the **Comprehensive Resort Upgrading Programme**, the *Spruce Up Jamaica* programme includes:

- Removal of debris
- Cutting of grass
- Bushing of roadways
- Painting of kerb walls
- Installation of garbage receptacles
- Streetscape in urban centres, e.g. painting of façade of business places in resort centres

In Montego Bay our major tourist town, for example *Spruce Up* will be revitalizing the *Hip Strip* as a primary place of interest for both locals and visitors. We will then be concentrating our efforts on Greater Montego Bay, Portland and the South Coast. The work will be geared to creating a

competitive edge for Jamaica’s resort areas, and additionally to promoting **increased awareness of environmental issues** like climate change and the need for energy conservation.

The **Spruce Up II Programme** will be undertaking significant projects in a number of communities island wide. These include:

Montego Bay
St. Ann
St. Mary
Negril
Portland
South Coast
Clarendon
St. Elizabeth
Westmoreland
Manchester
Falmouth
Kingston Metropolitan

The Community

Through the *Spruce Up Jamaica*, we will be **interacting with inner-city communities** around the resort areas of Montego Bay, Ocho Rios and Negril, encouraging citizens of these communities to work together for a common cause – to make a difference, and so benefit from tourism.

For strength and support, we’ll be partnering with such organizations as the Social Development Commission, the foundations of some private sector companies (for example BNS, JNBS, Grace) and community organizations.

Of course, *Spruce Up Jamaica* will support the **community tourism concept** of empowering a community to **create income-generating projects** by drawing on culture and heritage assets.

These projects in turn provide **a value-added experience for both visitors and residents**, as we see repeatedly at our many annual festivals, including events as wide apart as the Portland Jerk Festival and Calabash Literary Festival.

Spruce Up Jamaica benefits will reinforce our initiatives for the development of both existing and new community tourism projects. One excellent example of this is community-based wellness tourism, using the attractions of **Milk River Bath & Spa** and **Bath Fountain Hotel & Spa** as community anchors for development of these two wellness community projects.

Craft Development

Hand in glove with *Spruce Up Jamaica*, and a major component in our community tourism, is the Ministry's drive to develop craft, as an important part of the enhanced tourism product.

There are nearly 2,000 craft vendors in 13 craft markets across Jamaica. Despite this the numbers are growing as our cruise ship industry is quickly attracting new entrants into craft vending.

Through our Craft Development programme being spear headed by the *Spruce Up Jamaica* programme, we are working to enhance the visitor's shopping experience by transforming these markets into places of interest where Jamaica's cultural heritage will be showcased through craft, music, culture, and cuisine. Each area is being individually styled, and each will have its own special theme. Diversity will attract visitors to take in several different markets rather than making just a single stop at one of them.

Seven craft markets are to benefit under *Spruce Up*, as about US\$2 Million are earmarked for upgrading activities.

I'm excited to report that Jamaica will soon have our *Artisan Villages*, designed to promote a cultural Jamaican experience for visitors with a range of uniquely Jamaican craft-related activities and programmes. This initiative calls for a reorganization of the craft sector in terms of product development and marketing.

Our Human Employment and Resource Training (our HEART TRUST) Programme and Team Jamaica Programme will provide *Spruce Up Jamaica* training support, including specialised training for craft vendors and traders. Training will also include merchandising, salesmanship, personal development, and customer service.

The Craft Development Institute (CDI), which will be a HEART Trust/National Training Agency project, is one such partnership, established to give leadership, set policy and act as a catalyst for the development of craft in Jamaica. The Institute will take on responsibility for developing craft products for our tourist industry.

Our *Spruce Up Jamaica* campaign not only underscores the value of this craft market renaissance, but also **reinforces the strength of Destination Jamaica**.

Heritage Link

Of course, the development of our great heritage assets helps to differentiate Jamaica from other Caribbean islands. The *Spruce Up Jamaica* heritage link will focus on four heritage attractions:

- The Ward Theatre
- Devon House
- Hope Gardens & Zoo and
- Emancipation Square in Spanish Town

Four major areas are cited for the development of **built heritage**:

- Falmouth, one of the best designed Georgian towns;
- Spanish Town, Jamaica's capital for 300 years;
- Seville, Columbus' first capital on the island; and
- Port Royal, which occupies a special place in the history of Jamaica and the world.

Heritage towns like **Accompong in St. Elizabeth** where Jamaica's first free people, the Maroons established themselves, as well as Seaford Town in St. Thomas are also on the agenda. The development of these towns will create an interesting blend of heritage tourism and community-based tourism. They will be a magnet for tourists and the residents will benefit from the efforts of maintaining their heritage and the increase in commerce.

Another interesting heritage link will be the **development of places of worship in the downtown district of Kingston as heritage attractions**. Baptist, Anglican, Methodist, Catholic, Jewish and Chinese places of worship are all represented in Kingston, the capital of Jamaica. It is one of the reasons why our national motto – *Out of Many One People* - works. Packages featuring visits to these locations will compliment our growing faith-based tourism sector.

Mind, Body, Spirit Connect

With a focus on **Mind, Body and Spirit**, *Spruce Up Jamaica* seeks to connect all the elements for improving attitude and behaviour, which in turn will move forward our drive for **exemplary service delivered effortlessly**. Under the banner ***Mind, Body, Spirit Connect***, our focus on

values and attitudes will be **supported by training and a comprehensive public awareness programme.**

The Tourism Service Excellence Programme also established under *Spruce Up Jamaica* is a vehicle for evaluating and rewarding high quality service. Its function is to improve the competitiveness of Jamaica's tourism product in the global marketplace and to achieve sustainable results – all geared towards offering **high-touch service everywhere in Jamaica.**

In December this year, we will host the inaugural **Tourism Service Excellence Awards** – we call it *The Oscars* of tourism!

The **Team Jamaica** programme will provide the training support for the **Mind, Body, Spirit Connect** component of the *Spruce Up Jamaica* programme. The objective is to provide all tourism workers with first-hand experience of **brand Jamaica**, and to encourage camaraderie and a sense of pride in Jamaica's tourism product. A song used in the Team Jamaica training programme has the words:

*Team Jamaica, Team Jamaica
Tek mi advice, mek wi country nice
Team Jamaica.*

And on the subject of training, in 2009, **our new Hospitality School** will open. It will provide professional training for the supervisors and managers who will be needed to fill the 33,000 jobs expected to be created by the growth in our hotels and attractions sub-sectors.

BUILDING APPRECIATION

Keeping **people at the centre** with our *Spruce Up Jamaica* maintenance programme, we aim to build a greater appreciation of tourism and a heightened awareness of the Jamaican tourism product. Our activities will:

- Promote an understanding of the *circular flow* of tourism, and of its linkages, for example the impact tourism has on the foreign exchange earnings of Jamaica.
- Explain how making our resort areas smart and attractive will promote insight and understanding of tourism, and in turn will contribute to reducing crime.
- Foster a new level of respect for self and visitors, we will help build a true service ethic.

MAKING IT MEMORABLE

Spruce Up Jamaica, is an acronym that will help us to grasp the concept:

Sustainable high-touch service

Partnerships for growth

Resolute delivery

Universal appeal

Commitment to change

Environment maintenance

Unprecedented programme

Pride, passion and personal development

Joining hands to achieve goals

Attitude change

Mega partnerships

Awareness building

Ingenuity and creativity

Communicate the vision

Amelioration for the nation

THE POWER OF UNITY

As a highly interactive programme designed to engage participation at all levels, ***Spruce Up Jamaica, Nice Up Yusef*** crosses all social divides, gender and age.

And it sets the stage for **memorable experiences that bring visitors back again and again to Jamaica**, thereby creating **superior value and competitive differentiation**.

Spruce Up Jamaica is a call to action, and a directive to work together in unison with a shared vision for a secure and prosperous future for all Jamaicans.

According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), tourism is the world's leading business; it is currently worth more than 8 trillion US dollars; and is forecast to increase to 15 trillion US dollars by 2015.

Tourism represents approximately 35% of the world's exports of services and over 70% in Least Developed Countries (LDCs), that is in countries like Jamaica.

The Caribbean region is among the most heavily tourism-dependent in the world:

- WTTC statistics indicate that Caribbean tourism accounts for nearly 15% of GDP;
- And almost 13% of employment, with approximately 2 million jobs;
- Tourism represents 18.2% of the region's export earnings – which means that one in every five dollars earned is from tourism.

- In Jamaica, tourism contributes 47% to the country's foreign exchange earnings.
- Tourism contributes 10% of our Gross Domestic Product;
- Tourism is responsible for 9% of employment in this country, employing more than 80,000 persons directly and some 180,000 persons indirectly;
- Tourism has linkages to all sectors of the economy;
- And is the only industry in Jamaica today that provides support and assistance for every single layer of employable persons in the country.

Despite the current economic challenges, we in the Caribbean, and in Jamaica, especially, must press on, as Tourism is our way towards ensuring that every Jamaica has a decent life. The UN World Tourism Organization agrees. Thus despite the challenges, we must find a way to make our destination the one the visitor chooses and the industry the one that attracts and keeps the best workers. It is indeed why I cannot be with you today, as my responsibility is to be in the marketplace drumming up support for the sector. Like the new Minister of Tourism in Barbados reminded us recently, during difficult times, it is prudent to work even harder, to re-invest more so that when the cycle moves on, you are ready.

Spruce Up Jamaica in all of its five manifestations is intended to achieve these objectives. We are investing in our product now to improve our service, so that we are the ones who get the scarce vacation dollar and later when the cycle moves on, we will be better prepared to marshal our share of the industry.

We believe that together we can shape our future. We have the power to choose. ***One love!***