



Remarks

Launch of the 2011 SDC National Twenty20 Community Cricket Competition

“Batting for Our Vision”

by

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Introduction

Thank you for giving me and the Planning Institute of Jamaica the opportunity to be associated with this exciting Twenty20 for 2030 Cricket Competition.

Let me begin by saying Mr. Vernon, that you and your team at the SDC could not have chosen a more apt vehicle through which to capture the “hearts and minds” of thousands of Jamaicans, especially those who live in the nooks and crannies across the island as you seek to realize the goal of “building communities...building Jamaica”.

Twenty20 cricket is now very popular in Jamaica, the Caribbean and cricket-playing countries across the world, and is proving itself not only entertaining and captivating, but a tool for community building and transformation.

Master of Ceremonies, I’ve had the pleasure of attending one of the matches at the community level, and I must say that I believe that the amount of excitement, enthusiasm, pride, excellent community support and camaraderie that is being generated among community members and supporters of their respective teams, is comparable to that which is exhibited at any of our popular national sporting events.

I therefore take this opportunity to commend the team at the SDC for its foresight and innovation; the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sports and the many sponsors in the private and public sectors for your generosity and commitment in making the Twenty20 Community Cricket Competition a much anticipated annual event on the community as well as national calendar.

However, I must express some disappointment. As one who prides himself in being more than just a cricket enthusiast, I feel compelled to call your attention to an important deficit. Let me pause to first establish that my credentials to criticize are impeccable. My claim to fame was that at Excelsior High School I was the opposite end bowler to Courtney Walsh. I got no one out so that he could get all the wickets. This contribution to his success needs no telling.

Having established this, I would like to take up my bat for our women whom, as I observed and from anecdotal evidence, are the most vociferous supporters at each 20/20 match. That their role in this regard is very important cannot be disputed. But let us not consign them each year to merely being cheer-leaders for their menfolk who take centre stage. Permit

me therefore — against the background of the broad-based inclusiveness of *Vision 2030 Jamaica* — to recommend that we develop, if feasible, a similar annual sporting competition or possibly include mixed teams to also showcase the capabilities of our women. I’m sure that through this medium our country can unearth the many Vivalyn Latty-Scotts and Stephanie Taylors, to name a few, who are waiting to emerge from the many communities which you target each year.

That you seek to “*advance national development through community sports and entertainment in realizing Vision 2030 Jamaica*” suggests a deep appreciation and understanding of the synergies which exist between sports and national development. This symbiotic relationship can only serve, as you have identified, as a catalyst for:

- community transformation through the exposure of local talents
- creation of opportunities for appropriate social intervention strategies
- increasing the organizational capacities of local communities
- enhancing the abilities of community-based organizations to initiate and sustain positive community options in the areas of planning and project development

- bringing together the relevant local and national agencies to respond directly to issues affecting the development and well-being status of individuals and their communities
- building and solidifying the important social and public capital necessary for the first tasks of community transformation and national development.

Thus, individuals and communities can be assisted to achieve proper health standards/healthy lifestyles; our youth and adults can build strong character and confidence; prepare to better meet the many challenges in a competitive world; and community driven interaction can be facilitated — all of which are critical elements for ensuring not only that *“Jamaicans are empowered to achieve their fullest potential”* but that there is holistic growth and well-being development of our communities and nation by 2030.

The competition’s projected economic and social impacts on individuals and communities are impressive and far reaching — over 4,000 persons mainly between the ages of 14 and 50 are expected to be involved as players; in excess of 2,000 individuals will gain seasonal employment as venue administrators, umpires, scorers and vendors; local businesses will benefit directly and indirectly; and thousands of persons will get the opportunity to spend their weekend as fans of a beautiful game.

In concluding, as we continue to bat for our vision through today's launch and the ensuing competition at the national level, I urge everyone — organizers, participants, vendors and fans — to ensure that that there's commitment, discipline, determination and productivity on the field of play and the venue that will consequently be translated into positive action in our everyday lives.

While as a people we continue along the continuum to achieving our ultimate vision, let us try to live a cricketer's life, which according to the former English Amateur cricketer W.G. Grace "is a life of splendid freedom, healthy effort, endless variety, and delightful good fellowship".

At the PIOJ, we are committed to being a part of the Twenty20 for 2030 team. Through our continued collaboration and partnership, we'll continue to play exciting, productive and successful innings of lusty batting, penetrative bowling and accurate fielding to make our collective vision a reality.

Thank you.

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