

**Remarks of the Deputy Director General of the Planning Institute of Jamaica at the
Graduation ceremony of the IAN Youth Development Programme
March 8, 2021**

GREETINGS: Master of Ceremonies Mr Damion Hylton; Mrs Hazel O'Connor, Executive Director, Morris Entrepreneurship Centre, NCU; Mr Eric Malcolm, Vice-President, NCU; Ms Parsha Allen, Deputy Parish Manager, KSA, SDC; Mrs Charlene Mohan, Director (Acting), Region 1 Heart NSTA Trust; Mrs Sherrone Lobban, CEO DPM International Ltd and Director, Project Management Global Institute; Rev. Dr Sherrone Smith-Sanchez, Board Member PMGI and Guest Speaker today; Miss Donnetta Russell, Assistant General Manager, Human Capital Management Department, NHT; IANYDP Committee members, Graduands, specially invited guests, in person and online, my own CRP team members, Charles Clayton, Programme Director, Charmaine Brimm, Socio-Economic Development Specialist and Chair of the IANYDP Committee; Kimberley Wellington, Research Officer, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

It is indeed a pleasure for me to stand before you today and to share in this wonderful occasion, which marks the culmination of two years of hard work and dedication in the implementation of the IAN Youth Development Programme. This programme, with its focus on youth development and capacity building of CDCs was such a timely and critical intervention in our efforts to prepare and motivate youth to become owners and leaders of their communities; and to strengthen the governance structure of the CDCs to effectively carry out their role in coordinating and advocating on behalf of its community members. It cannot be said enough, how important it is to invest in our youth who are the foundation and future of our society, and to equip them with the requisite tools needed to adequately prepare them to become effective leaders of tomorrow. This IAN Youth Development Programme has served to achieve just that, through the delivery of its main programme components, namely Training (core skills, business administration, project management, proposal writing, business model canvassing and community engagement and leadership); Mentorship and Internship, over the past two years. This programme was indeed a timely intervention that provided one more rung on the ladder for restoration of hope among our vulnerable youth and which can be seen today in the persons of you our Graduates.

With this in mind, I must commend you all for the discipline and resilience exercised, as you chose to press on with the programme despite the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and the unexpected volatilities that arose within your communities. Seeing you here today is testament of your focus and will power to succeed, no matter the cost. For this I must commend you as your efforts have not been in vain and has borne much fruit.

I must also recognize the Community Renewal Programme of the PIOJ (CRP), the SDC's Parish Inter-Agency Network and our partners, for the insight and awareness about the needs of our youth and our community groups, which led to the design, development and implementation of this programme.

Today I am pleased to say that the successful implementation of this programme, has contributed directly to the fulfilment of Vision 2030 Jamaica, National Development Plan Goal #1: Jamaicans are empowered to achieve their fullest potential and National Outcome 2: World Class Education and Training. In this context we recognize the work of HEART NSTA Trust who delivered the Core Skills and Business Administration training under the programme; as well as the Northern Caribbean University who delivered the Project Management, Proposal Writing and Business Model Canvassing training. These are two of Jamaica's leading training Institutions which are also recognized internationally for offering 1st class training and capacity building programmes. We also acknowledge and are thankful for the NCTVET, who recognized the value of this programme and approved our recommendation for a new qualification plan to be developed, which resulted in a customized training programme, accredited by the NCTVET as "*Development of Community Projects for Implementation*", now being a permanent offering by HEART NSTA Trust. This programme has also supported two of the CRP's strategic objectives which are to strengthen Governance and to promote Youth Development within the CRP target communities. The Pillar identified as "Youth Development" provides the nexus between the CRP, the NDP and the Youth IAN.

Importantly, the successful execution of the IANYDP, exemplified how well coordination works when we harmonize our efforts. Thus I must recognize the role of the key implementing entities and partners SDC, HEART NSTA Trust, HOPE Programme, PMGI, the CDCs and the NHT.

I see before me today winners, future leaders within their communities, motivated and equipped to lead the process of community transformation, not only in your immediate communities but throughout Jamaica. I sincerely hope now that you have benefitted from this programme, you will fully utilise its opportunities and in turn become an inspiration to other youth who may be needing motivation and direction to chart a better future for themselves.

I close by offering congratulations to the partners who contributed to the design and implementation of this programme and to the youth and CDC members who have taken the opportunity to participate in this pilot phase of it. Because of this resounding success, we look forward to replicating this programme in other communities across Jamaica and pledge the continuing support of the PIOJ as it continues to forge a path of inspiration for our youth. We are truly proud to have been a part of this successful initiative.