



**PARTNERSHIP FOR JAMAICA'S STRONG
AND SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY**

AGREEMENT

2022 - 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE NUMBER
Preamble	3
Guiding Principles	5
General Commitments of the Partners	7
Issues	9
New Partnership Agreement	11
Structural Arrangements of NPC	16
Secretariat	17
Institutionalization of NPC	17
Monitoring and Assessment of Partnership Agreement	18
Communication	18
Conclusion	18
Partner Affirmation	20



OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

PARTNERSHIP FOR JAMAICA'S STRONG AND SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY

1.0 PREAMBLE

The effects of the global financial crisis between 2007 and 2009, worsened the short and long-term economic challenges facing many countries, including the Commonwealth Caribbean. These challenges included: declining investments, productivity levels and employment opportunities for its citizens.

Although the crisis presented challenges for governments in the region, it also afforded these countries an opportunity to implement innovative solutions, to contend with the short-term effects of the financial crisis, while addressing long-standing problems.

The forging of social partnerships, as a specific governance model is one such innovative solution and has been effectively used in countries such as Barbados,

Ireland and Botswana, which allowed them to achieve levels of development and stability that other states yearned to attain.¹

Jamaica's Social Partnership Journey

Jamaica has also sought to use social partnership as a tool, to address some of its critical national issues. A summary of the country's social partnership journey is as follows:

1979: Establishment of an **Electoral Advisory Committee** with a quadripartite structure. The committee included representatives from the government, in the form of the Electoral Office of Jamaica, each of the two major political parties and civil society members.

1989: Establishment of the **National Planning Council**, with multisectoral representation, to advise the government on national planning matters.

1997: **ACORN**, the social dialogue group led by civil society players, was formed with quadripartite membership from civil society, trade unions, the private sector and government employees.

2003: Private Sector Organization of Jamaica (PSOJ), initiated deliberations around a **Partnership for Progress**

¹Minto-Coy, Indianna D. *Social Partnerships and Development: Implications for the Caribbean*. Caribbean Paper No. 12, December 2011, p. 3.

2008: Government of Jamaica (GOJ) launched a National Social Partnership Consultative Committee, which encompassed representatives from government, the parliamentary opposition, private sector, trade unions and civil society groups.

2009: Establishment of Jamaica's National Partnership Council (NPC) under the operating rubric of **Partnership for Transformation**. The NPC, which has operated seamlessly across successive administrations, has spawned three (3) Agreements: the 2011 **Partnership Code of Conduct**; the 2013 **Partnership for Jamaica**; and the 2016 **Partnership for a Prosperous Jamaica**.

Jamaica has enjoyed several benefits from this history of social dialogue and partnership and the GOJ intends to continue the process.

The previous Partnership Agreement, which was established in 2016, expired on December 7, 2020. Against this background, a new four (4) year Partnership Agreement is now needed.

2.0 **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The partners recognize that the country continues to be challenged by an unacceptable level of violent crime, poverty and division and nothing less than a radical transformation of our vital institutions will address these challenges. The Partnership seeks to build public support for this transformation.

In light of this, the new Partnership Agreement is guided by underlying principles of:

- Adherence to the just rule of law;
- Respect for human rights and civil liberties of all Jamaicans;
- Accountable, informed leadership, demonstrating unimpeachable integrity;
- Protection of the natural environment and improvement of public health;
- Economic growth established on foundations of inclusiveness, equity and sustainability;
- Quality education as a foundation for nation building; and
- Individual and collective commitment to tolerance and maturity in conflict resolution.

In carrying out its role, the Partnership will seek to:

- **Deepen the Process of Participatory Decision-Making** by adopting an inclusive, transparent and consultative approach, as no one sector has all the answers. This approach will take place early enough in the process to guide action.
- **Build the Partnership Process** through regular, respectful engagement and the achievement of shared goals.
- **Exhibit Effective Leadership** through effective communication and consultation with the broader society, including liaising with a range of committees, task forces and stakeholders, all operating in the national interest.
- **Seek consensus on the prioritization of Jamaica's major challenges and identification of critical development opportunities.**

- **Perform Critical Problem Solving by** drawing on the wealth of information, experience, expertise, insight, and other resources within the partnership, as well as in the wider society and the dynamic Jamaican diaspora.

3.0 GENERAL COMMITMENTS OF THE PARTNERS

The partners include representatives from the government, parliamentary opposition, private sector, trade unions and civil society (church, youth representative, women's representative and environment group).

In pursuit of their objectives and vision for the strong and sustained recovery of the Jamaican economy; and building upon the foundations of prior partnership agreements and arrangements in Jamaica; the partners undertake the following general commitments:

- **The Government and Parliamentary Opposition**, reaffirming that Jamaica's progress is retarded by a divisive political climate, commit to bring genuine, transparent, and accountable bipartisanship to national life; and commit to long term national goals, rather than short term political imperatives, and seek to engender trust and confidence in national processes, with due attention paid to the elimination of corruption in all its forms.
- **The Private Sector**, reaffirming that increased enterprise productivity and competitiveness, margin restraint, improvements in the ease of doing business,

obligation to the consumer and ensuring their fair treatment, youth engagement, effective consultation with unions and workers, employment creation, the creation of decent working conditions, gender equality, environmental stewardship and corporate social responsibility are necessary for national development, commits to bring these elements to the partnership process.

- **The Trade Union Movement**, reaffirming that innovative solutions are needed to the issues of low productivity, lack of trust between management and workers, gender equality, recognizing creative capacity and enhancement of the well-being and rights of workers, including the right to due process, commits to initiating and collaborating in the identification of such solutions.

- **Civil Society**, recognizing that the severity of Jamaica's social and economic problems requires a national call to action, commits to: initiating and supporting national efforts to deliver inclusive, equitable and sustainable economic growth; improve justice and security; enhance gender equality; empower young people; protect the environment; improve educational and public health outcomes; promote accountability and transparency; and harness the positive contributions and resources of the Jamaican diaspora.

All Partners, in recognizing their individual and collective responsibility to uphold and adhere to each one of the commitments given above, resolve to engage in

respectful and constructive dialogue and support each other in the fulfilment of these commitments, by accepting constructive feedback and criticism; and by holding each other and the collective partnership accountable, in the best long-term interest of the nation.

4.0 ISSUES

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) as a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) on January 30, 2020; and by March 11, 2020, it was declared as a pandemic. On March 10, 2020, Jamaica confirmed its first case of the virus. In its response to this public health emergency, the GOJ introduced a range of restrictions under the Disaster Risk Management Act (DRMA), such as work-from-home and stay-at-home orders, curfews, closure of our borders, bans on entertainment events, reduced public gatherings, physical distancing, closing of schools and other restrictions.

While these containment measures were intended to reduce the spread of the virus, they had an almost immediate negative socio-economic impact, resulting in a significant contraction of the Jamaican economy. In the first quarter of the 2020/2021 fiscal year (April to June 2020), the economy declined by 18.4%; while there was an almost 11% decline in the number of persons employed as at July 2020, when compared to the same period in 2019 (STATIN, 2020).

According to the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), during the January to March 2021 quarter, the Jamaican economy contracted by an estimated 5.7 per cent, largely due to the impact of the pandemic. This estimated decline, is in comparison to the previous year's corresponding period.

Overall, economic output and productivity suffered a severe blow in 2020 and this continued into 2021. This resulted in an approximate 12% decline in the economy and 300,000 jobs affected.

The country also continues to feel the impact of the climate crisis and is threatened by adverse weather conditions which have had a significant negative impact on our agricultural sector and serve as a constant reminder of the need for adaptation strategies to treat with the impact of climate change.

The velocity of the digital transformation of the workplace has increased rapidly, spurred on by the realities of COVID -19. Working from home and in cyberspace are rapidly becoming the norm. Therefore, access to fast, reliable internet services and the development of specific skills and competencies to navigate the digital transformation are urgently needed.

If the Government is to successfully enable Jamaica to recover stronger and do so in a sustained way, it cannot do so by itself, but must forge partnerships with key stakeholders such as: the parliamentary opposition, private sector, trade unions, church and civil society. This opportunity lies in establishing a new Partnership Agreement, focused on uniting the country around the goal of sustained recovery from these crises.

5.0 NEW PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT - *PARTNERSHIP FOR JAMAICA'S STRONG AND SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY*

Given the fall-out in the Jamaican economy from the COVID-19 pandemic; and the need to place the country on a firm 'footing' for the future; the new four (4)-year Social Partnership Agreement will be entitled *Partnership for Jamaica's Strong and Sustainable Recovery* and will commence in 2022 and end in 2026. Under this Agreement, the NPC will lend support to the recommendations of the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Taskforce, whose principal focus is to ensure accelerated rates of economic growth, employment, and improved levels of productivity to facilitate Jamaica's swift and robust recovery. It is envisaged that this will redound to the country being resilient to economic shocks post-COVID-19.

The new Partnership Agreement encompasses the five (5) strategic pillars of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 2030 and reflects our own Vision 2030 Jamaica – National Development Plan, namely: *Prosperity, Peace, People, Planet and Partnerships*.

I. PROSPERITY

The key national goal is to place the Jamaican economy on the path to full and sustained economic recovery and achieve a prosperous economy, with inclusive, equitable and sustainable economic growth. This can be achieved via the following, *inter alia*:

- **Employment Recovery, Growth and Productivity Enhancement**

The NPC will support and champion the recommendations of the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Taskforce Report and COVID-19 Labour Market Taskforce Report, to ensure that employment, growth and productivity targets are met. Specifically, focus will be placed on strategies for productivity improvement, building trust between employers and employees; and employers building and utilizing the creative capacity of employees.

Also, the NPC will advocate for the following legislations to be addressed: a) Employment Termination Redundancy Payment (Amendment) Act; b) Occupational Health Safety and Environment Bill; and c) Flexible Work Arrangement Bill. Given the increased velocity of digital transformation in organizations in Jamaica and globally, work-from-home (WFH), in fact work-from-anywhere (WFA), is fast becoming the norm; and therefore addressing these pieces of legislation becomes even more critical.

- **Enhancement and Spatial Expansion of the National Technology Infrastructure and effective implementation of a National Digitization Process**

This component will focus on the segment of the population without access to reliable internet services, including the effectiveness of the implementation of a national identification process and teaching and learning in educational institutions. To ensure that these deliverables are achieved, the NPC will

support the work of the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Taskforce, the Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology (MSET) and other key stakeholders, through advocacy and proffering advice.

II. PEACE

One of the key national goals is to combat crime and corruption and ensure that we have a Jamaican society that is safe, peaceful, orderly, fair and just. This can be achieved through the following, *inter alia*:

- **Rule of Law Adherence:** The NPC will support the work of the Crime Monitoring and Oversight Committee (CMOC); and advocate for issues relating to justice, safety and security (*inter alia*, reduction in murders and violence prevention), public order, anti-corruption and adherence to environmental and planning laws. It will also advocate for substantial improvement in Jamaica's corruption perception index (CPI).
- **Social Transformation:** The NPC will support issues relating to conflict resolution, civic responsibility and character-building skills, especially amongst our youths, as well as community development.

III. PEOPLE

Our people must be empowered to realize their fullest potential. This can be achieved via the following, *inter alia*:

- **Education Transformation and Labour Market Alignment**

The NPC will support the recommendations of the Education Transformation Commission 2021 and the COVID-19 Labour Market Taskforce Report and act as an advocate for change. Focus will be placed on addressing the deficiencies in the education and vocational training systems, with the aim of improving quality and outcomes and the overall level of Jamaica's human development.

Emphasis will also be placed on aligning the current and future needs of businesses with our education system. It has been found that in some instances, the market has not been conducive to some persons' growth and development, resulting in 'brain-drain.' Therefore, emphasis will be placed on ensuring the retention of the best and brightest talents.

- **Improved Public Health**

The NPC will support efforts to reduce the incidences of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), as well as the implementation of an effective vaccination programme. This is critical, considering the still present threats to the health and lives of Jamaicans, posed by COVID-19.

- **Protection of the Vulnerable**

The NPC will support efforts to improve opportunities for decent housing and to strengthen protection mechanisms for vulnerable populations, especially our disabled community. It will advocate for the implementation of the Disabilities Act.

IV. PLANET

The NPC will support initiatives to protect and restore our environment and natural resources, especially those that reduce climate vulnerabilities. Support will also be given to efforts to improve the framework of environmental laws, with an emphasis on monitoring and enforcement; as well as adaptation and resilience strategies, to protect the island against the threat of the climate emergency.

V. PARTNERSHIP

This will focus on a national ethos of dialogue and collaboration, which will involve: operating in alignment with government policy and national initiatives; inter-ministerial cooperation; and support for the Open Government Partnership National Plan.

6.0 STRUCTURAL ARRANGEMENTS OF THE NPC

- There will be quarterly meetings of the NPC, chaired by the Prime Minister.
- A coordinating government minister appointed by the Prime Minister, will act as an intermediary between the NPC and the government. This Minister will have oversight responsibility for the NPC and its committees, to ensure that their goals and those of the Social Partnership Agreement are accomplished.
- The Coordinating Committee will continue to operate and will include one representative from each sector – parliamentary opposition, private sector, trade unions, church, youth, women’s group, environmental group and civil society, along with its institutional membership. It will be chaired by the coordinating minister and will meet monthly.
- The Governance Committee shall be reestablished to treat with any disputes that may arise; and will meet as necessary.
- Other committees/working groups may be established by the NPC.
- **Framework for Agenda Setting:** The Coordinating Committee will have primary responsibility for setting the agenda for the quarterly NPC meetings. There will be an open call before the meeting, for partners to submit their suggested agenda items. The Coordinating Committee will accept, review and make a determination as to whether these suggestions are placed on the NPC

meeting agenda or dealt with in another forum. The Prime Minister will have his own agenda items that will also be included for the meetings.

7.0 SECRETARIAT

A Secretariat will continue to operate under the auspices of the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and will undertake coordinating, administrative and research duties. This will involve, *inter alia*: organizing meetings and other activities of the NPC; preparing minutes of meetings and reports; and providing general support to the NPC by ensuring that its work is successfully executed and the desired objectives achieved.

8.0 INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE NPC

Steps will be taken to institutionalize the NPC. This will involve: developing Terms of Reference (TOR) for the NPC and its members; outlining how the NPC members are selected; who are the members; the NPC's scope of authority; their mandate; when or how frequently they meet; the quorum for a meeting; how the Committees are selected and other details. This information will be documented and taken to the Cabinet for approval, within the first year of the Agreement.

9.0 MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT OF THE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

The Partnership Agreement will be monitored and assessed by the Coordinating Committee of the NPC. This will be done on a quarterly basis. A progress report will then be presented half-yearly to the NPC at their meeting.

At the mid-term point of the four (4)-year agreement, a retreat of the NPC will be held, to undertake a full review of the agreement; and adjust the terms and arrangements if necessary.

10.0 COMMUNICATION

A standard communication framework will be implemented and managed by the Secretariat, to inform the public and stakeholders of the work of the NPC. This will include: a Cabinet Note being prepared after each NPC meeting and presented to Cabinet; a press release or conference after each NPC meeting; a quarterly newsletter; and overall media and community engagement.

11.0 CONCLUSION

The Partners recognizing that new critical issues, disputes and even conflicts will arise from time to time during the term of this Agreement; agree to bring our best efforts to the resolution of these issues.

We agree that this Agreement will be deemed to have been breached, if any partner violates any of the provisions contained herein. Any breach will be reported to the NPC, which will decide on an appropriate course of action, including referral to its Governance Committee.



PARTNERSHIP FOR JAMAICA'S STRONG AND SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY

PARTNERS' AFFIRMATION

Most Reverend Kenneth Richards, D.D., CD, JP
Civil Society Representative

Kenneth Richards

Mrs. Helene Davis-Whyte, CD
Trade Union Representative

Helene Davis-Whyte

Mr. Keith Duncan, CD
Private Sector Representative

Keith Duncan

Mr. Mark Golding, MP
Opposition Representative

Mark Golding

The Most Hon. Andrew Holness, ON, PC, MP
Government Representative

Andrew Holness

This 28th Day of September 2022