



(Min Montague DCS Graduation)

Remarks Hon Robert Montague MP, Minister of National security

At the

Graduation Exercise for District Constables

Tuesday July 12, 2016

Salutations

Today's graduation marks a very important step in our efforts to develop targeted solutions to the challenges we face in ensuring the safety and security of our citizens and visitors to our island.

On behalf of the Ministry of National security, I am honored to be welcoming this first batch of District Constables specially trained and ready to be deployed in our resort areas.

We commend each of you on successfully completing your program of training and satisfying your trainers that you are now ready to make your contribution to the safety and security of your country and for our visitors.

This collaboration with the Tourism Product Development Company (TPDCo) is an example of the kind of partnership that is essential, if we are to reduce the level of criminality in our country and create the safer and more prosperous Jamaica that we desire.

Building a safer Jamaica is a national priority of this administration. It is a mission to which we are fully committed as a Government and one that is fully supported by all law abiding Jamaicans from all walks of life, and from every level of the society.

We are at a point in our history where Jamaicans are frightened, feeling powerless and hopeless as the criminals breeched the fences and are at our doorsteps. We did not get here overnight and we certainly will not walk away from this state overnight.

It is going to take hard work, partnership and the critical element of our well trained, disciplined, specially trained district constable force. Everyone has a role to play. There is no magic wand, no silver bullet, there is no quick fix. It is going to take time; it is going to take effort. It is going to take commitment.

Many will tell you of what they can and cannot do and what we should and should not do. As a minister of national security, I welcome your contributions and ask that you join us in partnership because we work for Jamaica land we love.

The truth is that very few if any of our goals and ambitions as a country, will be realized in an environment of crime and lawlessness, or in an atmosphere of fear. Prosperity and security are very closely linked.

It is widely recognized and a well-established fact that tourism is an important pillar of the Jamaican economy. It is one of country's leading source of foreign exchange earnings, foreign direct investment, economic growth and employment.

A healthy tourism industry benefits all of us as Jamaicans, it is therefore our responsibility as Jamaicans to protect the industry and to ensure that persons who choose to vacation in Jamaica have the kind of experience that will encourage them to return and to tell others about how nice Jamaica is.

The Ministry of National Security, its agencies and departments, has been working very closely with the Ministry of Tourism and other stakeholders in the industry to ensure that the safety and security concerns of the industry are properly addressed.

We are strengthening the capacity of the security forces island wide including our resort areas; with an emphasis on technology, intelligence, mobility and smart policing.

We will soon be rolling out a national CCTV system where persons who have private CCTV systems on their premises will be able to log in and allow the police to utilize the cameras that already exist.

We are investing into improving our intelligence network island wide and in terms of mobility, not only have we begun the process of acquiring pre owned motor vehicles but we have started the process of repairing some 90 motor vehicles that are stuck in garages for minimum cost. It has been a long time since the police have gotten an issue of rain coats so you know and I know that the criminals wait until there is a little rain and the police have to seek shelter then they move.

We are in the process of procuring more bullet proof vests and helmets for our police officers.

We are about to sign an MOU with INDECOM as it relates to the relationship between INDECOM and the Jamaica Constabulary Force because both groups work for the people of Jamaica and not for themselves. INDECOM should be the police's greatest friend and the police should be INDECOM's greatest friend.

We are moving, right here on these premises to repair a building to be used as a counseling centre. We recognize, as an administration, that counseling is important because the stress that the men in the Jamaica Constabulary face is untold. I would like to commend DCP Novelette Grant for leading and pushing that initiative so that when officers are in

need of counseling there will be a place provided for them so to do in privacy and with professionalism.

We are moving, as an administration, to roll out a programme against domestic violence, 37% of our murders are attributed to persons who know persons. We believe that if we create enough space and time for people to cool down tempers, we can save more of our people. Domestic violence affects everyone everywhere.

As announced in my sectoral presentation, we are moving to establish five gyms for each 'area' office. I am now told by Minister Bartlett that this number has been moved up to ten, so each area office will now have a gym because the police more than any other group suffer from lifestyle diseases.

We have high expectations of the men and women graduating today. You will be expected to perform your duties with the highest levels of professionalism at all times. You will be expected to know the laws that govern your area and to enforce them with firmness, fairness and respect for citizen and visitor alike.

You may be criticized and opposed by those who are prepared to destroy the industry in their efforts to 'eat a food,' but their selfish actions cannot be tolerated. Their actions threaten the welfare of the tens of thousands of hardworking Jamaicans that are legitimately making a living from this vital industry.

These harassers do not represent the true Jamaica. They must be reminded that although they have rights and privileges as citizens of Jamaica, they also have responsibilities too, and that they must act within the law or else be prepared to face the consequences of their actions. We cannot allow them to destroy the goose that lays the golden egg.

In that regard, we are calling on the retired police men and women, licensed firearm holders to join us on a programme of a voluntary force

of special District Constables to be deployed across the island to assist the JCF and to secure our citizens. Retired, ACP Strong has agreed to assist this process. We are currently in the process of recruiting persons to join this force. I therefore appeal to those who are retired to get in touch with ACP Strong and those licensed firearm holders who wish to play their part.

Each and everyone who is here can play a part. I invite all of you with a Smart Phone to take it out now and go to the Google play Store, type in Stay Alert and download that app. That app will make your phone into your weapon. Your phone will become your bodyguard, your phone will become your weapon of choice in the fight against crime.

As a Ministry, this financial year we are going to put back the question of the pension for DCs on the table. You serve this country and we believe we owe you that at the end of your service, you should be on a sure pension. With the support of private sector partnerships, we have secured two scholarships and we have been asking the District Constable Association to name the children of two slain or injured DCs that their children can benefit from the scholarships valued at JMD\$100,000 each per annum.

As we seek to improve the security forces, the new board here is moving to have all the courses offered here accredited so that over time as you train and as you come back for more training, the courses you do will be accredited and they will go towards higher earning and higher learning. From this institution, you should be able to move up to a certificate, a diploma, an associate degree or even a Bachelors degree.

As we increase the intake of recruits into the Constabulary Force we are moving swiftly to complete the discussions with the University College of Jamaica because it is our intention that regularly, at least every three months, we should be graduating a batch of police officers because we

must occupy the public space and that is why the investment in training is so important.

As I have said repeatedly, the lost man hours of police officers sitting in family court answering maintenance orders will not be tolerated. The tax payers of Jamaica invest in your training to be on the streets providing law and order, not to be in the courts for maintenance orders. I have been in discussions with the Police High Command; officers who are subject to maintenance orders ought to be removed from the list of officers to be promoted. You must take responsibility for your actions. Many times when these children are not properly maintained they become a burden and become recruits to gangs and become a problem to the society. This Minister is not treating with the symptoms but with the cause.

You are being deployed with the full support of the Ministry of National Security and the law abiding citizens of Jamaica. Our citizens are tired of the lawlessness and criminality that continues to rob us of the social and economic growth that is possible for Jamaica. They want a change and you will play an important role in making that change a reality.

We challenge you to make a difference, to maintain the high ideals and standards of your department and to make a positive difference in the areas that you serve.

I wish for each of you the very best, as you enter this new phase of your life, and ask you to make your families and country proud. I hope that you will experience personal and professional success as you serve your country.

Thank you.