



PRESS RELEASE
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\$82 million for MNS' Articulate Truck Driving Programme

The Ministry of National Security has spent approximately \$82 million to acquire two mobile driving simulators to train at-risk-youth residing in vulnerable communities in St. James and Kingston, to operate heavy duty vehicles. The simulators were commissioned by Prime Minister, the Most. Hon. Andrew Holness and Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang, at the Cornwall Automotive Training Institute (CATI) in Montego Bay, earlier today.

According to Minister Chang, the acquisition is in keeping with the technology component of the Ministry's Music, Sports and Technology Programme to engage, train and certify at-risk-youth in specialised skill areas. He said the move will facilitate behaviour change and deliver certified training which will result in socioeconomic opportunities for at-risk-youth in vulnerable communities.

He pointed out that music, sports and technology are proven to shape interpersonal relationships, perspectives of young persons and reduce juvenile delinquency while encouraging contact with positive role models.

“Boys, in particular, use these avenues as gateways to sustaining bonds among themselves. Some of our most volatile communities have used music and sports to positively contribute to neighbourhood transformation, and technology continues to have a phenomenal impact on how young people access, process and communicate information, as it is the “catalyst for the surge in new skills training and employment opportunities in the global space”, emphasised Minister Chang.

Meanwhile, Kevin Lee, Instructor and Assistant lecturer for the Articulate Truck Driving Programme at the Caribbean Maritime University, says the programme generally spans the course of 3 months or approximately 150 hours and enables participants to enhance their skills in driving heavy duty equipment which prepares them for jobs locally and overseas.

“The simulator is good because it mirrors 97 per cent of real life experiences. We focus not only on driving but also on defensive driving such as how to handle a loss of brake while going downhill”, he said. The simulators also provide experience in difficult weather and bad road conditions such as wet, slippery and snow covered roads.

He commended the Ministry for implementing the programme noting that 21% of students from vulnerable communities who he taught in a similar programme obtained employment both locally and overseas. **“It's a wonderful thing”,** he said.

“The most important thing emerging is the human resource development aspect, especially for the inner city youths. Most of them do not have the opportunity or the people behind them to push and that's all they need – a push!”, he continued.

In support of the driving programme, Taver Chung, a resident of Flanker, St. James, said he is excited to become enrolled. **“I'm looking forward to the training as it will fulfill my childhood dream of driving trucks. It's just that now I will be able to make a living out of it”,** he added.

The Ministry has partnered with the Caribbean Maritime University (CMU) and Heart Trust/NSTA to deliver and certify training in the Articulate Truck Driving Programme, in Kingston and in Montego Bay.

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