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Cadets Launch Tree Planting Project at JP Farms

The Northern Regiment for the Jamaica Combined Cadet Force (JCCF) has launched its Tree Planting Project at JP Farms, Agualta Vale in St. Mary, where some 500 trees were planted this morning in commemoration of National Environment Awareness Week (June 1 -8).

While delivering remarks at the launch, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of National Security, Senator the Hon. Matthew Samuda said the project represents the latest manifestation of the Government's National Tree Planting Initiative, noting that similar activities have been taking place within the Department of Correctional Services and other agencies, for which he has responsibility.

“This project provides young men and women in many cases with the ability to see the future”, he said, pointing out that planting a tree today will inevitably contribute to a sustainable environment.

“For far too long in Jamaica, we have not looked at the environmental factors which also impact our stability and security” the Minister continued, noting that in **“areas with high urbanisation there tends to be a high level of environmental degradation”**.

“Promoting patriotic service is at the core of the JCCF’s mission and one of the five objectives is to instill in cadets an ethos of service to fellows, school, firm, community and country. Participating in activities like these enables a young cadet to develop a sense of responsibility for his community. They feel a great deal of satisfaction on making a difference in our world, coupled with the camaraderie involved in contributing to a national effort alongside their peers”, the Minister concluded as he acknowledged and commended the efforts of instructors who serve in the JCCF.

Meanwhile, Brigadier the Hon. Errol Johnson and Custos Rotulorum for the Parish, said the launch culminates approximately two and a half years of negotiation with JP Farms and the Forestry Department in the Ministry of Housing, Urban Renewal, Environment and Climate Change, which was represented by the Hon. Pearnel Charles Jr.

“JP Farms provided the land and technical advice and the trees were given to us by the Forestry Department” said Brigadier Johnson.

He noted that the ultimate goal for the project is to plant some 1,500 trees, create a watershed and provide a complete beautification for the area.

“This is an activity that will involve the Cadets and will teach them to appreciate their environment. This is something that we are glad about especially because of how we are being challenged by the Covid-19 pandemic”, he added.

He noted that the JCCF is not a virtual programme and while some programmes can be offered virtually, the majority are hands-on, physical programmes that involve in-person interaction.

“These physical interactions are not solely based on learning tactics and strategies but also teach young people how to socialise, command and lead and we are focused on helping our youngsters to become good citizens”, the Custos emphasised.

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