



**PRESS RELEASE
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Ministers Samuda and Charles plant trees at DCS Facilities

Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of National Security (MNS), Senator the Hon. Matthew Samuda, along with colleague Minister of Housing, Urban Renewal, Environment and Climate Change (MHURECC), Hon. Parnel Charles Jr., participated in tree planting exercises at two correctional facilities in St Catherine, in recognition of International Day of Forests, which is to be observed on Sunday, March 21.

Some sixteen (16) trees will, in the end, be planted at the Rio Cobre Juvenile Correctional Centre with 56 at the Tamarind Farm Adult Correctional Centre. **“We must understand the process of rehabilitation for those who we’ve had to extract from society and kept in custody, whether as inmates or as wards of the state, that certain things must be a part of their rehabilitation process. So, some of the days that society celebrates particularly, as it relates to the environment, need to be actualised”**, Minister Samuda said.

The Minister stated that the day’s exercise was to set the tone for Sunday’s activity, where inmates from all the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) facilities will be planting trees. He added that **“planting trees is a learning moment for the wards at the Rio Cobre Juvenile Correctional Centre as it teaches them the importance of environmental benefits that they can bring about for themselves and for their families, when they re-enter society at the end of their rehabilitation programme”**. He noted as well that it presents an opportunity for the wards and staff to learn to care for the trees and nurture the growth.

Meanwhile, Hon. Parnel Charles Jr said the activity was a way of establishing collaboration across ministries in order to join efforts, increasing the amount of trees planted on the island. He said a number of the correctional facilities have enough land space to be utilised for tree planting.

The Minister lauded his colleague Minister Samuda for inviting representatives from his Ministry, as well as from the Forestry Department to participate. He stated that plans are already in place for an expansion of collaboration between the MNS and the MHURECC to utilising DCS and all of the other agencies and departments as best as possible; direct national messages around environmental protection; the need for sustainability and ultimately building resilience across the country. **“The Forestry Department is collaborating not just with DCS, but also with Food for the Poor and other stakeholders locally, regionally and internationally to make sure we achieve our target of the three million trees”**, Minister Charles said.

Commissioner of Corrections, Ret. Lieutenant Colonel Gary Rowe, described the initiative as a worthwhile opportunity that will benefit both wards, inmates and correctional officers.

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