



**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Tuesday, September 30, 2025



Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of National Security and Peace, Ambassador Alison Stone Roofs (centre), alongside Permanent Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister, Ambassador Dr. Rocky Meade (left), Canadian High Commissioner to Jamaica, His Excellency Mark Berman (2nd right) and Country Representative of the Organization of American States, Jeanelle van GlaanenWeygel (2nd left), discuss expected outcomes of the cybersecurity training with programme participant, Brandon Hibbert, at the Opening Ceremony for the Jamaica Cyber Youth Empowerment Academy held at the S Hotel on Monday, September 29.

Thirty youth to undergo training at Jamaica's First Cyber Empowerment Academy under GOJ-OAS- Canada partnership

“As we stand at the forefront of a rapidly evolving digital landscape, it becomes imperative that we equip our youth with the knowledge, skills, and resilience necessary to navigate and thrive in this digital age”, emphasised Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of National Security and Peace, Ambassador Alison Stone Roofs.

She was addressing the first cohort at the Opening Ceremony for the Jamaica Cyber Youth Empowerment Academy held at the S Hotel in Kingston on September 29. The Academy is implemented by the Ministry of National Security and Peace in collaboration with the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), the Organization of American States (OAS), the Government of Canada and the SANS Institute.

The Permanent Secretary outlined that the youth-focused cybersecurity training and certification programme represents a collective dedication to empowering Jamaican youth, upskilling cybersecurity professionals, and strengthening the nation’s cybersecurity architecture.

Jamaica is the first country to benefit from the pilot programme and Ambassador Stone Roofs noted that it puts the nation at the forefront of regional efforts to develop skilled cybersecurity talent.



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Ambassador Alison Stone Rooffe, further pointed out that the initiative aligns with Jamaica's broader national security and peace goals and added that **“...a well-informed and digitally empowered youth population is vital to building a resilient and peaceful society.”**

Similarly, Canadian High Commissioner to Jamaica, His Excellency Mark Berman, shared that the programme **“is a strategic investment in Jamaica’s digital resilience by equipping young people, with the tools and certification needed to succeed”** and outlined that **“we are helping to build the pipeline of skilled professionals who strengthen national cybersecurity and contribute to regional stability.”**

Country Representative of the Organization of American States, Jeanelle van GlaanenWeygel, expressed that **“the demand for skilled, cybersecurity professionals continues to grow”** noting that **“globally, there is currently a projected shortage of 3.5 million cybersecurity professionals.”**

“The Jamaica Cyber Security Academy now adds the next step – a firm pathway to career advancement in cyber security through recognised certification, mentorship and workforce readiness,” she pointed out.



Representatives from partner entities, the Ministry of National Security and Peace, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), the Organization of American States (OAS), the Government of Canada, SANS Institute and a portion of Cohort 1 at the Opening Ceremony for the Jamaica Cyber Youth Empowerment Academy held at the S Hotel on Monday, September 29.

In his keynote address, Ambassador Dr. Rocky Meade encouraged the first cohort to continue building on disciplines offered by the Academy. **“I want to encourage you to learn as much as you can in this programme... You will be the managers, trainers and directors, so do not stop at this programme. Use your minds, and you your intellect to do more than you can do now.”**

Over the next six months, thirty (30) young Jamaicans between the ages of 18-25 will participate in a structured training that includes aptitude testing, interview techniques, artificial intelligence security essentials, foundational cybersecurity, mentorship, and the opportunity to earn an internationally recognised certification. The program is designed to impart both technical and professional skills that will position participants to have a competitive edge in the global job market.