



JAMAICA SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday December 13, 2012

\$25 million rehabilitation for Mount Vernon Roadway in St. Mary

There is relief in sight for residents of Mt. Vernon in St. Mary who have had serious socio-economic woes resulting from poor infrastructure in the community – a situation made worse over time by successive natural disasters.

The Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF), under the CDB-Funded Community Investment Project (CIP) is now rehabilitating three kilometres of roadway in the area, which project is expected to benefit residents who have encountered hardships in marketing produce because of the roads.

The total cost of this project is J\$ 25.49 million of which the JSIF cost is J\$24.28 million and the community contribution is \$1,205,000.00. As part of the condition for approval for funding, the sponsor group in the community is required to make a minimum of 11 per cent of the total project cost as contribution in cash or kind.

Project works include the construction of 6,000 m² gabion baskets; construction of 200 m² of Rip Rap drains; 1000 m² of Sheet Patching; and construction of 100 m² of “V” drains.

The project is the second to be done in the community by JSIF. In 2009 3 km of roadway was rehabilitated which investment made a significant difference for farmers, school-aged children and small business operators, notes Dale Colquhoun, JSIF technical officer.

He explains, however, that with the passage of Tropical Storms Gustav (2009) and Nicole (2010) the river began to overflow its banks in some areas leading to the destruction of approximately 20% of the roadway. “These recent turn of events made it necessary for river training, road repair, and construction of drains in areas that water was not known to run before.”

In order to reduce the significant socio-economic damage that can occur from the road reverting to a deplorable state and to mitigate the risk associated with future natural hazards the current project will be executed over three months.

Colquhoun states, “We note the significant actions of the St. Mary Parish Council which is the project sponsor and which has maintained a strong presence in the community, and which brought our attention to this project. The sustainability of the overall project will be reliant on collaborative efforts between the Parish Council and the recently formed Mt. Vernon Development Committee.

JSIF will also pursue a Social Services (SS) project for Mt Vernon and this will include a community-wide Social Marketing Campaign for environmental awareness; and technical assistance to the farmers (primary beneficiaries) inclusive of land Management in Agriculture; disaster Mitigation in Agriculture; production management ; chemical management in agriculture; and post-Harvest Management as well as marketing .

Approximately 32.91% - 45.2% of the population in Mt. Vernon lives below the poverty level (PIOJ Poverty Map 2008). According to the residents, approximately 70% of youth are unemployed. Farming however is the mainstay of the community. With better access, it is expected that some of these characteristics will be mitigated.

Contact:

Kristina Morgan, Communications Officer

Jamaica Social Investment Fund

Telephone: 968-4545. 446 -8639