



GREETINGS BY

SCARLETTE GILLINGS

MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE JAMAICA SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND

Handing Over Ceremony for the Rastafari Indigenous Village

Porto Bello St. James

April 4th 2014

Salutations

- **Hon. Sharon Ffolkes-Abrahams, MP – Member of Parliament for St. James West Central**
- **Mr. Michael Thorpe - Deputy Mayor of St. James**
- **Mrs. Jennifer Griffith – Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment (TBC)**
- **Dawn Lemonious Caribic Vacations**
- **Theo Chambers Country style Community Tourism Network**
- **Annette Tingle, Programme Officer for Jamaica Travel Foundation**
- **Mary and Mike McLaughlin Trees that Feed Foundation**
- **Ras Kashka, Past President of the RAHBS**
- **Members of RIV**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

Good morning,

I bring you greetings from the board, management and staff of the Jamaica Social Investment Fund.

In the early years, the JSIF interventions focused on infrastructure development such as road repairs, construction and rehabilitation of schools and health centres.

The fund has however ventured into community based Interventions in rural areas to generate economic returns both in the agriculture and tourism sectors. In so doing, the JSIF under the mandate of the Government of Jamaica through funding from the World Bank began the implementation of the Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) in 2010 to cater to this need.

In March 2012 the Rastafari Africa Hall Benevolent Society (RAHBS) received approval for JSIF/REDI for assistance with Infrastructure, marketing and promotion and capacity building with respect to the Rastafari Indigenous Village (RIV).

The Project was funded on the basis that the strengthening and promotion of this project would not only make a significant contribution to Jamaica's tourism product, but as one which will impact the economic prospects of the community which it operates.

Furthermore, JSIF in 2011 signed an agreement to provide funding to the Ministry of Tourism to develop a Community Based Tourism Policy geared towards the development of rural economies through tourism.

Currently, the policy is at the green paper stage and involved broad based stakeholder input through island wide consultations.

In effect the Community Tourism policy will ensure that other community groups like RIV receive greater support and will increase involvement by small enterprises in the wider tourism industry.

The REDI project was also interested in assisting RIV to move from 'market ready' (i.e.) that is from just operating with the basic facilities to operating at industry standard that would propel it to 'export ready' status.

Overall the main aim was to improve the infrastructure in order to enhance the visitor experience.

To address and to improve the existing product, the following scope of works were included:

Capacity Building: *Training and certifying of 20 persons in Team*

Jamaica, customer service and tour guiding

Infrastructure improvement:

- *Construction of a new museum, yoga center, music studio, cabins and restrooms*
- *Rehabilitation of a kitchen, restroom, and craft kiosks.*
- *Provision of Solar panels to provide lighting in the museum and kitchen as well as perimeter lighting*

Equipment: *The facility was also equipped with:*

Television and other audio visual equipment,

A Computer, multipurpose printer/scanner/fax/copy machine, Business management software,

Projector and Projector screen.

The project was implemented using the Community Based Contracting methodology. JSIF provides funding to the communities who are then responsible for executing the projects with JSIF playing a role as facilitator. Among the activities that the RIV carried out was the procuring of the staff and project related goods for the civil works.

These works were funded by the REDI which is a programme funded by the Government of Jamaica and the World Bank at a cost of J\$19.5 million and with community contribution of J\$4 million.

Today, as we close we are encouraged, that RIV has seen an increase in tours and that you have been able to welcome overnight visitors to the newly constructed cabins. We have heard that you have hosted over 30 visitors of varying nationalities since the beginning of 2014.

We understand that the impact of the project on the local community has been significant so far. One of the main partners, the Montego River Gardens, has seen increased revenue as they offer meals to visitors which is an alternative to the 'Ital' served at RIV. Other benefits have been the jobs created for artisans within the village. In addition, the community of Irwin has recently lobbied for and gotten

approval for a new police post and the Riverside Drive community must also be congratulated for taking the initiative to form its own CDC, mostly to lobby for better public infrastructure.

We must applaud all those involved in making the project a successful. You have our best wishes for the further growth of this enterprise.

I thank you