

REMARKS
BY
MR. OMAR SWEENEY
MANAGING DIRECTOR
OF
THE JAMAICA SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND
FOR THE
HOLY FAMILY INFANT SCHOOL REHABILITATION
AND EQUIPPING
HANDING OVER CEREMONY
ON
FRIDAY FEBRUARY 5, 2016
AT
9.00AM
AT
HOLY FAMILY PRIMARY AND INFANT SCHOOL

SALUTATIONS:

Madam Chair Ms. Venice Hibbert- Acting Vice Principal

Minister of Education, Hon. Ronald Thwaites

Chairperson- Holy Family Primary and Infant School, Ms. Herma Walker

Principal- Mr. Christopher Wright

The Most Rev. Charles H. Dufour- Archbishop of Kingston

Dr. Joan Reid- Executive Director, Early Childhood Commission

Mr. Achim Schaffert- Head of Operations, Delegation of the European Union

Ladies and Gentlemen. Good morning.

Our commitment at JSIF to education in general, and early childhood education in particular is evidenced by the fact that since our inception in 1996, we have approved and completed education related projects valued at over JA\$ 5 Billion.

This particular project at Holy Family was designed to address the following challenges faced by the school:

- Lack of adequate ventilation at the infant department
- Severe termite infestation resulting in the closure of the library for the past two years.
- Aged electrical systems posing threats of fire.
- Non-functional sanitary facilities
- Play area in need of urgent rehabilitation.
- The lack of an outdoor space for learning and
- A section of the premises had remnants of an improperly demolished concrete structure which posed a hazard for the students who played in the vicinity.

The rehabilitation works completed by the Poverty Reduction Programme (PRP) which we celebrate and officially hand over to Holy Family include:

- The installation of a suspended ceiling to reduce the transfer of heat throughout the facility.
- The demolition of the existing decorative blocks and installation of new windows and doors to improve ventilation.
- Electrical rewiring of the entire facility
- Renovation of bathrooms
- General painting
- Termite treatment
- Construction of a play area
- Provision of an outdoor green space, equipped with outdoor furniture.
- Removal of partially demolished structure, and the grading and paving of the grounds and
- The provision of equipment

Directly benefitting from this upgraded school are the 159 students of the Infant Department along with the 7 members of staff.

This project was delivered at a cost of JA\$ 8.9 Million, along with the JA\$2.6Million contributed by the community, and implemented over three (3) months.

The JSIF/PRP team is serious about erecting useful community infrastructure. We are also very aware of the critical importance of ensuring their maintenance. In this regard, we have coordinated with a number of external agencies like the Fire Department, the Parish Council and ODPEM and have expended resources in maintenance training for five (5) community members to ensure that there are resources in place to attend to the ongoing maintenance of the facility. The training included:

- ✓ Maintenance Planning
- ✓ Facilities Management

- ✓ Proper Environmental practices,
- ✓ Budgeting and Fund Raising
- ✓ Fire Prevention and techniques in combating Fires
- ✓ Disaster Preparedness and Risk Management

The participating community members left the training with a maintenance plan for their school, which they developed during the training, as well as a maintenance tool kit comprising such items as a wheelbarrow, a rake, a machete, and garbage bags, provided by the PRP. All is therefore now in place for the continued maintenance of this rehabilitated facility.

At this juncture let me publicly recognize and thank the European Union (EU), our financing partner on this important project, which was implemented under its EU Poverty Reduction Programme (PRP) 3.

Let me also recognize the tremendous support of the community and the sponsors- the Holy Family

Primary and Infant School Board, in ensuring the successful and efficient completion of the project.

Our children and staff can now feel proud and comfortable to be engaging daily in the important learning process, in an environment conducive to learning and play.

Let me remind everyone that it is through education that we will break the poverty cycle among so many in our Society. I am therefore appealing to all the parents and guardians present here today to support your children's educational journey. Make sure they never miss a day of school. Get involved in the life and work of the school. Never ever stand by and allow anyone to vandalize this school. It is the community's resource and must be maintained and secured. Work with the teachers. Keep track of your children's progress. The quality of their future depends on it.

On behalf of the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF) let me wish for you, all the good that is possible from this new learning facility.

Thank you.