



**Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries**  
**Hon Audley Shaw, CD, MP**  
**Minister of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries**  
**23<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly of the Inter American Accreditation**  
**Cooperation**  
**Hilton Resort and Spa, Montego Bay**  
**Monday, August 27, 2018**  
**9:00 am**

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**Salutations**

- Mrs. Marline Stephenson Dalley- Master of Ceremonies
- Bishop the Hon. Conrad H. Pitkin- Custos Rotulorum of St. James
- Mr. Simon Roberts – Chairman, Jamaica National Agency for Accreditation (JANNAC)
- Mr. Randy Dougherty - Chairman, Inter-American Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC)
- Ms. Sharonmae Shirley - CEO, JANAAC
- Mr. Ronald Josias – IAAC
- Distinguished Guests- Local, Regional and International
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning.

I am pleased to be sharing with you this morning at this the **23<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly of the Inter-American Accreditation Cooperation**. I wish, also, on behalf of the Prime Minister of Jamaica, the Most Honourable Andrew Holness, to extend heartiest welcome to the Inter-American Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC) delegation. We are extremely pleased to welcome you to our tourism capital, Montego Bay.

A special welcome as well to our other visiting friends who will be participating in this year's General Assembly. I hope you find the time to enjoy the beauty of our Jamaica!

The Government of Jamaica is very pleased to be hosting the **23<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Assembly of the IAAC through the Jamaica National Agency for Accreditation (JANAAC)**.

JANAAC is one of our newer agencies that since inception has provided excellent service to Jamaica and the Caribbean. Through its mandate of providing Conformity Assessment Bodies with internationally recognized accreditation services, JANAAC has indeed played its part in helping to lift the Jamaican economy as its services encourage Jamaican entities to produce and trade goods and services of consistently good quality.

The services of the agency also extend to the wider CARICOM through the Caribbean Conformity Assessment Scheme.

As Minister with responsibility for Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries (MICAF), I want to take this opportunity to congratulate JANAAC on the strides it has made over the years and extend congratulations on the agency's tenth anniversary.

**Points:**

Jamaica, like many other developing economies, is faced with several challenges which include: growing its industrial and manufacturing sectors as well as modernising and boosting agricultural production. We are also faced with creating the right atmosphere in which our entrepreneurs can grow and expand, especially towards increasing the export of goods and services that are produced locally.

My ministry has a vested interest in improving these dynamics for our local players, who must push even harder now, given this globalized sphere in which we now operate.

**The Atmosphere of Global Trade:**

The world's trade arena is now a global marketplace, fuelled by an unprecedented increase in communication, technological advancement and the ease and speed of transporting goods and services buoyed by trade agreements.

Each player must also compete on quality, production efficiency and price. And, as we all know, the playing field is not always level.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is also true that developing countries face more technical barriers to trade than many developed states due to a lack of acceptance of laboratory, inspection and certification data.

This in turn results in expensive retesting, detention and rejection of goods.

Jamaica's reliance on exports also necessitates a robust quality infrastructure as duplicative testing and delays disrupt the supply chain and threaten the stability of the Jamaican economy.

**If we are to grow, we must therefore learn to play the manufacturing and export game as well as the developed countries.**

We also have an additional challenge, our consumers have a healthy appetite for imported goods. The magnitude of this is evident in the trade balance as a percentage of GDP. According to the World Bank, the average balance of trade for Jamaica from 1960 to 2017 is negative 8.66 per cent. This relationship between imports and exports shows how far we are from creating the wealth required to satisfy our appetite for consumption.

***Clearly, we need a paradigm shift if we want the growth in exports that is necessary to bring about economic prosperity.***

Ladies and gentlemen, any discussion on improving our export potential must therefore include our adherence to the rules of the game in the global marketplace.

**The Value of Accreditation:**

Accreditation is the process which bridges the gap between the expectations of the consumer, the producer, the regulators and the exporting country. **Accreditation provides the stamp of approval to boost trade, enhance our competitiveness, reduce transaction costs and increase confidence in Jamaica's products and services.**

Accredited conformity assessment such as calibration, testing, inspection and certification for personnel, products or management systems **is a critical enabler of economic growth for developing countries like Jamaica.**

Let us consider that exports consistently account for over 30% of Jamaica's GDP. At the same time, world trade has grown annually by up to 12% since 1983, with the exception of the most recent recession.

Globally, trade is worth over a trillion US dollars. Ultimately, this has created more competition in the export market.

**Accredited Conformity Assessment Systems in conformance with the ground rules established in the World Trade Organization's Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement is therefore a game changer!** We must eliminate the need for Jamaican goods to be detained in the ports of third country markets and retested.

I must pause at this point therefore, to applaud the work of JANAAC. The agency has accomplished much in its short life. Through its services and capabilities, JANACC is changing the way we operate.

There is no doubt that Jamaican exporters and Jamaican goods are in a much better position with importing countries now more assured that JANAAC accredited Jamaican labs are competent in the tests that they are performing.

Accreditation is the game changer that will help to drive the economy by creating unique opportunities for entrepreneurs, support new industries, such as the nutraceutical and cannabis industries and medical tourism, while bolstering existing industries.

**Close:**

As I close, ladies and gentlemen, let me reiterate the support of my ministry, and the government overall, to creating an enabling environment which grows and sustains industries in agriculture, fisheries, manufacturing and the service sectors – all industries.

We recognise that in order to achieve our mission we must fully embrace accreditation and conformity assessment and we continue to lean on JANAAC to lead the way.

Thank you!