



Hon. Anthony Hylton MP
Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce
Greetings
for
Signing of Trade Facilitation MOU
Cabinet Office Room 302
Monday, 22 June 2015 at 9:00am

Salutations:

- Colleague Ministers
 - Permanent Secretaries from across Government
 - Mrs. Patricia Francis, Chairperson, Trade Facilitation Task Force
 - Members of the Media
 - Ladies and Gentlemen
-
- This morning, we make a critical step our journey towards putting in place a much improved trade facilitation regime.

- Improved trade facilitation is central to the business reform agenda. The National Competitiveness Council (NCC) has been focused on coordinating the implementation of a variety of reforms in the country's business environment -- all designed to enhance its competitiveness -- with significant outcomes, as reflected in the our rankings on the major global economic performance indices.
- These reforms are integral to our efforts to transform our economy into a logistics-centered economy. The logistics-centered economy is about increased efficiency in the movement of goods and services, and people across borders. It is a strategic objective that must be achieved, if we are to successfully position Jamaica as the 4th pillar in the global trading system.
- Improved trade facilitation is a condition for the successful implementation of our National Export Strategy (NES), and forms part of the second stage of the reform agenda.

- Today's MOU signing signifies our continuing efforts to deepen the business environment reform process to ensure measureable achievements in the trade facilitation outcomes, and in trade performance. It signifies the next stage of reforms and represents trade facilitation, as not just a formality to satisfy treaty obligations but to address the root causes of the impediments to trade.
- The expected benefits of trade facilitation are 1) Lowering transaction costs through harmonization, mutual recognition, and easier access to information, 2) Reducing time to deliver products to markets and customers, 3) Enhancing market access 4) Reducing costs when doing business 5) Improving Jamaica's international rankings in the World Bank's Doing Business Report particularly in the areas of doing business and the ease of doing business.
- Trade Facilitation speaks directly to the competitiveness of our country and businesses within Jamaica. Successful trade facilitation, therefore,

pivots on the principles of ease, transparency and predictability.

- However, for these principles to guide our current trade facilitation mechanisms, changes must be made. We must improve transparency and efficiency of our cross border procedures, strengthen the efficiency of maritime operations and improve the competitive offerings of our Special Economic Zones. At each turn, the effort to affect these changes may be difficult but they are essential.

- In this vein, the signing of this Memorandum of Understanding by Ministries across Government is a commitment to work collaboratively in a form befitting the joined-up Government approach. It is also a guarantee by all parties to do all they can in the furtherance of this process and lead by example.

The specific objectives of the MOU to be signed are as follows:

- To identify the roles and responsibilities of the Parties (Ministries) toward improving the environment for trade facilitation in Jamaica. It aims to facilitate the simplification and reduction of the cost of trade transactions for Jamaican importers and exporters.
- To support trade facilitation processes so that information sharing is optimized, paper documentation is reduced and overall efficiency increased. It is expected that the collaboration of Parties (Ministries) while adopting trade facilitation measures will result in greater accountability for each Party (Ministry), reduce the cost and complexity of doing business and improve access to statistical data.
- To remove obstacles and facilitate the ease with which goods and services move through our borders and ports to the benefit of business persons, in

particular importers, exporters and Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (“MDAs”).

- To adopt internationally accepted norms, standards and best practices for importing, exporting, transit and transshipment of goods while taking into account Jamaica’s development objectives.
- To ensure that trade is facilitated and conducted in a safe and secure environment utilising information, communication and technology (“ICT”), modern institutional structures and adequate resources with ISO 9001 Quality Management System Standards.

In closing, I want to I must commend the Trade Facilitation Task Force (TF 2), led by Mrs. Patricia Francis and Major (Rtr.) Richard Reese, the chair and co- chair respectively for working diligently towards the creation of a detailed trade facilitation plan and facilitating the creation of attendant partnerships across Government and with multi-lateral agencies such as the International Trade Centre and the World Bank.

I thank you