

Quarterly Press Briefing

January to March 2012

Vision 2030 Jamaica Report

Under the Vision 2030 Jamaica – National Development Plan framework, we are reporting comprehensively on key indicators of national well-being for this quarterly press briefing under six main reporting areas—Education Status, Labour Force Quality, Security Status, Justice Status, Economic Growth and Environmental Stewardship Status. An overview of performance shows little change in three of the six areas, with significant progress in two areas – Security and Economic Growth – and a decline in the indicator for Justice Status.

In Education, the gross enrolment rate of students at the tertiary level for the academic year 2010-2011 has increased slightly to 33.1 per cent, based on final figures, up by 0.3 percentage points compared to the academic year 2009–2010. The increase in tertiary enrolment is attributed largely to an increase in the access to and number of tertiary educational institutions and programmes in Jamaica.

Labour Force Quality declined slightly, with an average of 22.7 per cent of the total labour force having vocational or professional certification based on the quarterly labour force survey for January 2012, down 0.3 percentage point from 23.0 per cent in the January 2011 survey.

With respect to Major Crimes (murder, shooting, rape, carnal abuse, robbery, break-ins and larceny), 403 major crimes per 100 000 population were committed for the calendar year 2011, a decline of 1.5 per cent from 410 per 100 000 population in 2010. The murder rate for 2011 was 42 per 100 000 population, down 20.9 per cent from 53 per 100 000 population in 2010.

These figures for the past year continue the downward trend in crime rates that began in June of 2010. The reduction in the murder rate for 2011 already meets the target set under Vision 2030 Jamaica for 2015.

This downward trend in crime rates has continued in the most recent quarter from January to March 2012. While the murder rate increased by 10.7 per cent over the period January to March 2012 compared to the similar period in 2011, the overall rate of major crimes fell by 17.6 per cent over the period January to March 2012, compared to the similar period in 2011.

The likely contributory factors for this sustained fall in the crime rates include the strategic intervention of the security forces in key locations to disrupt the activities of the major gang networks, increased collaboration between citizens and security forces, and

increased use of proactive and technology driven policing methods. The Government continues to consolidate these gains through steps such as the implementation of the Community Renewal Programme, which targets holistic socio-economic interventions in the most volatile and vulnerable communities in key parishes.

Under the Justice Status, the case clearance rate in the Resident Magistrates' Courts (or the ratio of new cases filed to cases disposed of each year) fell to 82.7 per cent in 2011, down from 94.0 per cent in 2010. This excludes the data on Traffic Matters which were provided for the first time in 2010. If Traffic Matters are included then the case clearance rate falls to 53.0 per cent in 2011, compared to 63.7 per cent in 2010.

Under Economic Growth, the per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) expressed in US dollars rose to US\$4 973 in 2011, up 2.1 per cent from US\$4 870 in 2010, based on an increase in nominal GDP and an appreciation in the exchange rate of the Jamaican dollar. This economic indicator is expressed as a moving 3-year average, to smooth out annual fluctuations and show the underlying trends.

Finally, under Environmental Stewardship, Jamaica's score on the Environmental Performance Index or EPI has declined slightly to a score of 54.4 in 2012, down from a score of 58.0 in 2010. However, scores and rankings for the 2012 EPI cannot be compared directly with scores and rankings from earlier releases of the EPI, owing to changes in data and methodology.

This concludes the reporting on key indicators of national well-being for this quarterly press briefing.