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February 16, 2004

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

**PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH AT SIGNING OF MOU
BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF JAMAICA AND THE
JAMAICA CONFEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS**

On Monday February 26, 1996, I made ^a Broadcast to the Nation on the matter of social partnership in which I closed with this quotation from National Hero Marcus Mosiah Garvey "Let us not try to be the best or worst of others, but let us make the effort to be the best of ourselves".

Today, we have done that

I regard this defining moment in our history as a personal triumph in my tireless campaign to bring Jamaicans together to work toward the prosperity and future our country. This Administration has invested a lot of time and effort into broadening the decision-making process and by operating on the basis of consensus and cooperation.

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I will not attempt to take anything away from the remarkable work that was done by the Minister of Finance and his team and the various trade unions and bargaining units who negotiated under the umbrella of the Jamaica Confederation of Trade Unions.

Our unions have come of age and, based on the sentiments of a wide cross section of the society, so as the nation.

This MOU will provide us with the foundation that is critical for us to achieve our macro-economic goals, a stable industrial climate and sustainable development for the country.

There are some questions regarding the contribution of the Government to the MOU. The Jamaican people would be interested to know that Parliamentarians have given up salary increases amounting to \$12M for the period April 1, 2003-March 31, 2005.

I am ordering that the Ministry of Finance and Planning circulate a general policy statement on cost saving measures in the shortest possible time to all Government agency as is agreed in this MOU.

I am imploring the members of the Monitoring Committee to not only insist on receiving the quarterly reports detailing savings achieved in each agency of Government but that these reports should be made public. The Jamaican people must not be kept in the dark about the efforts that we are making to reduce public sector expenditure.

I am proud of the players who have risen to the challenge to put Jamaica first. It is in times like these that we must work together, not ^{fall} pull apart. This is how great nations are built-out of sacrifice and unity.

I thank the many public sector workers who have, in this single gesture, demonstrated practical wisdom and love for country.

Today is a great day for Jamaica and Jamaicans. Today, we are the best of ourselves.