

**SPEAKING NOTES
FOR
RT HON PRIME MINISTER
FOR
LAUNCH OF TOURISM IN SCHOOLS PROGRAMME
JAMAICA CONFERENCE CENTRE -1998 OCTOBER 1**

Acknowledgments

317

God has blessed this country with a natural beauty which, combined with our unique culture, attracts visitors to our shores.

It is the responsibility of all Jamaicans, whether or not you work directly in the tourist industry, to develop and preserve this vital sector of the economy. All of us benefit from tourism earnings, which are used to pay for essential imports.

Stopover visitors increased by 2.5% from January to August 1998.

✓
SC

Industry has a future and can grow if significant and sustained investment in plant and human resource is made.

Because of the critical role of tourism in our national life, it is the responsibility of all of us to become knowledgeable about the subject.

People abroad are more knowledgeable about Jamaican cultural heritage than many of us living here. (Jamaican cultural heritage is in such high demand abroad that other countries are claiming paternity. For example, Bob Marley has birthplaces in several countries).

We must all make it our duty to familiarise ourselves with the workings of the local tourist industry and seek to protect this goose that lays the golden egg.

It is in this regard that the Ministry of Education and Culture in collaboration with the Jamaica Tourism Board has developed a programme to infuse the subject of tourism into the educational curriculum from the Early Childhood level through to Secondary.

This programme includes:

- The production of Support Materials and
- Teacher Training

The programme will benefit:

-1700 Basic Schools

-950 Primary Schools

-150 Secondary Schools

Over 900, 000 student books will be produced and distributed in schools.

In addition some 23, 000 teacher's guides will be produced.

The aim of the Tourism in Schools Programme is to educate our student population so that they may form an informed opinion and develop a positive attitude about Tourism.

This programme should help in dispelling many of the negative attitudes and myths about Tourism.

Tourism ...

- Is about service, not servitude.
- Is about hospitality, not aggressiveness.
- Is about professionalism, not trial and error.
- Is about maintaining standards and improving quality, not about mashing down the industry.

- Tourism is about building a career, not hustling.

The Tourism in Schools programme complements the Team Jamaica project, launched late last year to train workers/operators involved in the tourism industry to improve levels of customer service. To date 600 persons have been upgraded from a target of approximately 2,500 during this financial year.

Both initiatives will, over time, make a significant impact on the quality of the local tourism product.

The Tourism in Schools programme will, in the medium and long terms have a revolutionary effect on how, as a society, we view and deliver our tourism product.

I hope that the young generation will grow up with a good understanding of this vital sector. I hope that they will see it as a career option, either as an employee or an employer.

It is fitting for me at this point to offer my own congratulations to Shauna-Kay Wood, the eleven year old student who has been selected winner of the Jamaican leg of the 1998 Conde Nast Traveller magazine's seventh annual Caribbean essay competition.

The Government is confident that this decision we are implementing today will reap benefits for the country in the future.

It is with great pleasure that I officially launch the Tourism in Schools programme.