

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY PRIME MINISTER OF JAMAICA
MOST HON. P.J. PATTERSON AT
IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHOP FOR THE IMO ISPS CODE
GRAND LIDO HOTEL NEGRIL
JUNE 25, 2003

Salutations.

It is a real pleasure to welcome such an important gathering to my country – important not only because of the subject matter which will claim your attention over the next few days, but also because you have the potential, through the industry which you represent, to partner with us in the development of one of the critical sectors of our economy – the maritime industry and the cruise shipping sector in particular.

As members of the shipping industry, you may recall that Jamaica enjoyed our first cruise ship passenger arrival in the late fifteenth century in the person of our European tourist – a certain Christopher Columbus. Not only did he visit but he also provided us with the very first celebrity endorsement of our tourism product by writing to his sponsors that Jamaica was, and I quote, “The fairest isle that eyes have ever beheld.”

Our reputation as a “happening place” continued down the years as in the seventeenth century, the pirates of the Caribbean took their swashbuckling ways to our eastern city of Port Royal, making its reputation as the richest city in the world.

Captain Morgan did us proud as he too did an endorsement, this time of one of the by-products of our sugar industry - Jamaican rum - which continues to enjoy a well-deserved reputation for excellence.

Fast forward to twentieth century and we see the entry of Port Antonio 's banana trade and the exquisite beauty of that eastern tip of our island enter the lexicon of popular culture through the songs of Harry Belafonte - entertainer, civil rights activist and son of Jamaica. Through Harry's Banana Boat song, the world learnt to sing about our "tallyman and tallying banana" - even if they had no clue what the words actually meant. Harry's gift of song to Jamaica continued to build the Jamaica brand with memorable songs such as "Jamaica Farewell" and "Island in the Sun".

And so, throughout the years we have maintained the long established mystique of our island as a premier and most desirable tourism destination. A recent survey conducted in the United States found that Jamaica enjoys the highest awareness of all destinations – in excess of 60% of those surveyed. Jamaica's brand awareness is in the top 50% of ALL products worldwide and, remarkably, achieved this with an advertising spend of less than 4% of that of comparable brands.

My own personal involvement with the international maritime industry dates back to the seventies when, as Minister with responsibility for Industry and Tourism, I became heavily involved with our port and shipping industry which then revolved around the Kingston Container Terminal, located in the Port of Kingston – the flagship of our industry.

Over the years, the Port of Kingston has achieved steady annual growth of 17% in container traffic. Currently, Jamaica controls approximately 12% of the regional Market. Kingston Harbour is rated among the top ten of the world's natural harbours.

Our prominent cruise shipping facilities, with which you are familiar are located at Ocho Rios, Montego Bay and Port Antonio. Technical studies are also currently underway for Lucea which you passed in getting here, to further expand our cruise shipping industry.

The maritime industry is of critical importance to our island's economy as we must import many of the basic necessities of life; it is equally critical to our major export sectors which include agriculture, tourism, bauxite and alumina. We have identified it as pillar for growth in our National Industrial Policy.

Jamaica has been a member of the Association of American Port Authorities since the mid 1980s and has served on the Board of the Association.

The events of September 11 and its aftermath have had a profound and far-reaching impact on the cruise shipping industry. Jamaica is fully seized of the urgent need to radically overhaul our maritime infrastructure and systems to deal definitively and expeditiously with the post-September 11 vulnerability and potential security problems that confront the maritime arena of ports and ships.

Very soon after September 11, we carried out an in-depth review of existing security arrangements at our ports and made immediate decisions to institute new and enhanced security systems.

As a Contracting Government to the ISPS Code, we are unreservedly committed to carrying out the specifics which the Code has provided for, both in its mandatory and recommendatory sections and have begun to address these in earnest. We fully intend to meet the July 2004 deadline for compliance.

Work is continuing apace in the areas of policy formulation, legislative, administrative and training arrangements. The two principal agencies with responsibility for the implementation of the Code are:

- the Maritime Authority of Jamaica, which has regulatory responsibilities for maritime transportation matters and the Port State Control (PSC) programme and implements the Shipping Act under which the Code is administered, and,
- the Port Authority of Jamaica which has overall responsibility for the development of ports and harbours.

The Maritime Authority of Jamaica will be fulfilling their responsibilities as required by the Code to ensure compliance by establishing adequate measures to protect persons on board, cargo, cargo transport units, stores, or the ship itself from the risks of a security incident.

I have instructed the Minister of Transport and Works to provide the Cabinet with the general status of vessels registered under our flag well before the implementation of the ISPS Code next year. We believe that preparedness is the crucial component in the whole security apparatus and the setting of security levels for ships which is an exclusive government responsibility to be carried out in close liaison with the a Ship Security Officer and the Company Security Officer as required by the ISPS Code.

Your immediate interest, of course, is with the measures employed at our port facilities as they affect cruise vessels when they enter our maritime space and come alongside our port facilities.

I will be coming to that shortly when I outline very briefly some of the more important and critical measures that the Government is implementing through the Port Authority's security plan. You do understand, however, that I have a strong desire to see some of the magnificent vessels many of which you control, enter our very high quality ship register.

The Director of the Maritime Authority of Jamaica is here with a small team to participate in this workshop and is keen to provide the details after my small marketing and promotion pitch! So when your companies decide to flag in to the Jamaica Ship Register, you can be assured that we take our fleet's maritime security matters very seriously indeed.

On a final note about the Maritime Authority's functions regarding internationally trading ships and the Code, I assure you that our Port State Control Officers will not be harassing your ships, even with their expanded duties provided by the Code itself.

I do not believe that any of the shipping lines which call here have any complaints about our activities in carrying out our Port State control inspections.

We are in frequent contact with our counterparts in the US Coast Guard who have Observer status in the Caribbean Port State Control system, and there is a fairly good communication line between the Maritime Authority, which hosts the Secretariat of the Caribbean MOU on Port State Control and the Captain of the Port of Miami where most of your ships are based.

I have already intimated that the Port Authority has the framework of a revised Port Facility Security plan in place which contains measures to protect all our ports. This Plan is being implemented and upgraded to meet the new requirements of the ISPS Code and indeed some of the more stringent requirements of the ICCL and the FCCA, as well as guidelines promulgated by the AAPA. We will therefore be in a position to submit to the IMO a list of our approved port security plans, including the location and contact details as is required of us as a SOLAS Contracting Government.

Components of the programme are:

- Procurement of x-ray machines for inspection of cargo and containers
- A closed circuit TV system (CCTV) for round the clock surveillance

- Access Control System to electronically control and regulate access to our ports
- Procurement of two boats for patrols by the Jamaica Defence Force Coast Guard at our major ports.

Jamaica truly values the mutually beneficial relationship which we have enjoyed over the years with you, our partners in the cruise shipping industry. This relationship has facilitated the growth of the cruise shipping as an integral part of Jamaica's tourism industry. It hasn't always been smooth sailing (no pun intended) but we have managed to weather the storms together and lived to tell the tale.

In addition to working assiduously to meet the security requirements of the new era, we have been positioning ourselves in the cruise-shipping market through substantial infrastructural development.

The resort area of Port Antonio late last year received a major boost with the opening of the refurbished Port Antonio Marina. Catering to boutique ships, the modern complex boasts an air-conditioned terminal, covered walkway shopping areas and a private beach being developed adjoining the terminal.

Our Ministry of Industry and Tourism and its agencies continue to work with the Port Authority of Jamaica to effectively market Jamaica as a preferred destination for cruise calls. Indeed many of you will have been subject to our lobbying efforts with the FCCA to put Jamaica back on the rotation list for Cruise Conferences.

Thanks to your support, cruise ship calls to the ports of Montego Bay and Ocho Rios have increased significantly so far this year in comparison to the corresponding period of the last two years – a 41% increase over 2002 and 15.5% over 2001.

Cruise calls figures for the first four months of this year have been the highest since 1999, moving from a total of 320,308 in 1999 to a total of 472,052 this year.

Among the many positives in the industry is our success in attracting calls from a number of new vessels including the *Navigator of the Seas*, which you know is a brand new ship of the Voyager Class which called on Ocho Rios in December. The *Navigator of the Seas* will join the *Voyager of the Seas* and the *Explorer of the Seas* as three of the world's largest cruise ships visiting Jamaica.

In addition, the largest and newest vessel in the Carnival fleet – the *Carnival Conquest* - will begin calling on Montego Bay every Wednesday starting this December.

In order to accommodate the size of the Conquest, the Port Authority of Jamaica undertook the dredging of the Montego Bay Harbour.

We are particularly excited by the prospect of Jamaica becoming the new homeport for this winter season for Seetours' *A Rosa Blu* which caters to the German market and will include a Sail and Stay programme to the benefit of the hotel sector where passengers spend one week on board and one week on shore at a hotel.

The Government is also working to improve the shore excursion experience. We have recently introduced incentives to further increase and improve the number and quality of our attractions.

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In closing, let me express the appreciation of my Government of the high level of cooperation we have traditionally enjoyed with you and your constructive feedback and recommendations as we work together for our mutual benefit.

I wish you a productive and successful meeting. I know that your deliberations are of great importance and should not be neglected, but I hope your organizers will not have been so heartless not to have set aside some free time in which you can enjoy at least a few of the many pleasures that our beautiful island has to offer.