

Opening Remarks by Ms. Yvonne Hall
Executive Director, Bureau of Standards Jamaica
Regional Workshop on Capacity Building for the EPA
and CSME Standby Facilities

6 February 2017

Salutations:

- Ms. Darran Newman - Acting Division Chief, Technical Cooperation Division (TCD), Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)
- Ms. Andrea Power - Coordinator, Regional Cooperation and Integration, CDB
- Representative from the European Union (EU)
- Other members of the CDB
- Other members of CARICOM
- Members of the Media

Good morning...

It is with much excitement and a deep feeling of gratitude that I stand here today, at this opening ceremony for this Regional Workshop on Capacity Building which will focus on projects funded by the EPA and CSME Standby Facilities.

In 2015, the Bureau of Standards Jamaica (BSJ) signed a Grant Agreement with the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) to facilitate the implementation of the “Capacity Building for Market Access Project, under which we are upgrading laboratories in our Packaging Centre, and creating three (3) websites to improve the delivery of our business support services to our stakeholders. These two components have been progressing extremely well and this is a testament to the dedication and the facilitatory ethos of the CDB and the European Union.

This partnership has gone a far way and it will propel the BSJ and, by extension the region, to more effectively compete with our international counterparts in the global marketplace. The modernisation of the Packaging Centre will now enable the BSJ to provide improved quality testing and research services to meet the needs of its clients, and

fulfil regulatory and international requirements, thereby providing improved market access for Jamaican packaged goods.

Additionally, the support we have received from this project will allow us to build on the recent accreditation of one of the critical food tests (can seam analysis) conducted by the Packaging Centre, as we seek to enhance consumer confidence in the quality and safety of packaged goods.

The improvement of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has been a major thrust for the Government and we are happy that the BSJ is able to support this initiative. The development of the three websites form part of an initiative to upgrade our ICT infrastructure, to improve timeliness in the dissemination of information, and the processing of business transactions.

A major component of the website will be the facilitation of e-commerce transactions. We are especially happy for this because, again, we are now better competing with our

international counterparts. It will significantly impact our promotional, marketing and educational efforts in the drive to foster a standards-led and market-driven economy.

We look forward to participating in this workshop, which will be an excellent forum for building the competencies of the Project Coordinators who are driving the implementation of the projects under the Standby facilities. It is also a useful opportunity for sharing their experiences and lessons learnt. I am sure that the skills acquired during this workshop will be aid in the successful completion of the projects.

On behalf of all the other member states that are benefitting from funding from the Standby Facilities, for their social and economic development projects, I would like to express sincere gratitude. The dedication of the EU and CDB to the development of the region is remarkable. We will continue to partner with you, to maintain the position of CARICOM as a major and effective trading region in the world.

I wish you all a successful workshop.