Montego Bay, March 14, 2012

Upgrade to Negril Waste Water Treatment plant helps preserve one of Jamaica's greatest tourist attraction

Tourism initiatives and general sanitation in the town of Negril have received a well needed boost with the completed rehabilitation of the Negril Waste Water Treatment Plant. Works began just over a year ago with the objective of extending the plant's capacity and improving the treatment of effluent to the plant. The upgrade became necessary given the increase in the number of housing settlements and the rapid growth in the tourism sector since its construction over a decade ago. The increased operational capacity of the Waste Water Treatment Plant in Negril will service approximately 50% of domestic households corresponding to a population of 3000 and 85% of hotels in the connected area, serving over 2 million tourists who visit annually; this is compared to about 25% and 75% respectively when it was constructed in 2002.

The improved plant will also significantly preserve the coastal environment as well as increase aquatic biodiversity; resulting in an improvement in the environmental status of coral reef and beaches in Negril which is considered a prime tourist destination. The rehabilitation will among other things, raise and connect the embankments of the stabilisation ponds, install flow control devices and improve the outlet structure. In addition to the civil works a J$35million truck mounted vacuum evacuator was also purchased. The project was undertaken at a cost of J$278 million, of which J$35 million was provided by the Government of Jamaica. The project was being managed by the National Water Commission.

Speaking at this morning's commissioning of the plant newly appointed Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Jamaica, Ambassador Paola Amadei described the project not only as timely but a critical step in preserving aspects of Jamaica's natural environment. "We cannot afford to allow growing populations to destroy the environment and by extension the economic viability of prime tourist destinations such as this one. Population growth should not be to the detriment of the environment and that is where such projects have become critical as we seek to balance the necessary measures to ensure proper sanitation for communities but in so doing also take steps to preserve the environment. As the world focuses its attention on the effects of climate change we must ensure that the economic development is undertaken sustainably with due regard for the impact on the environment. The work on this plant will do just that."

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