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## DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION PRESS RELEASE

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### **EU funds JMD\$400 million sugar cane road rehabilitation**

Today, September 03<sup>rd</sup> the Sugar Transformation Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries hosted a contract signing for works on a number of road rehabilitation projects with Programme support by the Accompanying Measures of Sugar Protocol (AMS) of the European Union. The rehabilitation of these roads will provide improved access for the transportation of sugar cane, while also serving the sugar workers and surrounding communities.

Over 44 kilometers of cane roads will be rehabilitated at a cost of some \$404 million JMD. The Agriculture Minister, the Hon. Roger Clarke thanked the EU "for the support they have given over time" and encouraged "stakeholders to seize this opportunity to increase productivity and efficiency".

Eight contractors attending the signing, for works in the various sugar dependent areas which will benefit from this project, with Members of Parliament of the respective communities also in attendance to witness and sign the documentation.

Offering remarks on behalf of the members of the House of Representatives whose constituencies were to benefit, MP of North Trelawny, the Hon. Richard Atkinson highlighted that the works would indeed be timely, and thanked the EU for its support.

Speaking on behalf of the EU, Chargé d'affaires a.i, Jesús Orús Báguena said that "through upgraded road infrastructure will come increased economic activity, and reduced transportation costs. The socio-economic benefits will not be superficial or transient, but lasting, and meaningful for the small farmers in St. Thomas, the community of Long Pond in Trelawny, and the Appleton, Monymusk and Worthy Park estates."

Mr. Orús Báguena also said "the European Union looks forward to a rally in the sugar industry and the boon to rural communities that will follow. The support of rural development and infrastructure is critical as Jamaica moves forward with its economic reform programme, and it will see improvements in food security and facilitate import substitution as the nation seeks to lower its import bill.

He thanked contractors present "for their due-diligence thus far, and for what I expect to be impeccable and timely works."

**Contact- Andrew Raymore  
Delegation of the European Union to Jamaica,  
Belize, Turks and Caicos Islands, Bahamas and the Cayman Islands  
Tel: 1 876 924 6333**

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