



DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION PRESS RELEASE

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EU reaffirms commitment to assist vulnerable communities across Jamaica

The European Union has given its commitment to continue support to vulnerable communities across Jamaica. Speaking at the launch of **the Jamaica Exporters' Association and the St. Andrew Settlement Income Generating Opportunities for Unemployed Young People Through Linkages with Established MSMEs** in Majesty Gardens on Tuesday, "Chargé d' Affaires of the EU Delegation in Jamaica Jesús, Orús Báguena says the focus on vulnerable communities remains key especially given the challenge with unemployment. *"The International Labour Organization indicated that at the beginning of 2012, following three years of continuous crisis conditions in global labour markets....there is a backlog of global unemployment of 200 million, an increase of 27 million since the start of the crisis.....Given these facts it is not surprising then, that the need for the world, particularly developing countries such as Jamaica, to rise to this challenge in order to generate sustainable growth, while maintaining social cohesion. It is against this background that the importance of facilitating access to income generating initiatives, particularly in vulnerable communities can not be over-emphasized.*

The five month project will offer training and product development to small business operators in the community. It will see beneficiaries receiving assistance with business plans, business readiness training, product exhibition, interfacing with prospective buyers, assistance with capacity building, guidance on start up activities, internships and study tours.

The project is being funded under the Poverty Reduction Programme through its income generating component which offers grants between €25,000 and €95,000. The JEA has received a grant valued at J\$10.8 million or ninety percent of the overall cost of the project and the initiative is expected to impact 25 small business operators (age 18-35) and another 200 persons from the community indirectly. Beneficiaries are currently engaged in craft and woodwork, dressmaking and design and crochet. They were selected from another EU funded project being implemented by Rise Life Management Services through which they have received remedial educational training.

In addition to income generating projects, PRP GOLA also invests in community members through internship programmes and scholarship awards. PRP has also provided support for the building, expanding or refurbishing of small infrastructure projects such as schools, local roads, community centres, police stations, homes for the aged, water and sanitation systems.

The key note address at the launch was given by Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller who is also the Member of Parliament for South West St. Andrew.

For more information:

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~~Delegation of the European Union to Jamaica~~