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EU hands over J\$11.5 billion in development assistance to the government as it marks Europe Day

More than 75 million Euros (J\$11.5 billion) in development assistance was today signed over to the Government by the European Union at a ceremony held at the Office of the Prime Minister. The signing was held in celebration of Europe Day, which is recognised on May 9 each year. It also marks the EU's 39th year of development assistance to Jamaica.

The sum represents funding being disbursed under six financing agreements, for which implementation will begin this year. The programmes include the Accompanying Measures for Sugar Protocol (AMS 2013), the Justice Security Accountability & Transparency Project (JSAT), additional funding for the Poverty Reduction Programme (PRP), the Public Financial Management Support Programme, further support to the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) Capacity Building Project and Technical Co-operation Facility. The projects will support the sugar sector enhance security and justice, social projects, trade and strengthen the government's technical capacity through the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ). The funds will be disbursed over a period of 2- 5 years, depending on the contract period for each financing agreement.

Prime Minister the Hon. Portia Simpson Miller who delivered the key note address, thanked the EU for its tremendous support over years. *"Indeed Jamaica and Europe has had a long and very fruitful relationship. In nearly forty years Jamaica has received a total of approximately one billion Euros. To date, Europe Jamaica's largest source of grant funding with our current cooperation programmes consisting of grants totalling 220. 4 million Euros covering seventeen projects and programmes."* She added that the partnership between Jamaica and Europe went beyond funding, noting that two shared the same values and respect for human rights and that these values are at the core of the agreements which were being signed.

Ambassador Paola Amadei, Head of the EU Delegation in her brief remarks encouraged the government to ensure that the assistance being provided by the European taxpayers is used to profit the Jamaican people. *"During this difficult economic rigour, both in Jamaica and the EU, it becomes even more important to work hand in hand to make sure every Euro being provided by the European taxpayer is spent properly in Jamaica and produces the mutually envisaged results profiting the Jamaican people when we look at them as part of an integrated approach to addressing the areas necessary for the country to attain and maintain growth– then we begin to see their complementary nature and real impact."*

The ceremony was hosted by Finance Minister the Hon. Dr. Peter Phillips and attended by resident Ambassadors and representatives of EU Member States in Jamaica.

As part of its month long celebration to mark Europe Day, the Delegation will participate in a number of activities. The celebration kicked off last night (Thursday, May 8) with the EU's annual reception which was also attended by several government ministers, private and public sector leaders, NGO representatives and other project partners. The delegation is also a sponsor of the Nuttall 5K walk/run scheduled for tomorrow (Saturday, May 10). On May 13 the EU will launch a new phase of support to youths and children in juvenile centres through the RISE Life Management Services
