



# INTEGRITY COMMISSION

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## **Integrity Commission's Statement to the Media on Jamaica's Ranking in Transparency International's 2020 Corruption Perception Index**

The Integrity Commission has noted Transparency International's recent ranking of Jamaica in its 2020 Corruption Perception Index (CPI) and wishes to briefly comment on the matter and to share what it believes are some of the fundamental things that must be done for Jamaica to significantly improve its CPI score and ranking.

At the outset, it must be clearly stated that the Commission fully understands and accepts the magnitude of its mandate and has been working assiduously to lay the groundwork that is required to decisively combat the scourge of corruption in Jamaica.

Transparency International has ranked Jamaica at #69 out of 180 countries. This is an improvement of 5 places over its 2019 country ranking of 74 out of 180 countries. Jamaica's positive performance in 2020 in the TI Country Rankings has reversed 2 consecutive years of a negative trend. The country had previously fallen 2 places from position #68 in 2017, to position #70 in 2018. It had then dropped another 4 spots to position #74 in 2019.

Jamaica's 2020 CPI score has also moved up 1 spot, from 43 to 44, on a scale of 0-100, where 0 is seen as "Highly Corrupt" and 100 as 'Clean'. Jamaica's 2020 CPI score of 44 equals its best ever score of 44, previously attained only in 2017 and 2018.

A ranking of 44, although indicative of a movement in the right direction, is, however, not good enough. It is nothing to boast about and the Integrity Commission is not satisfied about it.

In the 19 years (2002-2020) that Transparency International has been ranking Jamaica, the country has averaged a CPI of only 37.5 out of 100. A CPI score of below 50 means that a country has a serious corruption problem, is experiencing prevalent bribery, a lack of punishment for corruption, and public institutions that do not respond to citizens' needs. The unmistakable reality is that Jamaica has been firmly planted in this category for at least 2 decades.

Transparency International's assessment of Jamaica's corruption problem would suggest that corruption in the country is endemic, is systemic, is pervasive and is, essentially, a deep-rooted problem.

The Commissioners and executive leadership of the Integrity Commission are not unmindful of the situation. The Commission believes that the matter requires a holistic approach, driven by transformational leadership - right across all levels of leadership and all sectors of our country - if we are to realize the transformational change that is desired in Jamaica's CPI standings. This is the stark reality.

It is against this background, therefore, that the Commission, recognizing its own mandate to fight corruption in Jamaica, and the herculean challenges that lie ahead, is taking an approach that must first seek to address what I would characterize as 'the fundamentals'. This essentially involves ensuring, among other things, the following:

(a) That the Commission is adequately structured and resourced to effectively and efficiently discharge its statutory functions. In other words, it must be 'fit for purpose'. The mere creation or existence of a national anti-corruption agency does not necessarily mean that it is structured, designed and/or empowered to be effective.

(b) That Jamaica's anti-corruption and anti-bribery legislative framework incorporates and reflects international best practices in anti-corruption and anti-bribery. There are a number of deficits in Jamaica's anti-corruption legislative architecture which must be addressed by our country's Lawmakers.

(c) That the country's leadership, within and without the public sector, is comprehensively sensitized and educated on the issues of anti-corruption, good governance and integrity in the conduct of public affairs, and is willing to play its own part, including leading by example, to ensure that the required step-changes that all well-thinking Jamaicans would like to see in the CPI rankings are in fact realized.

Over the past 7 months, during which 3 members of the Commission's substantive 4-member executive team, inclusive of myself, were sworn into office, the Commission has given considerable attention to the foregoing, even while it continues to discharge its operating mandates.

Significant work has been undertaken and this will be discussed further in the upcoming appearances that the Commission is expected to make before the Integrity Commission Parliament Oversight Committee. I can, however, highlight the following at this time:

On the issue of Item (a), I can advise that the Commission's newly appointed executive team has undertaken a comprehensive 'gap-analysis' assessment of the Commission's organization structure and has made recommendations to significantly improve and strengthen the structure. It is worthy of note that the previously approved structure had substantively addressed only 5 of the Commission's 16 statutory mandates.

The revised 170-staff-member organization structure, which, among other things, has added a 4th Division - the Corruption Prevention Division - and has otherwise significantly strengthened the other Divisions and Units of the Commission - was reviewed and approved by the Commission in October 2020.

The revised structure was then scrutinized and approved by the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service on November 16, 2020, and by the relevant Parliament Joint-Select Committee on December 22, 2020. The Commission, which currently has less than 80 members of staff, is now engaged in the process of identifying a suitable expanded office space, after which it will employ the remaining staff that it requires to effectively discharge all of its statutory mandates.

The Commission wishes to publicly acknowledge the unqualified support that the Government, the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service, and the Opposition have extended to it in the foregoing regard.

On the issue of Item (b), the Commission has already formally advanced a number of proposals for revision to the Integrity Commission Act and to otherwise strengthen Jamaica's anti-corruption and anti-bribery legislative framework. Additional remedial proposals will be forthcoming. The Commission anticipates that the country's Lawmakers will respond to these proposals favorably as and when they are made.

The Commission has also formally engaged Jamaica's Private Sector, through the good offices of the leadership of the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce (JCC), to implement anti-bribery measures throughout Jamaica's business sector. This has been done in an effort to decisively tackle, 'at source', grand corruption which involves the bribery of Jamaica public officials.

We have been advised that our 2 recommendations to the JCC - to institute the ISO-37001 Anti-Bribery Standard and to lobby for the promulgation of a law that is similar to the UK's 2010 Bribery Act - have found favor, in principle, with the leadership of Jamaica's Private Sector.

On the issue of Item (c), I can say that the Commission is far advanced in an initiative which we believe is unprecedented in our region, namely, the delivery of a comprehensive series of specially developed anti-corruption, good governance and integrity sensitization workshops for the country's Prime Minister and Cabinet Ministers, essentially to provide guidance on what is right and what is wrong in their conduct and administration of public affairs in Jamaica.

The workshops, which are being delivered by the Commission's executive team during the weekly Cabinet Meetings, started with the Cabinet Meeting of November 9, 2020. They are expected to be completed during the current month of February 2021.

The Commission will be saying more on this in short order but must publicly acknowledge the role that the Most Hon. Prime Minister has played in making the entire initiative possible. The Jamaica Parliament and, thereafter, the Jamaica Public Service, will be next in line for anti-corruption sensitization engagement and guidance, from the Commission's executive.

In terms of other key high-level anti-corruption strategic initiatives that are being pursued by the Commission, it is important to note that the Commission has been actively preparing to undertake the coordination and implementation of Jamaica's 1st National Anti-Corruption Strategy.

This initiative is intended to align efforts within the public and private spheres towards the singular objective of developing a long term actionable set of recommendations and practices to reduce and contain the prevalence of corruption within Jamaica.

Additionally, in an effort to build effective strategic relationships with the country's major law enforcement agencies, in order to significantly uplift Jamaica's fight against corruption, the Commission's executive team has already completed its formal engagement with their leadership. The Commission is now far advanced in the process of settling consequential information-sharing and operations-cooperation MOUs with these agencies, even as collaboration, that is already bearing considerable fruit, is taking place.

The entities in question are the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF), Jamaica Customs, Tax Administration Jamaica, the Financial Investigation Division (FID), the Major Organization Crime and Anti-Corruption Agency (MOCA), the Revenue Protection Division (RPD), the Office of the Attorney General, and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. The Commission has

also sought to have the Office of the Political Ombudsman accorded qualified status to enable it to formally collaborate and share information with the Commission.

And, finally, regarding the Annual Statutory Declarations of Assets, Income and Liability, that are required to be filed by Jamaica Public Officials, the Commission has already publicly communicated its 'Zero Tolerance Policy' on the matter.

The Commission's objective, commencing with Declarations that are required to be filed by March 31, 2021, is to secure a 100% compliance filing rate by the country's 37,000-plus Public Officials. It is noteworthy that all of the country's 84 Parliamentarians were 100% compliant with respect to the 2019 intake.

Public Officials who are disposed to delinquency would be well advised to follow the lead of our Parliamentarians and comply. Those who choose to challenge the Commission can expect to face the sanctions that are prescribed by law. The Commission's Chairman, the Hon. Mr. Justice Seymour Panton, has already issued a clear warning about this and has placed the Commission's intended posture on the public record.

In closing, I would only wish to state the obvious as a reminder to all. Jamaica will not improve its CPI score and country ranking in any appreciable way if its perceived pervasive culture of indiscipline, impunity and reckless disregard for the rule of law is permitted to continue unimpeded.

As previously advised, the Commission expects that it will have the opportunity to say more to the nation about its work, its achievements, its strategic and operating plans and, of course, its challenges, in the forthcoming regular meetings of the Integrity Commission Parliament Oversight Committee.

Respectfully yours,

Greg Christie  
Executive Director  
**For and on behalf of the Integrity Commission**