



Meeting of the Central Executive Friday, May 2, 2014 - 10:00 AM

SECRETARY GENERAL'S REPORT

I. INTRODUCTION

I am pleased to extend a special welcome to all members of Central Executive present at this meeting. The President has indicated his thanks to you for attending despite the inconvenience caused you by the change of the regular date for the meeting. It was the considered view that the meeting should not be cancelled since there is not the practice to cancel these meetings. In addition, there are many issues on the Association's agenda that need to be addressed.

Once again, welcome to this meeting and I urge you to fully participate in the deliberations.

II. FINANCIAL IRREGULARITIES

(i) Accounting Staff

Members will recall that General Council, at its meeting in March 2014, disallowed the appeal against the dismissal of Mr. Gary Bodden, former Accountant. This decision was communicated to Mr. Bodden's representative. Since then, the matter was referred to the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. The Ministry has invited the JTA to a conciliatory meeting to be held on May 19, 2014.

Regarding Miss Judith Sterling, the matter was referred by the BITU to the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. The Ministry has returned the matter to the local level for further discussion with a view to arriving at a settlement. A meeting has been scheduled with the BITU for May 13, 2014.

(ii) Special Investigation (Forensic Audit)

PriceWaterHouseCoopers has continued its investigation into the matter of the alleged financial irregularities. As reported to General Council, the company is expected to present an interim report at the end of May 2014.

(iii) Recovery of Assets Purchased through the Alleged Fraudulent use of JTA Funds

The effort is being led by Grant Stewart and Philips, Attorneys-at-Law. The JTA has also engaged the services of Shields Crime and Security Consultants to assist in the matter and also in the efforts to apprehend Marlon Francis and bring him to justice in Jamaica.

(iv) **Interim Arrangements to Deal with the Accounts of the Association**

The engagement of Crichton Mullings and Associates to prepare and present the monthly financial statements to the Finance Committee was extended to facilitate the reports up to March 2014. Other internal arrangements have been put in place for the other accounting functions such as the preparation of the weekly and monthly payrolls, the filing of statutory payments, the preparation of cheques, etc.

(v) **Appointment of Accountant**

The Association has advertised for applications to fill the position of Chief Accountant. The Advertisement appeared in the Sunday Gleaner, April 27, 2014. The closing date for applications is May 9, 2014. A copy of the ad has been circulated to members of Central Executive.

A Job Description is being prepared with the assistance of Crichton Mulling and Associates and BDO Limited. The preparation of a Procedural Manual for the Accounts Department is also to be undertaken.

III. **SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE**

The meeting will receive a report from the Chairman of the Salaries and Conditions of Service Committee.

IV. **WHITE PAPER ON PENSION REFORM**

The JTA was expected to discuss the document and prepare a response to be submitted to Government out of the Retreat that was held April 3 – 5, 2014. This did not take place because the time was taken up with the discussion on the amendments to the Education Act and its Regulations.

Another session is to be organized to discuss the document and prepare the response.

V. **AMENDMENTS TO THE EDUCATION ACT AND ITS REGULATIONS**

The retreat to discuss these matters was held April 3 – 5, 2014. In attendance were: Presidents; Administrative Staff; Chairman, Salaries and Conditions of Service Committee; Chairman, Resolutions Committee; Chairman, Education and Research; Trustee Polly Bowes-Howell; Chairman, Professional Advancement and Teacher Welfare Committee and Chairman, Policy Committee.

At the end of the session, it was unanimously agreed that the Association should inform the chairman of the National Council of Education (NCE) by letter that the Association did not have any major concerns with the existing Act and

Regulations and hence the letter would constitute the JTA's response at this time. In addition, the chairman was advised that the Association expected that it would receive a copy of any Bill resulting from the work undertaken by NCE. The chairman has acknowledged receipt of the JTA's letter.

The Association has been informed that the NCE has submitted its report to the Minister of Education.

VI. **JAMAICA TEACHING COUNCIL BILL**

The National Council on Education has established a Steering Committee to receive and examine the submissions from the stakeholder groups. The committee has had three (3) meetings. Representatives of the JTA attended one (1) of those meetings. The NCE has also invited the JTA to sit on a committee responsible for the drafting of regulations to be based on the new Act. The Association needs to decide if it will participate in the exercise at this time.

VII. **ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED**

(i) **Investment Seminars**

The four (4) regional seminars were held as scheduled. The details appear in the Property and Business Services report.

(ii) **Pre-retirement Seminars**

All the parishes hosted successful seminars. There was a total of 1010 participants. The main concern of the participants related to the proposed reform of the pension scheme and the possible reduction in the lump sum payment. There is evidence of a more than normal number of teachers applying for early retirement to escape the reduction of the lump sum.

(iii) **50th Anniversary Activities**

(a) **50th Anniversary Church Service**

This was held at the Boulevard Baptist Church on March 30, 2014. It was well attended by teachers. The message was delivered by Rev. Devon Dick. The Association is grateful that the church was able to accommodate the involvement of the Association in their service.

(b) **Unveiling of Plaque at Excelsior High School**

A plaque commemorating the hosting of the founding conference of the JTA in the auditorium of the school on April 3, 1964 was unveiled. It was a brief but impressive ceremony.

We appreciate the effort of all who were involved in making the event the success it was.

(c) **Opening of the New Regional Office in Montego Bay**

The opening took place on April 3, 2014. We were very pleased with the attendance of the teachers from the region. We recognize the input of the Secretary Business Services who co-ordinated the

outfitting of the spaces to accommodate the offices and the conference room. Appreciation also to the Regional Officer and her staff for all they did to prepare for the function.

The offices are now occupied and the Pre-retirement Seminar for St. James was held in the conference room.

We are pleased that the Association could have established a new and pleasant environment for the teachers in the West during this our 50th year.

(d) **International Education Conference**

The conference was successfully staged at the Hilton Rose Hall Resort, April 22 – 24, 2014 under the theme, ***Revolutionizing Twenty-first Century Education through Best Practices***. The keynote speaker was Dr. Dennis Shirley, Professor of Education, Lynch School of Education, Boston College, USA.

He gave a very inspiring address and set the stage for the other sessions which have also been highly rated. An innovation was the compilation of a *Catalogue of Best Practices in Schools in Jamaica*. We commend the members of the Organizing Committee, the Programme's Committee, the JTA staff and all who had a part in executing another successful activity.

We were pleased to have had approximately 270 participants including two participants from the Bahamas Union of Teachers.

The proceedings of the conference are being prepared and will be available on the JTA's website. Some of the presentations will also be uploaded to the site so that many more persons will have access to the information. The presentations will also be loaded on flash drives to be distributed to participants.

(e) **50th Anniversary Award**

One of the approved activities for the anniversary was an awards ceremony at which 50 members who have given outstanding service to the Association during the 50 years would be recognized. Nomination forms were sent to Parish Associations for the Parish Executives to nominate members for this award.

One of the groups named to make nominations was the 50th Anniversary Organizing Committee. The committee, at its meeting on May 1, 2014, raised the matter of the Roll of Honour Award which is the highest award of the JTA and recognizes outstanding service to the Association, and the proposed 50th Anniversary Award. The meeting

felt that the Association could not award persons for significant contribution to the Association and not include recipients of the Roll of Honour Award.

The committee is, therefore, recommending to Central Executive that the recipients of the Roll of Honour Award be recognized as fitting the criteria and be so recognized at the function and that the 50th anniversary award would be to 50 other members. To facilitate this, the committee recommends to Central Executive that the deadline for nominations for the 50th anniversary award be extended to May 16, 2014.

VIII. **EDUCATION WEEK 2014**

This will be celebrated May 4-10, 2014. The main activities will be as listed.

May 4 - National Church Service, Ocho Rios Baptist Church

May 5 - 50th Anniversary Lecture, Jamaica Pegasus Hotel

May 6 - Read Across Jamaica Day

May 7 - Teachers' Day - JTA members will receive a 50th Anniversary Pin as the token for Teachers' Day. Kingston Bookshop will also be hosting a luncheon at which three teachers will be recognized for service to education.

May 8 - Helen Stills Professional Development Day

The theme for the week is Celebrating the Legacy: Activism, Service and Patriotism.

IX. **PRESIDENT ELECT ELECTIONS**

The candidates for the elections are:

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|---------------------------------|---|--|
| ✓ Norman Allen | - | Principal, Four Paths Primary, Clarendon |
| ✓ Merlene Dawes | - | Teacher, Innswood High, St. Catherine |
| ✓ Melva Humes-Johnson | - | Principal, Iona High, St. Mary |
| ✓ Georgia Waugh-Richards | - | Principal, Harmons Primary, Manchester |
| ✓ Claudette James | - | Teacher, Denham Town High, Kingston |

Brochures with the profile of the candidates are being circulated. The elections will be held June 16 – 20, 2014. The counting of the ballots will be at a special meeting of Central Executive to be held on July 1, 2014 at the Sunset Jamaica Grande Resort and Spa.

All the other arrangements are being put in place to ensure a fair election.

X. **GOLDEN TORCH AWARD PRESENTATION CEREMONY**

The ceremony will be held on July 3, 2014 at the Sunset Jamaica Grande Resort and Spa, Ocho Rios. There are approximately 500 nominees for the award.

XI. **JTA/SAGICOR NATIONAL ATHLETIC CHAMPIONSHIPS**

The championships will be held on May 16 and 17, 2014 at the National Stadium. The Media Launch of the championships was held on April 30 at the Ben Hawthorne Conference Room, 97B Church Street. The Patron of the Meet is Mrs. Shelly-Ann Fraser Pryce, who also gave the address. Mrs. Fraser-Pryce, outstanding world champion and Olympian, is a product of these championships.

XII. **INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS**

(a) **EI's Unite for Quality Education Conference**

The conference will be held May 26 – 31, 2014 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Montreal, Canada. The conference is being organized in co-operation with UNESCO and the United Nations Secretary General's Global Education First Initiative.

(b) **Loma Linda Workshop for Teachers of Science**

One of the outcomes of the Diaspora Education Initiative is the offer from Loma Linda University in California, USA to reserve five (5) places in their EXCEED programme for Science teachers from Jamaica. Five (5) schools have indicated an interest in participating in the workshop. These schools will underwrite the airfare for the teachers and Loma Linda and the Diaspora in California will provide accommodation, meals and related support.

The programme will take place June 23 – 27, 2014.

XIII. **CONCLUSION**

Colleagues, let me close this report with a quote from President Barack Obama... ***“All of us share this world for but a brief moment in time. The question is whether we spend that time focused on what pushes us apart, or whether we commit ourselves to an effort – a sustained effort – to find common ground, to focus on the future we seek for our children, and to respect the dignity of all human beings.*”**

“... It is easier to blame others than to look inward; to see what is different about someone than to find the things we share. But we should choose the right path, not just the easy path. There is also one rule that lies at the heart of every religion – that we do unto others as we would have them do unto us. This truth transcends nations and peoples – a belief that isn't new; that isn't black or white or brown; that isn't Christian, or Muslim or Jew. It's

a belief that pulsed in the cradle of civilization, and that still beats in the heart of billions. It's a faith in other people."

Prepared by: Adolph Cameron

Secretary General