SECRETARY GENERAL’S REPORT TO GENERAL COUNCIL

Saturday, June 28, 2014
10:00 a.m.

Prepared by: Adolph Cameron
A special welcome is extended to all to this the final meeting of General Council for the 2013-2014 conference year. The past year has been filled with challenges but we have had reason for celebrating some achievements. The lessons we have learnt from both the challenges and the victories will enable us to advance the cause of the Association and education to a higher level.

During the year, we lost many of the stalwarts in education. I must make special mention of Dr. Nadine Scott, Trustee, who passed on unexpectedly a few weeks ago. We celebrate her life and contribution to the Association and education. She is gone too soon but memories of her will remain with us for a long time.

Let me encourage you to fully participate in the discussions on the matters that will be put to you so that the decisions taken will be to the benefit of the Association and its members and ultimately to the children we are committed to serve.

2.0 SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE
The chairman of the Salaries and Conditions of Service Committee will report on the relevant matters that were addressed during the period.

3.0 FINANCIAL IRREGULARITIES
3.1 Accounting Staff
The matter concerning the two former employees in the Accounting Department has been referred to the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. A meeting in respect of Gary Bodden was held on May 19, 2014 at the Ministry of Labour. The representative of Mr. Bodden has placed on the table terms for a settlement. The matter is now before this meeting of General Council for decision/consideration.

Two conciliation meetings in respect of Judith Sterling were held on June 4 and 19, 2014. The outcome of the meetings will be presented by the President.

3.2 Forensic Audit
PriceWaterHouseCoopers has continued its investigation into the matter of the alleged financial irregularities. The company presented an interim report on Tuesday, June 24, 2014 and a recommendation will be presented to Council by the President.

3.3 Recovery of Funds and Assets acquired through the Criminal Activities of Marlon Francis
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.

The Attorneys are expected to file the Court documents by the end of July.

3.4 **Interim Arrangements within the Accounts Department**
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.

3.5 **Appointment of New Accountant**
The first interview with the ten (10) applicants who were shortlisted was held on June 16, 2014. A further shortlisting of four (4) applicants was done. The second interviews will be held on June 30.

A total of sixty (60) applications were received.

4.0 **WHITE PAPER ON PENSION REFORM**
Representatives of the Pensions Reform Unit of the Ministry of Finance and Planning made a presentation to the meeting of Central Executive on May 22, 2014 on the proposals for the Pension Reform. The representatives addressed the main concerns of the teachers. These included:

- retention/reduction of the lump sum;
- inclusion of the grandfather clause;
- early retirement

5.0 **AMENDMENTS TO THE EDUCATION ACT AND REGULATIONS**
The National Council on Education has submitted its report to the Minister on this matter. The report is expected to be made available to the JTA but the Minister, by letter, informed the Association that after an examination of the report in the Ministry, areas that needed their input were identified and were being addressed. The final report would be sent to the JTA after.

6.0 **EDUCATION WEEK 2014**
Education Week 2014 was celebrated May 4 – 10, 2014 under the theme *Celebrating the Legacy: Activism, Service and Patriotism*. All planned activities were well executed. The highlight of the Week was the 50th Anniversary
Lecture presented by Professor Errol Miller, Past President. The other activities were:

- **Church Service**, May 4, at the Ocho Rios Baptist Church
- **Read Across Jamaica Day**, May 6
- **Teachers’ Day**, May 7. The highlight was the recipient of the 50th Anniversary Commemorative pins by members in schools. There were also courtesy calls by the Presidents on: the Deputy Governor General; Minister of Education; Leader of the Opposition; Most Honourable Prime Minister; and former Governor General, Sir Howard Cooke and Lady Cooke. There was also a visit to former Trustee, Victor Edward, at which he received the commemorative pin.
- **Helen Still Professional Development Day**, May 9 at RIU, Ocho Rios.

### 7.0 SPECIAL 50TH ANNIVERSARY ACTIVITIES

#### 7.1 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.

#### 7.2 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.

#### 7.3 50TH Anniversary Lecture

The lecture was delivered by distinguished Past President, Professor the Honourable Errol Miller. It was an enlightening presentation. Copies of the lecture were presented to principals of Teachers’ Colleges who were present for their libraries. Other members of the audience also received copies.
7.4  **50th Anniversary Award**  
The intention is to present this award to 50 members of the JTA who have given outstanding contribution to the building of the Association. Over 100 nominations were received for the award.

The Awards Committee has assessed the nominations and the 50 prospective recipients will be announced at the meeting of Central Executive to be held in July.

The Presentation Ceremony is scheduled for October 4, 2014 at a venue to be announced.

7.5  **Distribution of Commemorative 50th Anniversary Pins**  
This was already mentioned under Education Week.

8.0  **OTHER ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED**  
8.1  **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 have been 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.
8.2 **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 due to the anxiety about a possible reduction of the lump sum.

8.3 **Investment Seminars**
The four (4) regional seminars were held as scheduled. They were held under the theme, *Debt Reduction + Increased Savings = Improved Net Worth*. A total of 401 participants attended the seminars. The sponsors were:
- JTA Co-operative Credit Union
- Sagicor Life
- Scotia Insurance
- Guardian Life
- Jamaica Money Market Brokers Ltd.

8.4 **President Elect Elections**
The poll in the elections was done during the period June 16 – 20, 2014. This was preceded by an active campaigning by the five (5) candidates. The counting of the ballots will be done at a special meeting of Central Executive to be held on July 1, 2014 at the Sunset Jamaica Grande Resort and Spa, Ocho Rios.

8.5 **JTA/Sagicor National**
The championships were held on May 16 and 17, 2014 at the National Stadium. It was a well-organized and executed event. All parishes participated. At the end of the championships, the results were as follows:
- St. Catherine - Champion parish
- St. Andrew - First Runners-up
- Portland - Second Runners-up
- Kingston
- St. Elizabeth
- Manchester
- St. Thomas
- Clarendon
- Westmoreland
- St. Ann
- St. Mary
- Trelawny
- St. James
8.6 Labour Day Projects
The following projects were undertaken by the JTA in association with sponsors:

- **Paisley All Age School, St. Andrew, South East Region**: The activities will include the construction of drinking fountains for students and painting of the interior of the building.

- **Refuge All Age School, Trelawny, Western Region**: The activities will include the installation of two classroom doors and painting of the exterior of the building.

- **Ferguson Basic School, Manchester, South Central Region**: The activities will include the completion of a kitchen and dining area and the painting of the exterior of the school building.

- **Walkerswood All Age School, St. Ann, North East Region**: The activities will include the painting of the exterior of the buildings and the construction of water fountains.

8.7 Loma Linda University Programme
The programme came out of the Diaspora Education Initiatives that were hosted by the JTA and the Ministries of Education and Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade in February 2014.

Five (5) teachers of Science from Ardenne, Porus, William Knibb Memorial, Jonathan Grant and Calabar High Schools completed a 5-day workshop on June 27, 2014 at Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, California, USA.

It is expected that these teachers will assist in creating a similar programme to be delivered in Jamaica I 2015. The President and President Elect accompanied the teachers to California and had meetings with the Diaspora in that area on future collaboration between the JTA and the Jamaica Diaspora.

9.0 FUTURE ACTIVITIES TO BE IMPLEMENTED
9.1 Golden Torch Award Presentation Ceremony
The ceremony will be held on July 3, 2014 at the Sunset Jamaica Grande Resort and Spa. Over 400 persons who have given 35 and over years of service to teaching in Jamaica will receive the award.
9.2 **Annual Conference**  
The Annual Conference will be held August 21 – 23, 2014 at the Hilton Rose Hall Resort, Montego Bay. This is a departure from the usual days of the conference (Monday to Wednesday) but it was occasioned by the notice to the JTA from the Sunset Jamaica Grande Resort that the hotel would be unable to accommodate the conference this year. This was due to extensive refurbishing of the property to commence in August 2014.

The conference will be held under the theme, **Celebrating the Legacy: Activism, Service and Patriotism.** The relevant documents have been circulated. Delegates should note that no payment will be accepted at the JYA offices. All payments must be lodged to BNS account number 08014-91. The account is held at BNS King Street but payments may be made at any BNS branch.

The keynote speaker will be Mr. Danny Roberts, Head, Hugh Lawson Shearer Trade Union Institute, UWI.

9.3 **15th CUT Students’ Athletic Championships**  
The championships will be held July 25 and 26, 2014 in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The Liaison Officer and the National Sports Committee are pulling out all the stops to assist with securing the funds to cover the cost to send the Jamaican team. Members of General Council are asked to assist the athletes from their DA’s and parishes. The selected athletes are currently in training. At the end of the training, the team of 40 athletes will be selected. The list of the athletes who are in training has been circulated.

10.0 **CONCLUSION**  
Let us continue to **Unite and Serve!**

*Prepared by: Adolph Cameron  
Secretary General*