



SECRETARY GENERAL'S REPORT TO GENERAL COUNCIL

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2015

**JTA Head Office
2nd Floor, 97B Church Street, Kingston**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

I take much pleasure in welcoming all members of Council to this meeting. We recognize that we have been very busy since the start of this conference year promoting and implementing our various activities. We thank you all for your contribution, leadership and support in ensuring that brand JTA remains relevant and vibrant.

As we celebrate, we are conscious that some of us have experienced pain and loss during this period. I personally would like to express deep thanks and appreciation to you my colleagues for your words of comfort and tangible support owing to the death of my mother.

We must take time out to record the passing of two-time Past President and former Trustee, Victor (Pipy) Edwards. Mr. Edwards who was eighty-seven (87) years died on Tuesday, November 17, 2015 after a period of illness. He will be missed for his sober and balanced contributions to our deliberations. An astute and dignified advocate for the rights of the teacher and an uncompromising champion for the teacher as a professional. Victor, as Principal of St. Jago High School, would have impacted positively many lives and as such, played an important role in nation building. He will be sadly missed. May his soul find rest.

As we gather here today for General Council, we continue to bemoan the scourge of crime and violence on the society. We note in particular the attack on colleague Moore, Vice Principal of Fair Prospect High School, Portland and her daughter and pray that they will experience full and complete recovery. We will have to double our efforts to influence those we teach to look to a better way of life if *Jamaica Land We Love* is going to change some of the ugliness that still pervade our country. Peace leads to prosperity.

Let us as we come together to deliberate on matters relevant to education and our own survival as educators pledge ourselves to never lose our passion as advocates for decency, professionalism and activism. Let us never be weary in pointing those in our sphere of influence to that which is good, right and uplifting.

May we have a productive and worthwhile meeting.

2.0 SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

All teachers should have received new salaries in October and the retroactive component in November. We have not heard of any hitches for November. We are aware of the issue surrounding the payment of retroactive Upkeep and Commuted Travelling allowances. We know that government has offered to pay at least two months retroactive amounts in December. We also know that the Civil Servants are demanding at least four months payment in December. The JTA supports the position of the Civil Servants and hopes that some agreement can be arrived at that will result in a payment in December.

There are a number of unresolved matters to be settled at the committee level by the Ministry of Education and the Jamaica Teachers' Association. We have provided the Ministry with a list of all our nominees for the various committees. However, to date, there has been no meetings. We have also prompted the Ministry of Education to activate these committees. We are yet to get a response.

3.0 50% REFUND OF TUITION

This activity continues to move at a slow pace. We know of the commitment to pay outstanding amounts by December 2015 and we know that some payments are taking place but we are not able to state the current state of affairs in term of actual payments.

4.0 TEACHERS' SERVICE COMMISSION

The Teachers' Service Commission is the body that deals primarily with the appointment of Principals. We know that it is up and running and a meeting was held on November 5, 2015. Therefore, before long, outstanding appointments will be done.

5.0 TEACHERS' APPEAL TRIBUNAL

The members of the Teachers' Appeal Tribunal have been appointed. They had a meeting with the Minister of Education but they have not yet met to hear any appeal. This is very unfortunate because there are many teachers whose cases have been hanging for far too long.

6.0 PROTOCOLS FOR REINSTATEMENT

The Association remains concern over the unduly long time it takes to reinstate teachers after they have had their appeal allowed.

A committee was set up to treat with this issue and a useful first meeting was held. We hope that initiative will prove useful.

7.0 NEGOTIATIONS FOR LECTURERS AND INSTRUCTORS IN HEART/NTA

Dates have been set for negotiations to begin on Monday and Tuesday of next week. We hope that the process will be expedited and a quick conclusion reached because our colleagues in these institutions have waited for a long time.

8.0 NEGOTIATIONS FOR PREPARATORY SCHOOLS

The progress is slow but we have had a response from St. Hugh's, Vaz, and Stella Marris Preparatory Schools. We intend to follow-up appropriately because the responses are at varied stages.

9.0 UPDATE ON FINANCIAL IRREGULARITIES

The Judge has signed the Summary Judgement and we were informed that the other parties will not appeal anymore. We are in the process through our Lawyers to work out a method to acquire some of the properties owned by Marlon Francis and his family members. The Court will be willing to sign these Acquisition Orders.

Other submissions have been made to get a Default Judgement on the properties (assets) owned by Marlon Francis alone. We await the Judge's verdict on this one.

10.0 NEW TEACHERS' SEMINAR

The Association promoted and successfully executed four (4) New Teachers' Seminars. We shared with close to 500 hundred young and eager-to-go teachers. We have also signed up some of them as members. You need to help us sign up all of them as members.

The attendance was as follows:

- North East - 75
- South East - 99

- South Central - 120
- West - 126

11.0 CONTACT TEACHERS SEMINARS

All four (4) regions had their Contact Teachers Seminars. As usual, this was a useful exercise but, based on observation and feedback, we will have to review our approach and target group for the future. It cannot be over-emphasized that the Contact Teacher must be a loyal and committed member of the Jamaica Teachers' Association. Contact Teachers cannot and must not "bad mouth" and negatively represent the Association. This does not mean that one cannot criticize the Association but there is a place and time and channel through which this can be done.

We remind all our Contact Teachers that they are the face of the Association on the ground and as such they must be among the best as a professional.

The attendance for this activity was as follows:

- North East - 135
- South East - 220
- South Central - 163
- West - 155

We commend Mrs. Judith Spencer-Jarrett for the production of a Contact Teachers' Manual and trust that it will serve as a useful guide to our Contact Teachers.

12.0 LEADERSHIP SEMINARS

The reports from the Leadership Seminars have been very positive and refreshing. Empowered leadership provide the impetus for inspired *followership*. Inspired *followership* transcends into positive and productive programmes and activities on the ground. This will redound to the growth and impact of the Association as it seeks to represent what is best for its members and the education system.

The attendance was as follows:

- North East - 45

- South East - 45
- South Central - 58
- West - 48

13.0 PARENTING EXPOSITION/FORUM

On Thursday, November 5, 2015 the Professional Services and Teacher Welfare Unit staged a very successful Parenting Exposition/Forum for parents within the environs of the Association. This was seen as one of the positive ways that the Association could give back to the community.

The attendance and participation of parents and entities was very good. Parents were empowered to do an even better job as parents. We commend very highly this initiative and the many players who joined in to ensure its success.

14.0 HALF YEARLY MEETINGS

Half Yearly meetings were held in all parishes except for St. Andrew which will be held in February 2016. The attendance and participation generally has been good. High commendation to all our Parish Leaders, Presidents and Regional Officers.

15.0 MEMBERSHIP CARDS

We have distributed a paper card which carries a little more than what we are used to. This card bears the members' names and unique Teachers' Number. It is a pre-cursor to the real and ideal Membership Card which bears one's photograph. This we hope to roll out in the New Year once we have sort out all the teething pains that we currently are experiencing.

16.0 J.T.A. APP

The JTA App is up and running. We should be improving as the days go by. We relish your feedback.

17.0 JTA/DIASPORA ACTIVITIES

The President, Secretary General and Senior Secretary Member Services visited Florida October 29, 2015 to November 2, 2015 to meet with members of the Diaspora Education Task Force as well as to visit institutions with a view to forging links that could benefit our members.

We had three (3) members of the Diaspora Education Task Force visiting with us during this week. They are in the process of concretizing plans for a Middle Managers' Workshop, March 2, 2016. Dr. Mark Nicely and Mrs. Charmaine Gooden Monteith are our lead in the planning of this activity.

18.0 JTA NATIONAL NETBALL RALLY

The Sports Committee successfully staged a Netball Rally at Manchester High School. This activity saw the participation of ten (10) parishes. After some stiff and exciting competitive games, St. Catherine emerged champions. Congratulations to all the teams and thanks to our organizers.

19.0 JOB REALIGNMENT AND RENAMING EXERCISE

The Association employed Dr. Stephnie Stern, a Human Resource Consultant, to examine and align Jobs with Job Descriptions, as well as to look at current Job Titles and suggest possible changes.

A document detailing the proposed changes has been circulated for your scrutiny and ratification. This, if ratified will be implemented in January 2016.

20.0 EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL (EI)

Education International has planned a seminar to be held in Trinidad and Tobago, November 28 to December 1, 2015 for young female leaders. The Association will be represented by Mrs. Lasonja Harrison. Mrs. Judith Spencer-Jarrett is the Chair of the CUT Status of Women's Committee.

21.0 CARIBBEAN UNION OF TEACHERS' EXECUTIVE MEETING

The CUT Executive Meeting will be held in St. Kitts, December 3-5, 2015. Our President, Mr. Norman Allen and Mrs. Judith Spencer-Jarrett will represent the Association.

22.0 CONGRATULATIONS

The Jamaica Teachers' Association wishes to offer congratulations to two-time Past President, Paul Adams, on his election as President of the Jamaica Teachers' Association Co-operative Credit Union. We wish for him and our Credit Union all that is good.

23.0 GENERAL STAFF RETREAT

The staff of the Association will hold its Annual General Staff Retreat December 10-12, 2015, at Jewel Resorts, Runaway Bay, St. Ann.

24.0 EDUCATION CONFERENCE 2016

Notice is hereby given that in March 2016, we will be hosting our Education Conference at the Hilton Rose Hall Resort and Spa, Montego Bay, St. James. The relevant details will unfold early in the New Year. Start making plans to attend.

25.0 J.T.A. SECRETARIAT

Change is constant and so we will be saying good bye and thank you for service rendered to the following persons who will be going on pre-retirement leave as of January 1, 2016:

- Mr. Juno Gayle - Regional Officer, South Central
- Miss Yvonne White - Office Manager
- Mr. Clive Brown - Security Supervisor

We thank them all for their years of committed service to the Association and wish for them many happy years in retirement.

26.0 CONCLUSION

As 2015 draws to a close, we must take time to reflect on how much we benefitted or contributed to humanity during this year. Did I make a positive impression on even one life? The answer that comes readily and honestly will reveal the extent to which your living has purpose and meaning. Perhaps we can ask the same question of the Jamaica Teachers' Association as an entity. Did the Association impact its members and society in a meaningful way? Did I play my part to empower the Association even more? As we reflect, it is possible that we could feel motivated to strive even more as we anticipate 2016. Whatever your posture, content or restlessness, be assured that the Association thanks you for your contribution and must inform you that we already count you in for the year 2016.

May you and those you love have a blessed Christmas Season and may 2016 find you willing to be engaged in the effort to make JTA stronger and Jamaica a nice place to be. God's blessings as we continue to **Unite and Serve**.

**Prepared by: Byron Farquharson
Secretary General**