

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

The first meeting of the PSOJ Information Technology Committee was held on Thursday, 29th January, 2004, chaired by CEO, Greta Bogues. Invited members represented a wide cross section from various technological sectors, including telecommunications, internet service providers, computer vendors, utilities and the financial sector.



Members of the IT Committee seen here at their first meeting held at the PSOJ offices on Thursday, 29th January, 2004

Given the broad range of sector interests represented within the committee, it was agreed that the underlying theme would be:

### "Information Technology for Sustainable Growth to Enhance Competition in Jamaica"

The Committee identified some of the national issues affecting the sector.

1. The fiscal policy regarding taxation; the need for a clear policy and set of guidelines and for consultation between the relevant players
2. Issues in Education/ Public Education: The availability of trained human resources, certification of providers and work permits for the various types of skill sets and the criteria for licensing of providers
3. IT Investment opportunities and incentives in Jamaica
4. The Environmental Impact of IT: proliferation of external infrastructure

*and co-location opportunities; role of the various planning agencies; the disposal of IT equipment.*

The issues were condensed into three (3) broad areas of focus:

- I) IT Vision: policy implementation, the stimulation for growth and investment opportunities;
- II) Education: Human Resource skills availability & mobility, and public awareness;
- III) Environmental Impact of Information Technology.

Mr. Maurice McNaughton, Director of Information Systems, JPSCo., was elected Chair of the Committee with Ian Neita of Cable & Wireless elected Vice Chair. After the meeting, Chair McNaughton expressed the hope that this Committee would contribute value to the sector. He re-iterated his personal commitment and looked forward to the full support of the committee members as they seek to finalize the mandate,

goals and objectives to be addressed during 2004. He also stated, "Ultimately, I believe the real strength of this group is in its diversity. One of the early initiatives that I think would be important for our committee, is to develop a good sense of the spectrum of agencies, advisory councils and other groups representing various aspects of the local ICT industry, to

understand their respective mandates and forging meaningful liaisons. This would be important as we seek to ensure that we are not trying to re-invent the wheel and can leverage the efforts of these other groups, where appropriate, in pursuit of our own specific mandate", continued McNaughton.

One of the first activities to be undertaken by the Committee will be a review of the National IT Plan and the attendant policy framework. The Committee will meet on the 1st Thursday of each month. Members interested in joining this Committee should contact Membership Services Officer, Pamela Sinclair, Tel: 927-6238, Ext. 2249 or by email: [pamelas@psoj.org](mailto:pamelas@psoj.org).

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## TRADE POLICY

### **THE SINGAPORE ISSUES: WHAT ARE THEY ABOUT?**

**PART 1 (Cont'd)**  
**The Private Sector Trade Team**

Indeed, Actionaid (a Non-governmental Organisation) has mentioned that foreign investment into the clothing industries of countries such as China, Bangladesh, Cambodia and Lesotho provided new jobs for hundreds of thousands of workers, particularly for women from poorer families. It is also generally agreed that Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) can provide developing countries with greater access to technology, research and development, and marketing expertise, which are key elements and prime movers in successful industrialization. In addition, it is argued that FDI can also generate increased financial activity by encouraging the development of financial markets, generating employment and foreign exchange.

Developing countries have, however, not taken the bait, preferring to stay on the side of caution and have countered that, notwithstanding the above arguments, the benefits of FDI depend on the type and quality of investment that enter a host country, and its regulatory environment.

A major concern of developing countries is that investment commitments could erode their governments' ability to regulate the entry and operations of foreign firms, and their ability to assist or give preference to local firms. They also fear that their governments would not be able to exercise choice on foreign investments and channel them along national developmental objectives. The inability of government to regulate the flow of funds could lead to financial instability.

Accordingly, we believe that at Cancun, CARICOM and the other developing countries were justified in opposing the launching of negotiations on these issues at this time. Before commitments in this area can be made, there is a need for clarification on the kinds of FDI that should be covered in a possible multilateral framework on investment, and the scope and coverage of transparency obligations by which host countries and foreign investors will be constrained. Additionally, there are still many open questions concerning the definition of "investor" and "investment" and whether FDI

will include portfolio investment, which is generally viewed to be a less stable and a more variable form of investment than FDI. Furthermore, the manner in which non-discrimination principles (Most Favoured Nation and National Treatment) should be applied to FDI remains vague and lacking consensus.

From an empirical standpoint, there is no clear linkage between trade and investment; neither is there any conclusion derived from studies to indicate what kind of impact the General Agreement on Trade in Services GATS has had on developing countries, socially and most importantly, environmentally. UNCTAD has also concluded that even with the conclusion of the (GATS), there is no empirical evidence to link any significant increase in FDI flows to developing countries.

Notwithstanding these findings however, developing countries face growing pressure to open their markets to foreign investments under the GATS regime, despite having already

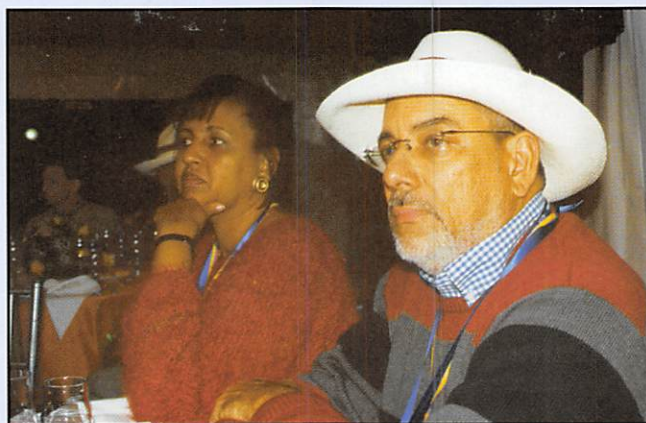
liberalized their investment policies to qualify for essential loans and debt relief from the World Bank and IMF.

These concerns reached a climax at Cancun where polarized positions among Members on these issues were not remedied by compromise or concession. Rather, they were reaffirmed through the divergence of positions that led to breakdown of negotiations.

If the "free trade system" is to benefit at all, it must, among other things, allow free trade on categories of goods and services that matter to the developing countries.

We are encouraged by the fact that CARICOM and other developing countries have started to realize that, in negotiations, we are neither mendicants nor supplicants and as such, free trade must ultimately, benefit all parties to the negotiations.

*Part 1a appeared in the PSOJ News of Nov/Dec 2003. Parts 2 and 3 will focus on the remaining Singapore issues: competition; government procurement; and trade facilitation.*



*Miss Greta Bagues and Mr. James Moss-Solomon  
at Trade meeting held in Ecuador*



## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

### *What is "Building Bridges"?*



An initiative created by U.S. Ambassador to Jamaica, Sue Cobb, Building Bridges is a one-year programme of events developed in collaboration with Jamaica's Investment and Trade Promotion Agency (JAMPRO), the Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica (PSOJ) and The American Chamber of Commerce of Jamaica (AmCham). Building Bridges is aimed at developing opportunities, sharing of knowledge and strengthening links between the public and private sectors of Jamaica and Florida by coordinating innovative programmes.

Activities planned will include specific pilot programmes, seminars and the matching of Jamaican and Florida public and private sector entities that share similar interests and objectives.

The "Building Bridges Trade Mission and Partnering Fair" is scheduled for June 7-9, 2004 at the Broward County Convention Center in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. The agenda consists of pre-arranged meetings between Jamaican and South Floridian businesses, networking opportunities, and table and booth displays on the show floor.

Speakers will share valuable international trade information and will highlight the free tools and trade resources available through Building Bridges partners. Activities will also include an opening reception, breakfast and lunch, and networking events.

Registration fee per company is US\$200.00. Special travel and lodging discounts have been arranged, and the estimated cost per attendee is less than US\$700.00 for flight and hotel.

For further information please contact:

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### *Anniversaries*

The PSOJ wishes to congratulate the following companies on their Anniversaries

CAPITAL & CREDIT  
MERCHANT BANK  
10 YEARS

DAIRY INDUSTRIES LTD.  
40 YEARS

&

JAMAICA NATIONAL BUILDING SOCIETY  
130 YEARS

### **WE WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBERS**

#### **JANUARY**

*Jamaica Venture Fund Limited*

#### **FEBRUARY**

*Global Bedding Ltd.*

*Are Systems*

*Hart Muirhead Fatta*



## BULLETIN BOARD

### JOB CREATION AWARDS - FEBRUARY 2004



Job Creation Awardees ceremony held on  
February 24, 2004  
at the Terra Nova All-Suite Hotel

### POLICE COURTESY WEEK APPRECIATION LUNCHEON — JANUARY 21, 2004



Police Courtesy Week Law & Order Awardees  
seen here with Dr. the Hon. Peter Phillips,  
Commissioner of Police Francis Forbes, Hon.  
Oliver F. Clarke and Greta Bagues, PSOJ CEO

### DATES TO REMEMBER:

APRIL 19-23, 2004 - CORPORATE GOVERNANCE SEMINARS, HILTON KINGSTON HOTEL

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS AND OTHER EVENTS PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE: [WWW.PSOJ.ORG](http://WWW.PSOJ.ORG)

### JMA/JEA EXPO MAY 28-30, 2004: A SHOWCASE OF QUALITY JAMAICAN PRODUCTS



The Jamaica Manufacturers' Association (JMA) and the Jamaica Exporters' Association (JEA) will once again host the JMA/JEA Expo at the National Arena from May 28-30, 2004. This premier trade show will highlight the wide range of products and services available in the island. Under the theme "BUY JAMAICAN", the Exposition will seek to present the vast improvements which have taken place in both sectors since the last showing nine years ago. In addition to focusing on the marketplace locally, the JMA/JEA Expo will also seek to capture the attention and support of buyers in the international marketplace. The Expo Organizing Committee extends an invitation to you our Jamaican manufacturers, exporters and service providers to participate in this show.

#### WHY PARTICIPATE?

You and your organisation will reap tremendous benefits by participating in this EXPO to:

- Showcase your products to a variety of interests
- Highlight the services you offer
- Interface with buyers and distributors from the local market as well as the Caribbean, Latin America and North American Regions.
- Explore business opportunities with potential investors.

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