

**WELCOME MESSAGE BY
WAYNE CUMMINGS, PRESIDENT, JHTA
AT JAPEX 2008 OPENING**

MINISTER OF TOURISM, HON. EDMUND BARTLETT

HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR, COUNCILLOR DESMOND McKENZIE

OPPOSITION SPOKESMAN ON TOURISM, DR. WYCKHAM McNEIL

PERMANENT SECRETARY IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM, MRS. JENNIFER GRIFFITH

DIRECTOR GENERAL IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM, MS. CARROLE GUNTLEY

CHAIRMAN, JAMAICA TOURIST BOARD, MR. JOHN LYNCH

DIRECTOR OF TOURISM, MR. BASIL SMITH

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JHTA, MRS. CAMILLE NEEDHAM

CHAIRMAN, KGN. CHAPTER OF JHTA, MRS. NICOLA MADDEN-GREIG

GENERAL MANAGER, HILTON KINGSTON, MR. FRANK ROSHEUVEL

AS PRESIDENT OF THE JAMAICA HOTEL & TOURIST ASSOCIATION I AM DELIGHTED TO WELCOME YOU ALL TO WHAT WE EXPECT TO BE ONE OF OUR MOST SUCCESSFUL TRADE SHOWS IN THE 18 YEAR HISTORY OF THE JAMAICA PRODUCT EXCHANGE (JAPEX)

THIS EVENING, THE JAMAICA TRAVEL AND TOURISM COMMUNITY ARE VERY UPBEAT FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS:

FIRSTLY, WITH OVER 500 REGISTERED DELEGATES AT THIS JAPEX, IT IS CLEAR THAT YOU ALL SHARE OUR CONFIDENCE AND COMMITMENT TO DESTINATION JAMACA. FOR THAT FACT YOU HAVE MADE THE TOURISM PARTNERS OF THE JHTA, JTB, MIN. OF TOURISM AND THEIR RELATED AGENCIES VERY HAPPY INDEED.

SECONDLY, THIS YEAR WE ARE EXTREMELY PLEASED TO WELCOME STRONG CONTINGENTS OF OUR TOURISM PARTNERS FROM WHAT ARE AMAZINGLY STRONG EMERGING MARKETS FOR JAMAICA –MEXICO, SOUTH AMERICA, SPAIN AND THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION –AS WELL AS

THOSE OF OUR LONG-STANDING FRIENDS FROM THE U.S.A., CANADA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM.

THE JHTA HAS BEEN WORKING WITH ITS MANY MEMBERS, WHICH INCLUDE ACCOMMODATIONS, ATTRACTIONS, TRANSPORTATION AND A WIDE PURVEYOR AND SUPPLIER COMMUNITY ALONGSIDE THE JAMAICA TOURIST BOARD TO DIVERSIFY AND GROW OUR SHARE OF THE GLOBAL TOURISM MARKET AND WE ARE GRATIFIED TO SEE THAT OUR COLLECTIVE EFFORTS ARE PAYING OFF WITH THE TREMENDOUS GROWTH IN AND DIVERSIFICATION OF OUR ROOM STOCK, OFFERINGS OF ATTRACTIONS AND ALL THE ATTENDANT SERVICES INTEGRAL TO THE VIABILITY OF OUR BUSINESS.

IT IS NO SECRET THAT THE TOURISM INDUSTRY IS VITALLY IMPORTANT TO US HERE IN JAMAICA AND WE WORK CONSTANTLY TO BE INNOVATIVE AND TO EXPAND IN THE MOST RESPONSIBLE AND EFFECTIVE WAY, IN RESPONSE TO THE EVER-CHANGING IMPERATIVES OF TODAY'S DEMANDING TRAVELLER.

WITH AN EVER CHANGING GEOPOLITICAL AND ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE - PARTNERSHIPS FORGED WITH OUR TRAVEL TRADE PARTNERS, TO INCLUDE YOU THE TOUR OPERATORS, TRAVEL AGENTS AND MEDIA PROFESSIONAL, WE ARE GREATFUL, THAT JAMAICA'S TOURISM MESSAGE STILL REMAINS RELEVANT AND ATTRACTIVE IN THIS GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE TOURISM ARENA.

THIS YEAR KINGSTON, LED BY THE HARDWORKING JHTA AREA CHAIRMAN, NICOLA MADDES-GREIG, HAS PULLED OUT ALL THE STOPS TO ENSURE THAT OUR CAPITAL CITY IS SHOWCASED WITH ALL THE CULTURAL, ENTERTAINMENT AND HISTORICAL VALUE FOR WHICH IT HAS BEEN REKNOWN FOR CENTURIES. I CONGRATULATE THE ENTIRE TEAM – MANY VOLUNTEERS – WHO HAS DONE SUCH A TREMENDOUS JOB.

OVER THE NEXT TWO DAYS, YOU WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO RENEW AND STRENGTHEN EXISTING BONDS, EXPLORE NEW HORIZONS, MEET NEW SUPPLIERS AND MAKE NEW FRIENDS. AND WE I HOPE WE WILL ALL REAP THE VALUE OF THESE INTERACTIONS IN THE MONTHS AND YEARS AHEAD.

ON BEHALF OF THE JAMAICA HOTEL & TOURIST ASSOCIATION, I WELCOME EACH AND EVERY DELEGATE TO JAPEX 2008.

THANK YOU.