

The Antecedents, Structure and Outcomes of the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Task Force

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February 19, 2021

Antecedents of the Task Force

- The COVID-19 Economic Recovery Task Force (ERTF) was established by Prime Minister Holness on April 27, 2020 under the chairmanship of Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke, Minister of Finance & the Public Service.
- In announcing the establishment of the Task Force, the Prime Minister indicated that Jamaica's social partners had indicated to him their interest in participating in an "all of Jamaica" effort to respond to an unprecedented crisis confronting Jamaica and the World.

The Jamaica Social Partnership Process

- Jamaica's social partnership process has been built on over thirty years of social dialogue conducted through institutions such as:
 - National Planning Council (1989-2007)
 - Labour Advisory Councils (1989 – Present)
 - Acorn Social Dialogue Group (1997 – Present)
 - PSOJ-led Partnership for Progress Committee (2003-07)
 - PIOJ – Vision 2030 Secretariat (2005 – Present)
 - Social Partnership Consultative Committee (2008-09)
 - National Partnership Council (NPC)(2009 – Present)
 - The NPC has spawned three national social partnership agreements (PCC; PFJ; PFPJ).

In 2011, after three years of consultation, Prime Minister Bruce Golding led in the signing of the Partnership Code of Conduct at Jamaica House



In 2013, Prime Minister Simpson Miller led in the signing of the *Partnership for Jamaica* at Kings House

The Partnership for Jamaica is Jamaica's first ever signed social partnership agreement, which gives voice in matters of development to all social partners.



In 2016, Prime Minister Holness signs Jamaica's second National Partnership Agreement, Partnership for a Prosperous Jamaica with representatives from the Private Sector, Trade Union Leadership and Civil Society in Ceremony hosted by Governor General Sir Patrick Allen.



RUDOLPH BROWN/PH

ntre), governor general of Jamaica, with (from left) Paul Scott, president of the P
aica; Diana McCaulay, CEO of Jamaica Environment Trust; Prime Minister Andr
resident of the Jamaica Civil Service Association, after the official signing of the Pa
ca Agreement at King's House yesterday. **See realted story on Page A3.**

The Structure of the CV-19 ERTF

- The CV-19 ERTF was established with a unprecedented structure for Jamaica which built on the existing social partnership process and reflected the principle that “the job of rebuilding the nation is the job of the nation”, while seeking to ensure a seamless transition from policy recommendations to policy implementation.
- The ERTF comprised 28 representatives inclusive of seven ministers of government and 21 representatives of government agencies, private sector associations and companies, trade union leadership and civil society.

The CV-19 ERTF Process

- The CV-19 ERTF process involved the establishment of 12 working committees chaired by Government Ministers and public and private sector leaders and an unprecedented level of transparency and inclusiveness in assessing Jamaica's CV-19 related challenges.
- The total membership of these sub-committees drawn from the membership of the CV-19 ERTF and other public sector, private sector, trade union and civil society leadership exceeded 100 individuals, with the goals of incorporating all the required expertise and widespread ownership of the process of developing a national recovery plan.
- The Task Force Report was finalised, within about two months, on June 30, 2020, with the goal of ensuring the relevance of the ERTF's work to the immediacy of the CV-19 crisis.

CV -19 ERTF Outcomes

- The ERTF observed that Jamaica had taken up to a decade to recover from previous economic crises and that recovery had been slowed by insufficient attention to key challenges, particularly the importance of macro-economic and social stability. The ERTF's goal is economic recovery within 2-4 years, with Jamaica “building back stronger”
- The ERTF proposed policy recommendations focused on building a CV-19 resilient economy, recommitting to macro-economic stability and reform and business climate improvements, restoring tourism, deepening local supply chains, boosting public sector efficiency, expanding national digitisation, economic diversification, economic formalisation, social safety net improvements, labour market reform and the strengthening of the GOJ's technical resource capacity.

Charge to Jamaica from CV-19 ERTF Chairman, Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke

- Though the road ahead may have difficult patches there is reason for great optimism.
- In our short history, Jamaica has time and again demonstrated the ability to reform itself, to bounce back, to achieve the unachievable and to confound the world.
- We need to look no further than our most recent history where, with social cohesion as the foundation, and social consensus as the support, Jamaica charted an unlikely course of reform that, pre-Covid-19, resulted in a range of outcomes recognised and celebrated around the World.
- This time we are starting ahead. There is no precedent for a consensus building broad-based Task Force on Economic Recovery commissioned during the eye of any previous storm. That gives us a head start. We must use it, embrace reform with ambition and Rebuild Jamaica.