



## MINISTRY OF LEGAL & CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

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JAMAICA

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### MINUTES

#### 16th Meeting of the Constitutional Reform Committee (CRC)

Venue: Jamaica House Banquet Hall

Date: July 14, 2023

Time: 9:30 a.m.

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### AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Prayer
3. National Pledge
4. Apologies for Absence
5. Opening Remarks
6. Confirmation of Agenda
7. Confirmation of Minutes from 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting
8. Presentation from the Public: \*
  - *We The People Republic Ja or JA.*
  - *Advocates Network*
9. Proposed Upcoming Public Engagement and Consultation Sessions:
  - St. Elizabeth – July 26, 2023
  - Westmoreland – July 27, 2023
  - Hanover – July 28, 2023
10. Proposed Drafting Strategy
11. Any Other Business

- Request for Sensitisation Session – Hagley Park Seventh Day Adventist Church

12. Date and Time of Next Meeting

13. Adjournment

## **ATTENDEES:**

### **Constitutional Reform Committee**

- Honourable Marlene Malahoo Forte, KC, JP, MP (Chairman)
- Ambassador Rocky Meade, CD, JP, PhD (Co-Chairman - Office of the Prime Minister)
- Dr Derrick McKoy, CD, KC (Attorney General of Jamaica)
- Mr Anthony Hylton, CD, MP (Parliamentary Opposition - House of Representatives)
- Dr the Honourable Lloyd Barnett, OJ (National Constitutional Law Expert)
- Mr Hugh Small, KC (Consultant Counsel and Nominee of the Leader of the Parliamentary Opposition)
- Dr David Henry (Wider Society – Faith-based)
- Dr Elaine McCarthy (Chairman of the Jamaica Umbrella Groups of Churches)
- Dr Nadeen Spence (Civil Society – Social and Political Commentator)
- Mrs Laleta Davis Mattis, CD, JP (National Council on Reparation)
- Mr Sujae Boswell (Youth Advisor)
- Professor Richard Albert (International Constitutional Law Expert – University of Texas at Austin)

### **Secretariat**

#### ***Ministry of Legal and Constitutional Affairs***

- Mr Wayne O. Robertson, JP, Permanent Secretary
- Miss Judith Grant, Chief Parliamentary Counsel
- Ms Nadine Wilkin, Director of Legal Reform
- Ms Roxene Nickle, Advisor/Consultant
- Mrs Janelle Miller-Williams, Senior Director, Legal Education (Actg.)

- Ms Nastacia McFarlane, Director, Corporate Communication & Public Relations (Actg.)
- Mr Christopher Harper, Senior Constitutional Reform Officer (Actg.)
- Ms Julia Wedderburn, Senior Legal Education Officer (Actg.)
- Ms Christal Parris-Campbell, Assistant Parliamentary Counsel
- Mrs Chrystine Bernard-Wedderburn, Legislative Editor
- Mr Makene Brown, Legal Officer
- Mr Jordan Jarrett, Constitutional Reform Officer (Actg.)

***Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade***

- Ambassador Sheila Sealy Monteith, CD, JP, Permanent Secretary

***Ministry of Justice***

- Ms Samantha Blair, Deputy Director, Legal Services

**ABSENCES**

- Senator the Honourable Thomas Tavares-Finson, OJ, CD, KC, JP (President of the Senate and Commissioner of the Electoral Commission of Jamaica)
- Senator Ransford Braham, CD, KC (Government Senator)
- Senator Donna Scott-Motley (Parliamentary Opposition - Senate)

## **1. CALL TO ORDER**

- 1.1.** The meeting was called to order by the Chairman, the Honourable Minister Marlene Malahoo Forte, at 10:02 am.

## **2. PRAYER**

- 2.1.** Prayer was offered by Dr Henry.

## **3. NATIONAL PLEDGE**

- 3.1.** The National Pledge was recited.

## **4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- 4.1.** Apologies for absence were tendered for Senators Tavares-Finson, Braham and Scott-Motley who were unavoidably absent due to a sitting of the Senate.
- 4.2.** Apologies for lateness were given by Dr Spence and Dr McCarthy.
- 4.3.** It was reported that Senator Braham expressed apologies for consecutive absences which were due to his need to attend to court matters which were scheduled far in advance of the Committee's meetings.

## **5. OPENING REMARKS**

- 5.1.** The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, including Professor Albert who joined by video link. The Chairman also welcomed Co-Chairman Ambassador Meade, who had

spent some time overseas and who had the opportunity to engage with members of the diaspora in the United Kingdom.

- 5.2. The Chairman thanked the members for sharing their thoughts with her on the progress of the Committee's work as well as their views on issues of concern based on matters discussed in the public domain, particularly within the political sphere.
- 5.3. The Chairman noted that the agenda item on the Proposed Drafting Strategy to implement the necessary reforms was placed on the meeting's agenda. The Chief Parliamentary Counsel, Ms Judith Grant, was present and would contribute to the discussion of that Agenda item.
- 5.4. The Chairman expressed her disappointment with the current backlog in the preparation and finalisation of the Minutes for previous meetings. She explained that a part of the post-meeting process involved going through the Minutes noting issues that arose in the discussions, and the actions needed to be taken as a result. She urged the Committee's Secretariat to ramp up its efforts, and provide the quality of support that it was intended to provide.
- 5.5. The Chairman noted that two new Members joined the Secretariat – Mr Jordan Jarrett, who joined the Ministry of Legal and Constitutional Affairs as a Constitutional Reform Officer, and Ms Georgette Campbell who would be providing the Secretariat with Administrative Support. The Chairman also sent her regards to Ms. Wedderburn, who was reportedly unwell.

## **6. CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA**

- 6.1. The Agenda was confirmed.

## **7. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES FROM THE 11<sup>TH</sup> MEETING**

**7.1.** The Chairman asked for the confirmation of the Minutes from the 11<sup>th</sup> meeting to be deferred to the end of the meeting, if time permitted.

**7.2. Report from Co-Chair Ambassador Meade**

**7.2.1.** Before the meeting considered the next agenda item, Ambassador Meade gave a short report on his engagement with Members of the Jamaican Diaspora in the United Kingdom.

**7.2.2.** Ambassador Meade reported that his primary purpose in the United Kingdom was not for public engagement in the constitutional reform process, but he took advantage of the opportunity to do so. He indicated that he gave Members of the Diaspora an indication of what was happening at the level of the Constitutional Reform Committee, issues raised in the public domain, and the proposed, phased work of the Committee. He noted the interest of the Members of the Diaspora in the next steps of the Committee, and that the information he presented was well received. Ambassador Meade concluded that it was important for the dialogue on Constitutional Reform to reach Jamaicans all over the world.

**8. PRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

**8.1.** The Chairman welcomed the first presenter, Haile Mikael Cujo, from the group '*We the People Republic JA*'. The Chairman recognised his interest in the reform process and thanked him for circulating his presentation to the Committee in advance of his presentation. His presentation was streamed live on the Ministry of Legal and Constitutional Affairs' social media platforms.

**8.2.** The Chairman noted that Mr Cujo had been present at almost every town hall consultation organised by the Committee to date. She thanked him for his interest and commitment and invited the Committee to offer him a round of applause.

### **8.3. We The People Republic JA – Haile Mikael Cujo**

- 8.3.1.** Mr Cujo read from his proposal entitled “We the People” which was written by him, in consultation with legal professionals and other members of the public.
- 8.3.2.** Mr Cujo indicated that his proposals were a broad framework and that the finer points would have to be looked at by the lawmakers, to ensure that they were beneficial to the people of Jamaica. The Members of the Committee engaged Mr Cujo on the main points of his presentation.
- 8.3.3.** The mechanism for implementing constitutional reforms – Mr Cujo proposed that the current Constitution be dispensed with, and that his proposed Constitution be implemented by a vote of all 63 Members of the House of Representatives. Ambassador Meade observed that the basis of Mr Cujo’s proposal was the sovereignty of the people. Against that background, he asked how Mr Cujo would resolve the desire for the will of the people to be paramount with the proposal that a new Constitution would need only to be ratified by the 63 Members of the House of Representatives.
- 8.3.4.** Dr Barnett stated that implementing a new Constitution in the way Mr Cujo described would mean ignoring the existing law contained in the present Constitution. Dr Barnett noted that ignoring the Constitution might result in court action on the basis that the prescribed procedure for amending the Constitution was not followed.
- 8.3.5.** In response, Mr Cujo stated that his proposal would involve doing away with the 1962 Constitution, altogether, including the procedure prescribed for changing it. In his view, the 1962 Constitution was a fraud, and to use that document to correct its own fraud would not make any sense. He stated that there may be aspects of the 1962 Constitution that were worth saving but there were aspects, like the placement of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council as our Final Appellate Court, that could not be retained. Mr Cujo explained that what he contemplated was a

“bloodless revolution”. He said that the Americans, French and many other peoples had done it – the people of Jamaica could therefore do it too.

**8.3.6.** The Chairman explained to Mr Cujo that there was a process by which a new Constitution could come into effect. She noted that a mere ratification by 63 Members of Parliament could not bring a new Constitution into effect.

**8.3.7.** The Constitution of Ethiopia – Mr Cujo provided the Committee with a copy of a repealed version of the Constitution of Ethiopia and suggested that aspects of it be used to inform what our new Constitution could provide. Members of the Committee asked about the status of the document and raised concerns about its usefulness, given that the people of Ethiopia had rejected that document for themselves. Mr Cujo indicated that the version of the Ethiopian constitution he provided had been repealed, but noted that it could still be helpful, given that it contained certain provisions that mirrored aspects of the United Nations Charter, and other matters that might be suited for adoption in Jamaica.

**8.3.8.** Making the laws more Jamaican/beneficial to Jamaicans – Mr. Cujo said there were some laws in Jamaica that were oppressive and designed to keep us in slavery. He suggested that they be abolished. He said that it meant that the administration of the Government would have to go through the Constitution and the laws of the country to see which laws were acceptable and which were not. Mr Cujo suggested, for example, that laws which criminalised certain expressions in Jamaican patois would be reviewed. He proposed that Jamaican patois be entrenched as our primary language except in international communication where English would be used.

**8.3.9.** Mr Cujo also suggested that laws permitting the extradition of Jamaicans to other countries be reviewed and abolished.

**8.3.10.** The Chairman noted in reply that the Committee had received a presentation on the use of language and the importance of language in the Constitutional Reform process and indicated that laws related to the criminalisation of language had to be looked at carefully.



**8.3.11. Timelines and implementation of proposals** – Mr Cujo suggested that general elections be held in Jamaica every two years from the date of the implementation of a new Constitution. He explained that the timelines for implementing his proposals were flexible, and not fixed. He noted that in each iteration of his proposals, he had to change the proposed timeframe for implementation. Mr Cujo however suggested that his proposal for Constitutional overhaul be implemented in 2024. The Chairman informed Mr Cujo that the timeframe for implementing significant reforms to the Constitution would have to be greater than what he anticipated. The timeframe would have to be informed by the procedure set out for changing the current Constitution and the lifespan of the current Parliament.

**8.3.12. Powers of the Prime Minister and Appointment of Members of the Executive** – Mr Cujo proposed that the Prime Minister be elected by the people of Jamaica, and that the Prime Minister do all other major appointments. The current Cabinet would be called the “Council of Ministers” who would be appointed by the Prime Minister without consultation. If the people or Parliament believed that a person was wrongfully appointed to the Council of Ministers, Parliament could petition the Supreme Court to remove that person. Mr Cujo further explained that there would be some appointments which could not be made without ratification.

**8.3.13.** Mr Cujo advocated for a Prime Ministerial power to veto recommendations or laws proposed by the Council of Ministers or Parliament. Any law vetoed would only be reconsidered by Parliament after a year. He said that the Prime Minister would not be able to call a State of Public Emergency without the agreement of Parliament. Mr. Cujo further said that Notaries Public and Parish Judges would also be appointed by the Prime Minister. He emphasised that the Prime Minister represented the people so many decisions would be made by him.

**8.3.14. Renaming Offices** – Mr Cujo suggested renaming public offices in Jamaica with indigenous Jamaican names or expressions. As an example, he said that the office of the Prime Minister could be renamed the “Don Dadda”, given the familiarity of the Jamaican people with that expression. The Chairman questioned Mr Cujo’s

suggestion of the name “Don Dadda”, given the negative context in which the word “don” had come to be used in Jamaica.

**8.3.15. Separation of Head of State and Head of Government** – Mr Cujo suggested that there would be no separation between the Head of State and the Head of Government. Mr. Cujo said that, to have two people doing a job that could be done by one person, did not make sense. He stated that there would also be difficulties selecting or determining which office was the higher officer.

**8.3.16.** Mr Cujo suggested that the Prime Minister be removable by petition. The House of Representatives would choose its Speaker who would be the Deputy Prime Minister. In case the Prime Minister dies, the Deputy Prime Minister would become the Prime Minister.

**8.3.17.** Mr Cujo also stated that it would be desirable to remove the Monarch given that, in his view, under the current law, the Governor General and the King could sign an order to override everything that was happening in Parliament, at any time. Dr Barnett indicated in reply that he was not aware of such a power being in the hands of the Governor General and the King under our current law.

**8.3.18. Changes to the Judiciary** – Mr Cujo suggested that Jamaica’s Judiciary be reorganised. He suggested that Jamaica’s highest court be named the ‘Supreme Court’. Beneath that court should be the Court of Appeal, then the Parish Courts and lastly, a court composed of Notaries Public. Members of the Committee interrogated Mr Cujo’s proposal, and highlighted points of conflict with such a framework. Mr Small highlighted that Notaries Public were officers who signed documents, in accordance with the requirements of various laws. They were currently not a part of the Judiciary. Mr Small also explained the history of the Court of Appeal, and the reasons it was established as a separate court, higher than the Supreme Court.

**8.3.19.** The Chairman stressed that an accurate understanding of the current system is a necessary foundation for proposals made. The Chairman explained the structure of

the Judiciary. She also pointed out that not all courts fell within the judicial branch of Government which was an anomaly. At the lowest level existed the Lay Magistrate Courts presided over by Justices of the Peace who dealt with minor offences. That court was not in the Judicature. Above that were the Parish Courts, the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, for appellate matters and the Caribbean Court of Justice for issues related to the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas. She stressed that it was important for Mr Cujo to base his suggestions on an accurate understanding of the current system and its history.

**8.3.20. Local Government** – Mr Cujo argued for the abolition of the Local Government system of representation. The Chairman stated that the abolition of the Local Government system, and whether it would be collapsed into the central government, remained a live question. She noted that the question came up in a significant way in 2015 when the Constitution was amended to enshrine certain matters surrounding the system of Local Government.

**8.3.21. State Relations with the Maroons** – Mr Cujo proposed to abolish all the treaties that the English signed with the Maroons. He said they were to be recognised as indigenous people, and made to enjoy all rights available by virtue of them also being Jamaicans. He further said on the matter of land, it was important that the Maroons retained ownership of their ancestral homelands. The Chairman noted that the categorisation of the Maroons, whether as indigenous people or otherwise, had been subject to debate, and that the use of the term “indigenous people” had a special meaning, not only in national law but in international law. She said that the Maroons had a special place in the Jamaican society.

**8.3.22.** The Chairman explained the laws dealing with the lands for the Maroons and noted that some of those laws were changed over time. She added that she believed that there were a lot of inaccuracies around public discourse on Maroon land rights. She explained that steps had been taken to regularise Maroon landownership including

an initiative where properties of defined acreage were given to individual members of the Maroon community.

**8.3.23.** Dr McKoy explained that, at Emancipation, the local administration passed a law that gave each Maroon 2 acres of land. He said it abolished any earlier use of land and granted them actual ownership of the land. He explained that Maroons also had a special privilege to claim individual ownership of land for themselves and for their children.

**8.3.24.** The Chairman emphasised again that in putting forth proposals, presenters were to base their suggestions on accurate historical and factual material. She said that accuracy mattered and asked that Mr Cujo paid attention to the details of his suggestions.

**8.4.** The Chairman thanked Mr Cujo for his presentation and for his involvement in the process so far.

**8.5.** The Chairman welcomed the second presenters, the Advocates Network Jamaica. The presentation was made by Professor Rosalee Hamilton, Co-Chairperson of the Advocates Network Jamaica. The Network's presentation was streamed live on the Ministry of Legal and Constitutional Affairs; social media platforms.

**8.6. Proposals for Constitutional Reform on the Road to a “Republic of Jamaica” – Advocates Networks Jamaica**

**8.6.1.** Professor Hamilton opened her presentation by indicating that the Advocates Network was a non-partisan alliance of individuals and organizations advocating for human rights and good governance to improve Jamaica's social and economic conditions and to ultimately transform lives. She said that they had been encouraging active citizen participation in addressing the range of social and

economic problems facing Jamaica, equality, justice, and discrimination, among other things.

**8.6.2.** The aim of the Network’s presentation, was to highlight what they perceived to be important to creating a new Constitution for Jamaica, and to share some views about the Terms of Reference of the Constitutional Reform Committee and the Network’s own work.

**8.6.3.** The Head of State – Professor Hamilton stated that there had been discussions about the type of President, whether Ceremonial or Executive, and the method of selecting the President – whether by election or appointment. She noted that there were mixed views amongst the Network and the public and that some members of [the Network] had not yet decided. She said that two options that arose were- (i) an Executive President without a Prime Minister; (ii) a Non-Executive President with a Prime Minister; but that, some saw a Non-Executive President as a mere substitute for the King’s representative.

**8.6.4.** Professor Hamilton added that the Network was very concerned about the authoritative culture of governance operating in Jamaica. She said that it had been observed that there was more support for a “strong man” leadership in the country than a democratic leadership. She pointed out that there were concerns about the context of a Presidential arrangement that essentially consolidated and strengthened Constitutional dictatorship. She also said that there were concerns about an Executive President elected by the people, which was likely to use that mandate to undermine oversight capacity of the Legislature.

**8.6.5.** Restructuring of Government – Professor Hamilton stated that the House of Representatives would be designed to undertake 4 key roles: (1) the legislative function of the Government; (2) the executive function of the Government; (3) oversight of the executive function; and (4) to organise and facilitate the public petitioning of legislators.

- 8.6.6.** She said that the Constitution would seek to clarify the roles and responsibilities of Parliamentarians and the members of the Executive. She stated that recent public discussions of the Parliamentarians suggested that there was no clarity of the role of Parliamentarians in the law-making process.
- 8.6.7.** She added that the roles of the oversight committees such as monitoring, evaluation and investigation would be reflected in the Constitution as part of the legislative function. The Committees would oversee all Ministries, Departments and Agencies of the Government.
- 8.6.8.** She further said that Senators would be elected to conduct the legislative function of the Government, provide oversight of the Executive, ensure the protection of minority rights, organise the public petitioning of legislators, and oversee the appointment, discipline and removal of senior government officials. Senators would not be younger than 30 years old.
- 8.6.9.** Professor Hamilton stressed that the Senate could provide important oversight to the Government by receiving public petitions. These petitions would provide opportunities to have the voice of the Jamaican public heard directly in the deliberations in Parliament. Professor Hamilton contended that making petitions a part of the law-making process, as a right, would strengthen democracy.
- 8.6.10.** She also advocated for a fixed number, or a fixed range, that would determine the number of Executive Members. The Network suggested that there would be no less than 11 and no more than 16 Executive Members of Government.
- 8.6.11.** Necessary Constitutional Changes/Drafting Issues– Professor Hamilton spoke to the importance of including a preamble in the Constitution, a clause indicating the supremacy of the Jamaican Constitution over all laws and actions by government authorities, and a sovereignty clause indicating that the sovereignty of Jamaica belonged to the people of Jamaica.

**8.6.12. The Right to Petition Government** – Professor Hamilton emphasised that citizens had the ability to petition the Government through the website of the Office of the Prime Minister, but that petitions needed to be formalised into a Constitutional mechanism. She said that such a move would enhance Parliamentary responsiveness to the people’s needs, transparency and accountability.

**8.6.13.** The Chairman asked whether there was a specific view of how the Network would see the right to petition operating. In response, Professor Hamilton stated that rules would determine the number of signatures required for petitions, the provision of supporting documentation and other matters.

**8.6.14.** The Chairman pointed out that, in respect to an Oversight Committee, the Committees were set out in the Standing Orders of Parliament and that the Standing Orders were regulations of the Constitution provided for at Section 51 at subsection 1. The Chairman noted therefore that the Network’s proposal was not far removed from the current framework that existed under the Constitution.

**8.6.15.** The Chairman added that a structured mechanism was absent within the rules for the many reports from Oversight Committees that were generated to be discussed and treated with. She suggested that an optional provision could be contemplated to permit citizens to petition, if the citizens so desired to exercise the right to do so. She opined that creating an option for petitions, and not making petitioning mandatory, took nothing from the strength of any possible future right to petition.

**8.6.16.** Dr Barnett indicated that there was no methodology for the treatment of a petition in our current framework, nor for the treatment of reports from Oversight Committees. He noted the decision of Former Prime Minister, The Honourable Bruce Golding, to have the Opposition Members chair Oversight Committees. In his view, that was a very effective way of making sure that issues were dealt with.

**8.6.17. The Caribbean Court of Justice** – Professor Hamilton proposed full accession to the jurisdiction of the Caribbean Court of Justice.

**8.6.18. Participatory Budgeting** – The Network suggested that participatory budgetary arrangements would be made to allow the citizens of Jamaica to have a direct say in the preparation of the country’s budget. Professor Hamilton stated that it would improve our democracy and citizen involvement in the significant legitimacy of the Government and increase the trust in Government.

**8.6.19. Salaries, Pensions and Benefits for Public Officials** – Professor Hamilton highlighted the public discourse surrounding the increases in salaries for Members of the political directorate. She suggested the establishment of a Salary Review Committee with responsibility to assess and review salaries, noting that such a Committee existed in Trinidad and Tobago.

**8.6.20. Removal of Parliamentarians** – The Network suggested that the ability to remove Parliamentarians be considered. Suggestions were for an impeachment procedure, the availability of recall petitions, and modifications to the house rules to provide for automatic vacation of a seat in cases where a Member was not attending.

**8.6.21. The Terms of Reference and Other Matters** – Lastly, Professor Hamilton addressed the Committee on issues that arose from the Committee’s Terms of Reference and other matters related to the Committee’s engagements with the public.

**8.6.22.** Professor Hamilton noted that the Committee’s Terms of Reference used the term “Parliamentary Republic” and that the term needed to be defined, to give greater context to the Committee’s work. The Chairman stated in response that review of the Terms of Reference was an ongoing matter.

**8.6.23.** Professor Hamilton further indicated the Network’s concern that inadequate attention was being paid to public education surrounding the Constitutional Reform process, and that the Committee’s work was not transparent. The Chairman noted the Network’s concerns and stated in response that work was being done to finalise the public education processes, and that measures such as the publication of the



Committee's meeting minutes and the livestreaming of stakeholder presentations were measures taken to enhance the transparency of the Committee's work.

- 8.7.** Discussions were had with Committee members and the Advocates Network on points from their presentations. The Chairman noted that many things called for had already been established in law by legislation or the Constitution, and that the issue, in many respects, was implementation. Many of the issues were therefore not issues dealt with by the Constitutional Reform process, but were questions of governance. The Chairman thanked the Advocates Network for their presentation and for their engagement on the issues.

*The meeting broke for lunch*

**[LUNCH BREAK]**

*The meeting resumed*

*(The Chairman left the meeting at the end of the lunchbreak and handed over chairmanship of the meeting to the Co-Chairman)*

## **9. PROPOSED UPCOMING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION SESSIONS**

- 9.1.** Following a request of the Co-Chairman, Permanent Secretary, Mr Robertson, and Ms Nastacia McFarlane, Director of Corporate Communication and Public Relations, to led the discussion.
- 9.2.** Ms McFarlane informed the meeting that town hall sessions were planned for Saint Elizabeth, Westmoreland and Hanover. She indicated that the first town hall was to be conducted in Saint Elizabeth at the Saint Elizabeth Technical High School at 5:00 pm. There would also be a walkthrough, earlier that day. Ms McFarlane indicated that the

Secretariat, through Permanent Secretary Robertson, were working with the Councillors to determine the best location in Saint Elizabeth, for the proposed walkthrough.

- 9.3.** Discussions were had regarding the appropriate venue for public meetings and walkthroughs in Saint Elizabeth. Dr Spence and Mr Small gave insight into the nature of the major towns in Saint Elizabeth and the possible difficulties that could be encountered in each town. Discussions were had about the possibilities in Santa Cruz, Black River and Junction. Mr Small pointed out that Santa Cruz was a very busy town on a commercial day, similar in nature to downtown Kingston. He pointed out that the southern part of Saint Elizabeth may not provide a high turnout of participants. He suggested that there could be more than one meeting, because one meeting might not satisfy all of Saint Elizabeth.
- 9.4.** Dr Spence suggested that Black River might be a better place for a walkthrough to take place. She also pointed out that the Committee must operate with an awareness of the different patterns of behaviour of people in the north and south of the parish. Such awareness would be critical to a successful public engagement endeavour in the parish.
- 9.5.** A general concern was expressed about whether the temperature would be conducive to walkthroughs.
- 9.6.** Committee members identified mobilisation of attendees as a critical issue for the upcoming public engagement endeavours in Saint Elizabeth, and that assistance would be needed for political leaders in the parish regardless of the town chosen to host public engagement efforts.
- 9.7.** The Co-Chairman, Dr Spence and Mr Small suggested, and Ms McFarlane agreed, that contact was to be made with Member of Parliament, Floyd Green, along with other political representatives on both sides, for their assistance with mobilising attendees, and ironing out other relevant issues. Permanent Secretary, Mr Robertson, indicated that a list of the Local Government representatives had been requested. He indicated that plans were underway to contact the political representatives for assistance.

- 9.8.** The Co-Chairman indicated his view that there appeared to be some consensus, based on the discussions, that the walkthrough should take place in Black River, but that more information was still needed from the Secretariat, to arrive at a firm conclusion on the matter.
- 9.9.** Ms McFarlane noted that the next intended location was Westmoreland. The Permanent Secretary indicated that there was a concern about having three back-to-back town hall meetings and walkthroughs in Saint Elizabeth, Westmoreland and Hanover. Dr Spence shared her concerns about the three days of walkthroughs given the sustained high temperatures across the island. She suggested that the town hall in Westmoreland could be at Manning's High School, but suggested that contact should be made with the political representatives in the parish for their assistance with mobilising attendees. She also suggested that Jamaica Cultural Development Commission (JCDC) parish co-ordinators and the church be contacted to assist with mobilising attendees.
- 9.10.** The Co-Chairman suggested that further planning would be done and members could be informed via the WhatsApp group.
- 9.11.** Ms McFarlane raised the concern that three consecutive periods of public engagement would raise issues on the availability of accommodations, logistics for Jamaica Information Service, and transportation. The Co-Chairman indicated that more information would be needed on the specific plans and challenges before a decision could be made.
- 9.12.** The Permanent Secretary, Mr. Robertson, indicated that he would have sufficient information on the proposed public engagement by Monday afternoon, so that the Committee would be in a position to make more decisions.

## **10. PROPOSED DRAFTING STRATEGY**

- 10.1.** The Co-Chairman noted that this agenda item would have to be deferred to a later meeting.

## **11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **11.1. Request for Sensitisation Session– Hagley Park Seventh Day Adventist Church**

**11.1.1.** Permanent Secretary, Mr Robertson indicated that he received a request to do an online programme at the Hagley Park Seventh Day Adventist Church. He enquired whether there was any difficulty with attending and participating in the programme. The Co-Chairman indicated that he took no issue with the engagement.

### **11.2. Suspension of Activities for August**

**11.2.1.** The question was raised, whether the Committee would suspend its activities for August, as was the usual practice with other Public Bodies/Committees. The Co-Chairman indicated that he would take it as a proposal for discussion, but that it was hoped that the discussion on the Proposed Drafting Strategy would take place before activities would be suspended (if the decision is taken to suspend the Committee's activities in August).

## **12. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

**12.1.** The Co-Chairman noted that a meeting was not scheduled for next week, but that one might be necessary, possibly on Wednesday, July 19, 2023. It was indicated that a discussion would be had with the Chairman and members, most likely by email, to confirm the date, place and time of the next meeting.

## **13. ADJOURNMENT**

**13.1.** There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 4:43 pm.