

Messages

The JCA places great value on forging, fostering and enhancing strong partnerships

THE JAMAICA Customs Agency (JCA) is delighted to partner with other Customs administrations globally in celebrating International Customs Day 2024, as it offers Customs an opportunity to bring its work into greater focus.

This year's theme, 'Customs Engaging Traditional and New Partners with Purpose', challenges Customs administrations to not only sustain traditional partnerships, but also to engage with new and emerging partners as we continue to navigate within a dynamic and ever-changing global environment.

The JCA fully recognises the importance of staying abreast of these changes, by sustaining current partnerships and embracing new partners, in order to ensure continued optimal performance, in keeping with global trends and standards. The agency has consistently benefited from varying partnerships – traditional and new – which have resulted in improved efficiency, enhanced information exchange, and increased coordinated border management and operational processes, and further collaboration on various initiatives. All these are

undertaken in order to provide excellent Customs services.

So, what does purposeful partnership mean for the Jamaica Customs Agency?

For Jamaica Customs, building and sustaining mutually beneficial partnerships involve engagement, communication, collaboration, accountability, adaptation and commitment; we appreciate such partnerships, which, over the years, have contributed to the agency's fulfilment of its core mandates of trade facilitation, border protection and revenue collection.

We are aware that supporting and sustaining an efficient trade, logistics and a secure supply chain, as well as cohesive border management require the effective engagement of people and the collaboration of systems and processes. This can only be achieved through the building and sustenance of strategic partnerships with our relevant stakeholders.

For us, the essence of partnership is people-centred. As a service-driven entity, certified in ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System, the JCA places people – our



employees and stakeholders – at the centre of our operations. It is people that drive partnerships. To this end, we pride ourselves in executing robust stakeholder engagements, and maintaining effective communication and connection with our

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partners, guided by our core values: customer-focused, accountability, professionalism, integrity, and transparency (CAPIT, as it is popular known by our stakeholders).

We also place great value on fostering and enhancing strong partnerships through technological advancements. The interweaving of technological Customs systems, such as ASYCUDA World, the Port Community System and the Jamaica Single Window for Trade (JSWIFT), are practical examples of what technological driven partnerships can do in improving processes for government entities (such as border regulatory agencies), traders, businesses, industry partners and our citizens.

We place great value on partnering with our local business sector and their associations, such as the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce and the Jamaica Manufacturers' and Exporters' Association. We also look forward to partnering with other sectors, including academia.

It is through the assistance of various partnerships that the agency achieved significant milestones in 2023, which served to solidify our position as a model Customs administration and government agency. Some of these achievements included: advancement of our staff welfare and development programmes; development of our Compliance Strategy and Plan; implementation of several stakeholder-driven programmes, including the hosting of our inaugural stakeholder awards ceremony; and the introduction of body-worn cameras for Customs Officers.

Additionally, our Contactless Clearance Process and Customs Mobile app, *JaCustoms Connect*, have offered businesses, traders, industry partners and our citizens a more efficient way of transacting business with the agency. It is also through partnerships that, along with the Passport, Immigration and Citizenship Agency, and other partners, we undertook the implementation of the Electronic Immigration/

Customs Declaration Form for incoming passengers at the airports.

The forging of mutual partnerships have contributed significantly to the continued success of the agency. We have deepened relations with local, regional, and international law-enforcement partners, thus strengthening our capability to effectively disrupt criminal networks. In this regard, our engagements with local and international partners have led to, among other things, Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with Crime Stop Jamaica and the Jamaica Constabulary Force's INTERPOL National Central Bureau for Jamaica for the sharing of information.

In furtherance of our regional and international partnerships, we maintained close relations with the World Customs Organisation, the Caribbean Customs Law Enforcement Council, CARICOM's Implementing Agency for Crime and Security and its Joint Regional Communication Centre, as well as several international liaisons through various governments' embassies and high commissions (to include France, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada, the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Korea). These partnerships have fostered critical engagements resulting in capacity-building, donation of equipment, operational intelligence, risk-management and trade facilitation initiatives.

As the global landscape, trade and travel evolve, the Jamaica Customs Agency remains committed to sustaining traditional partnerships, while creating avenues for engaging new and evolving partners, as well as capitalising on opportunities with emerging partners that will enhance our capability to further grow, innovate, modernise, transform and deliver quality service, in keeping with national and international requirements. As we continue in 2024 and beyond, our resolve is to continue partnering with you, with purpose.

**VELMA RICKETTS WALKER, JP
CEO/Commissioner of Customs**