



**CHARGE BY MINISTER PAULWELL DELIVERED TO THE BOARD &
MANAGEMENT OF THE SRC AT ITS RETREAT HELD AT
ROBINS BAY VILLAGE & BEACH RESORT
APRIL 1 & 2, 2005**

The Minister extended greetings and welcomed everyone. He opened by noting that he expected to receive a complete report on the proceedings for his follow-up. He further added that he would allow time for discussion at the end of his presentation and he would not be speaking from a written text.

The Minister said he recognized that the Council in the last year had been taken to an even higher level and that he knew that this was based on its fulfilling his charge, previously delivered. He reminded the group of his statement that he wanted the Council on the front page throughout the year, and reiterated that the work of the public education programme had brought success. He then congratulated the Council on the Gleaner award, an achievement that made him very proud. He stated further that he relied on Boards for the management of the agencies.

The Minister then proceeded by recapitulating past events. He recalled the invitation of the private sector by the Hon. Prime Minister (HPM) to a meeting at which he emphasized that Science and Technology (S&T) together was the key to development. However the Minister continued that he had not yet witnessed the private sector lead development, and opined that perhaps the sector had not yet been provoked into greater action.

As we embrace the private sector he envisaged a greater role for the Council. There was need for advocacy and articulation in leading the way. The Minister at that juncture stressed the need to launch a massive campaign to reach the little man/woman involved in agro-processing so as to achieve a greater appreciation for the role of S&T.

The country Minister Paulwell said could not become developed if a greater percentage was not spent on Research & Development, which was an integral component of development. In order to outperform one's competitors then one must embrace S&T. The Minister went on to express how impressed he was with the work of the Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies and encouraged the Council to become involved. The University was creating a technology park from which technologies would be spawned. The Government had offered its assistance and in return requested a presence on the Board. The SRC would be nominated for that position on the board. The project cost was US\$26m. The project the Minister said could trigger commercial activities all using technology.

Minister Paulwell continued noting the Council's success in streamlining and rationalizing itself however what was now needed was to move to another level. To accomplish that, it required greater revenue. He acknowledged the fact that the Council would not be receiving that from the present budget. SRC now had an excellent platform from which to launch greater revenue generating projects. The Council should therefore set itself a target to be self sufficient.

The Minister then went on to expand on the areas with the potential for revenue generation. He articulated two options.

1. First, he cited the recently constructed Biodigester Septic Tank (BST) at the Cement Company and in that vein referred to the problems National Environmental Planning Agency (NEPA), was having with sewage treatment. The Council he reiterated could reap millions of dollars in consultancy services. There was also the experience of the Council with wastewater; both projects could be twinned for use in agriculture.

The Minister noted his preference for the BST above all and urged the Council to "run" with it. It was his fervent desire that SRC be the one to implement and not the private sector. The Minister further said that within SRC an entrepreneurial unit must be established to market these golden opportunities.

2. Secondly the Minister referred to the Council's contract with Banana Export Company (BECO) for Tissue Culture. There needed to be a model developed and the creation of satellite facilities for training and marketing and earning revenue. The Council he said needed to move to another level and in that respect he expressed his anticipation of the Ministry of Agriculture providing assistance. There should be hundreds of tissue culture projects across the island. The Council needed to identify crops and maximize the opportunities.

The above options the Minister reiterated could be used to build a capacity base for revenue generation, and then it would only be a matter of time before it began to bear fruit.

He advised that he would further instruct the Ministry of Finance not to take taxes resulting from income generating activities.

The Minister then continued to note other areas of activities. He commended the Council for the agreement with the Bureau of Standards, Jamaica (BSJ) and noted that the Executive Director, Dr. Audia Barnett played a significant role in that agreement.

He foresaw a problem of “turf” on the matter of the role of the National Commission on Science and Technology (NCST) and SRC, however he wanted to ensure that both agencies were not in competition and would in fact cooperate. Biotechnology was a new area and there he expressed some concern about the respective roles. It was clear that the Council would be the implementing agency, while NCST would be responsible for policy. He continued, noting the potential role of biotechnology and citing the strides made by Cuba and Brazil. He expressed his desire for greater cooperation with these countries in order to capitalize on opportunities.

.In continuing his charge he spoke of the special set of innovation awards that was introduced in S&T month. It was very important for the Council to be seen as the leading body in S&T. In cooperation with the BSJ he looked forward to an excellent function which would also help in the promotion of S&T. The function would also coincide with the Hon. Prime Minister’s medal for S&T.

The Minister proceeded to report on other Ministry activities.

1. There was the spinning cone technology for the farming community. Southern Food Processors would utilize that technology for flavour extraction from selected crops.
2. Education: The e-learning project would be funded by resources from the telecom providers. The project would provide equipment for schools to use Information Communication Technologies to create better learning facilities for students. There would be some 20,000 computers deployed to classrooms. Additionally video conferencing would allow the school system to take advantage of the best teachers and other resource persons in particular subject areas.
3. The Ministry was also trying to use all available data to show Jamaica as a high prospect for oil and gas.

The Minister concluded by reiterating the importance of greater advocacy and articulation of S&T. The Minister noted that he would await the presentation by Dr. Trevor Hamilton, specially invited speaker, on the proposed business development centre for the Council.

At the conclusion of his charge, questions were encouraged. It was suggested to the Minister that SRC being self sufficient was not achievable in the near future. The Minister disagreed.

In summary the Minister's charge was

- 1. A complete Retreat report was to be submitted to Minister Paulwell for follow-up.**
- 2. Council to launch a massive campaign on the role of science & technology to reach the grass roots**
- 3. Council encouraged to become involved with UWI through the new Vice Chancellor.**
- 4. With respect to the new technology Park being built by UWI the SRC would be nominated by the Government to be on Board.**
- 5. Council to increase its revenue earning potential and become self sufficient concentrating on the following areas:**
 - i. BST**
 - ii. Wastewater**
 - iii. Tissue Culture**
- 6. With the Ministry of Agriculture providing assistance the Council should seek to replicate the low cost tissue culture project across the island.**
- 7. Greater cooperation between the NCST and SRC should be fostered.**
- 8. Within the SRC an entrepreneurial unit must be established/ strengthened to market the golden opportunities for revenue generation.**
- 9. The Minister expressed his desire for the activation of greater cooperation with Cuba and Brazil in the area of Biotechnology.**