



**Presentation to Annual Strategic Planning Retreat
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**Dr. Hopeton S. Dunn
Chairman**

Let me start by expressing appreciation to the Executive Leadership, as well as to the Officers and Staff of the Commission, particularly recognizing that 2009 was such a momentous, even controversial year for the Broadcasting Commission. This related particularly to our bold enforcement of broadcasting standards and to the Directives issued in February about music content. Our actions opened up a vibrant public discussion but more importantly resulted in substantial, positive and demonstrable changes in media output in both radio and television in Jamaica.

In the face of the introduction of the Directives, the Commission has exercised and continues to exercise flexibility in effecting adjustments to its implementation guidelines, generated from internal review as well as external feedback from our stakeholders. But remain unapologetic and firm in enforcement of compliance with the Directives. We very much appreciate the support we received from the general public, the Government, from large sections of the music fraternity as well as from significant sections of the regulated broadcast media itself.

Next year, the Commission will continue to maintain its active vigilance, strengthening citizen monitoring as well as improving the internal mechanisms for content and quality monitoring. In that regard, we are not only looking to improve our capacity through trained monitoring personnel, but we will also start the process of seeking to acquire an electronic content monitoring system through the use of existing state-of-the-art technology.

We are aware that there continues to be attempts to both challenge and undermine the gains that have been made, but these challenges will be met in a firm but even-handed manner while maintaining consultations with our stakeholders and improving on public communication.

It is important that all associated public authorities responsible for monitoring music output purveyed via sound systems as well as on the public transportation system, continue the vigilance and enforcement of the law in order to assist in creating a more holistic environment of civility throughout the country, following the pace set by the Broadcasting Commission earlier this year.

Regional and Global Thrust

As many will be aware, the Broadcasting Commission is the oldest content regulator in the English-speaking Caribbean and one that is respected internationally and regionally. Through such councils as the International Institute of Communication (IIC) and the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) our work is respected. We can also claim some high regard by the regional media regulators and Caribbean industry generally. This isn't to say that we are not deficient in important respects, comparable to some of our regional regulatory partners, but the work and results

that we are able to achieve are valued and can be shared with our counterparts. In that regard, it is entirely appropriate that in March 2010, the Broadcasting Commission will host a regional conference on broadcasting regulation and policy. This is designed to both share perspectives and learn from each other in absorbing the implications of changing technologies on how we regulate and how we formulate policy. It will also allow us to look at what are the targets of our policy and regulatory attention at a time of resurgent innovations in our sector.

Convergence

The centrifugal process of convergence now folds once separate outlets, into single channels of digital content and co-mingle together hitherto disparate systems into "*next generation networks*" that are internet protocol based. This is the process that will require us in 2010, to place considerably more energy and attention on Digital Switchover. During the coming year, the global standard to be adopted and even the timeframe within which Jamaica's own analogue systems are to be switched to digital will need to be finalized and efforts towards same advanced. One is not saying that we will transition to digital next year, just that key decisions on this must be made.

We are grateful that this Minister, following his predecessor, has embraced the switchover process and has already begun to lead it. Much more will be required from all players in the new year, and the Commission commits to playing its part and to helping to increase the profile of the Switchover process.

Media Policy and Legislative Change

Turning to other elements in the landscape and opportunities of the forthcoming period, it will be necessary for the Commission to be enabled to operate with the additional regulatory amendments that have been requested and placed on the table, following industry consultations. We are encouraged by the assurance of the Ministry that these changes, requiring Parliamentary approval, will be speeded up during the next year.

The Commission will take a careful look at new channels of broadcast output, such as electronic billboards, as well as encourage guidelines for the safe use of the Internet by children. We will also be revisiting our existing recommendation regarding media output during elections, working in continued collaboration with other stakeholders including the political parties, the Electoral Commission, the Office of the Commissioner of Police and the Public Defender.

In seeking to enrich the range of content available through public broadcasting, the Commission will continue to seek legislative approval for establishment of the **Public Broadcasting Production Fund**, and will begin in 2010 to establish and operationalise the structures that will facilitate this Fund, pending the expected legislative approval. In addition, the Commission will continue to encourage **self-regulation** as an important component of the landscape of the modern regulator. It may not however, be appropriate for the Commission itself to play a leading role in creating these self-regulatory structures, but rather to place the onus for this on civic leaders and industry providers, while continuing the focus on its own public mandate for regulation.

The Commission continues to be in support of strengthening the regulatory convergence for the entire industry within the context of existing policy outlines. While this process is underway, we will continue to promote the **inter-regulators forum** and continue to collaborate with our counterparts regionally and locally.

Internally - The Way Forward

Internally, the Commission will again make direct reconnection with our licensees during the year 2010, with a new series of site meetings and visits by the Chairman and Commissioners, to discuss the contemplated media policy reforms and Digital Switchover and their implications for these licensees. It will also be the intention of the Commission to push forward with strengthening community and emerging media including, **community radio, Independent Programme Providers (IPPs)** and new forms of media output, such as digital video formats.

The Commission will continue to promote **media literacy** especially at the primary and secondary level in schools, as well as through seminars within communities and at other institutions.

One of the historical challenges of the Commission has been deepening and strengthening public knowledge of the work of the Commission and its role in society. We have over the last year made inroads in this regard and now have a world class website which was recently selected by United Kingdom Publishing House, Routledge, to be featured in the upcoming 5th edition of the **Media Student's Handbook**. We must find the right moment to launch and publicise this website locally and regionally.

Building on commitments out of preceding retreats, we will, in the new year, intensify output through the establishment of additional BCJ media, possibly including a **BCJ page in the newspapers**, at a regularity to be determined. Secondly, a regular **BCJ radio or television short feature segments**, possibly utilizing the Jamaica Information Service (JIS).

All of this will require the resolve and continued support of the Commission staff. This support and competence is evident within the lean and efficient structure that we already operate. We are in the middle of the **global economic crisis** with implications for all sectors, public and private. The Commission will have to take account of this and operate with restraint while carrying out our responsibilities to the public and to our employees.

I close with my own special thanks to the leadership offered by my colleague Commissioners and the support we have enjoyed from the Office of the Prime Minister, the staff of the Information Division and from the Minister himself.

Thank you.