

## NEWS RELEASE      NEWS RELEASE

### CASE BACKLOG STRATEGIES ACCELERATED

The Ministry of Justice is accelerating planned strategies to reduce the case backlog in the Criminal Division of the Supreme Court.

Cabinet at its recent sitting gave approval to several wide ranging proposals to clear the growing list of cases, including the provision of additional courtrooms and the appointment of additional Court staff.

Attorney General and Justice Minister, Senator the Hon. Dorothy Lighbourne, Q.C says the proposed strategies follows intense discussions with stakeholders, including Permanent Secretary, Carol Palmer, Chief Justice Zaila McCalla, Court of Appeal President, Seymour Panton, Director of Public Prosecution, Paula Llewellyn Q.C and representatives of Human Rights Organizations.

Four key proposals have been identified:-

1. The plan for the reduction will include the identification and provision of four (4) additional courtrooms at the Supreme Court to deal with criminal matters and the shifting of civil matters to caucus rooms at the Jamaica Conference Centre.
2. The use of the Horizon Remand Centre

3. An increase in the number of Judges, Masters, Prosecutors, and staff for the Supreme Court and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

4. Legislative amendments to bring the measures into effect.

Work will be undertaken at the Supreme Court to create a jury box, space for witnesses and the dock for accused persons in the four additional courtrooms.

The Judicature (Supreme Court) Act is to be amended to increase the complement of Judges from twenty-six (26) to thirty-two (32), and the number of Clerks in the Criminal Registry increased by four (4).

A team from the Justice Ministry, Chief Justice McCalla, and representatives of the Office of Director of Public Prosecutions, will undertake a site visit to the Horizon remand Centre at a later date, to view the suitability for that location to hear bail applications for the Supreme Court and Corporate Area Criminal Court jurisdictions.

-30-

Contact: Michael Cohen  
322-8498/908-5588  
mcohen@moj.gov.jm  
Rohan Powell  
367-5930/908-5547  
rpowell@moj.gov.jm