

## Jamaican Bush Medicine A "Step Up Inna Life"

Our grandmothers swear by it, but Jamaican bush medicine sometimes gets a bad. Now it looks like Bush medicine a 'step up inna life'.

The Scientific Research Council (SRC) and the Bureau of Standards yesterday forged a 'powerhouse partnership' in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that they say will play a significant role in the development of the island's nutraceutical industry. "The herb bush that grows in your back yard could very well be the next medical miracle (as) 'bush doctors' out there can benefit from this MoU," said Phillip Paulwell, Minister of Commerce, Science and Technology under whose portfolio the two agencies fall. The nutraceutical industry, estimated at US\$150 billion worldwide, "is one that Jamaica can benefit from," the Minister said. "We are told that quite a number of plants that we produce have tremendous medicinal value." Under the MoU, the SRC will be establishing a number of research outposts in rural towns and communities to facilitate the input of local residents whom the council's research scientists will be assisting to develop their indigenous materials such as herbs. Through the partnership between the agencies, the SRC will apply the scientific and technological expertise necessary for the development of products, while the Bureau of Standards will provide the technical expertise and testing facilities needed to ensure the products conform to required standards. Mr. Paulwell announced that the standards agency recently acquired new technology - a high performance Liquid Chromatograph and Mass Spectrometer and an Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometer - at a cost of \$10 million. These will make it possible to measure elements in parts per billion at a low and efficient cost. With the machines, the Bureau will be able to detect minuscule amounts of water pollutants, and trace elements in waste water, food and soil, he said. Additionally, Jamaica Promotions (JAMPRO), in association with the SRC will be embarking on a marketing campaign to promote and market these products both locally and internationally.

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