

## Celebrate Jamaica Day

Some 706 primary and secondary schools across the island will celebrate Jamaica Day today (February 26) under the theme: 'Celebrating Jamaica, contributing my personal best'.

Theatre Arts Officer in the Ministry of Education, Mr. Marlon Williams, said that the annual celebration is part of efforts by the Ministry to foster national pride in students. "We know about the influences from outside so it is basically getting our students to be one with our culture. In a sense, if we are not careful (our culture) is diminishing," Mr. Williams said. He said that the occasion will help to build community relations and get the students to feel better about themselves and by extension their culture. "It is to foster civic pride in our students and we are hoping to achieve all of that throughout the island based on the activities that will be done in the schools," he stated. According to Mr. Williams, each school will celebrate Jamaica Day in its own unique way. "It could be a case where they have an extended devotion, a civic ceremony where you have the uniformed groups involved in (a) flag-raising ceremony, a display of cultural items, inter-house competitions, debates, quizzes, discussions or seminars. It has to be a case where the activities they are involved in are connected to the theme," he explained. The official Jamaica Day celebration will take place at Herbert Morrison Technical High School in St. James. It will involve a civic ceremony, an exposition, display of cultural items, and a concert. In the meantime, Mr. Williams is imploring parents to use the occasion to educate children about their heritage. "We need to get children to feel good about themselves before they can feel good about their country and culture. Show them where they are coming from. Parents need to salute Jamaica Day and be as patriotic as possible," he stated. Jamaica Day forms part of the Ministry's Culture in Education programme and is celebrated once every academic year, on the last Friday in February to showcase aspects of Jamaica's culture.