

## Jamaica Registers Growth In Remittances

The Caribbean island of Jamaica, heavily dependent on remittances to support its GDP, has seen a sharp growth in money transfers sent home by nationals during the first few months of this year.

That's according to latest research from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), a specialized agency dedicated to eradicating poverty and hunger in rural areas of developing countries. 'There's now been four consecutive months of growth in remittances to Jamaica,' said Josefina Stubbs, IFAD's Director of Latin America and the Caribbean Division. 'We believe it indicates that Jamaica will likely be the first country in the region to begin a recovery from the decline in remittances over the past year.' Data shows a 7.4 percent increase as of February 2010 when compared to the same period for 2009. In 2009, \$1.791 billion was sent back. Remittances are vital to the Jamaican economy, representing approximately 15 per cent of GDP last year – the equivalent of \$660 per person living in Jamaica. This makes it particularly significant that Jamaicans living abroad sent home 7.4 per cent more money to their families this February than at the same time last year. In particular, remittances from the United States, which account for 62 per cent of remittances to the country, rose strongly. Central American and Caribbean countries received almost US\$16 billion in remittances during 2009, representing between 11 and 16 per cent of GDP for many nations. 'After a year of extreme hardship because of the ongoing economic challenges resulting from the financial crisis, migrant workers are beginning to send more money home,' said Cleaver.

Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala also showed strong increases in remittances for the first time since the onset of the global economic crisis, according to information released this week by the Central Banks of these countries.