

## Jamaica Shines at World Expo Shanghai 2010

Eight weeks into the prestigious World Expo 2010 in the cosmopolitan Chinese city of Shanghai, the attractively designed Brand Jamaica Booth in the CARICOM Pavilion continues to attract large crowds of visitors who have been enjoying the rich visual and cultural display and eagerly purchasing the high quality Brand Jamaica export products on offer.

Coffee has enjoyed the greatest demand to date, with sales in the Booth's Gift Shop being encouraged by a programme of free sampling to the tune of 2,000 cups of coffee per week on average. Paul Yao, a Chinese businessman, who has invested and settled in Jamaica, has secured contracts with three Chinese distributors at the Expo for his company J&C Coffee Trading. Sauces have been another hot sale item for visitors to the Booth.

Traffic in the Brand Jamaica Booth also spiked significantly during the visit of Stephanie Marley, daughter of reggae legend Bob Marley, on June 15. The vibe of "One Love" was pervasive on the day, as Stephanie gave away Jamaican flags and Marley memorabilia before leading the crowd in a chorus of her father's popular songs. At the end of her tour, she had high praises for the inter-ministerial Jamaican team at the Booth, which consists of team leader A. Gene Hylton (JAMPRO), Nelissa Hinds (JAMPRO), Adrian Harrison (Jamaica Tourist Board) and Dahlia Sterling (Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce).

"The booth looks great... the staff is great, the energy is perfect and our team is definitely representing Brand JA well. I thoroughly enjoyed my time at the booth and we made the best of the moment," said Stephanie.

In January of this year, JAMPRO, the lead agency coordinating Jamaica's participation in the Expo, mobilized members of the local export community around the business opportunities that exist in the Chinese market. JAMPRO-led research determined that coffee, spices, condiments, rums, beers, art and crafts, apparel and coffee were likely to do well in China.

Among the companies who have submitted products in the first and subsequent shipments to the Expo are Wallenford Blue Mountain Coffee, Baron Hall Estate Coffee, Novelty Trading, Mill Press, LMH Publishing Limited, Ian Randle Publishers, Jackmandora MEDIA MAGIC, Carlong Publishers, PA Benjamin and the National Gallery (art prints).

On July 16, JAMPRO will stage a Distributor and Investor Forum to position Jamaica as a source of products for purchase and distribution in the Chinese market. The agency will facilitate targeted business interactions in the investment/distributor forum, with a view to landing Chinese investments in Jamaica and linking local exporters of niche, value-added products with Chinese distributors.

World Expo 2010 Shanghai, which started on May 1 and will end six months later on October 31, has 192 participating countries and has already attracted over 16 million visitors. It is expected to draw a total of 70 million visitors over the 184 days, with most of them coming from China. The Brand Jamaica Booth, which boasts a design inspired by the theme "Bold Energy", has experienced a steady increase in traffic during the course of the Expo. Visitors have been gravitating towards its vibrant, warm colours and strong visual appeal, which captures the culture, creativity, intrigue, excitement and growing business sophistication associated with Jamaica. A key feature in the booth is the "Great Wall of Jamaica", which is covered with floor-to-ceiling photographs that portray the natural beauty of Jamaica and its people. Images of reggae legend Bob Marley and Olympic sprint champion Usain Bolt enjoy pride of place in the booth, which also features a Trade and Investment area replete with collateral material, as well as a meeting room and culture section. The latter area contains an art gallery and music room dubbed "From Mento to Dancehall".

Beyond the aesthetic and cultural allure of the Booth, Jamaica succeeded in pulling huge crowds with the visit of Shelly-Ann Fraser, the reigning 100m Olympic and World Champion in May. The Jamaican sprint sensation was in Shanghai for the Golden Grand Prix, and her visit to the Brand Jamaica Booth supported JAMPRO's initiative to build on the publicity and goodwill garnered by Jamaica's athletes in China at the Beijing Olympics in 2008. A jovial Fraser obligingly signed autographs, stamped Expo passports, posed for photos and shared in a dance with members of Brand Jamaica team on the ground at the Expo.

The excitement and buzz surrounding Jamaica at the Expo will take on a new life as CARICOM celebrates its National Day on July 17. Jamaica will join its CARICOM neighbours in staging an official ceremony and cultural performance in Expo Centre's Red Hall. The CARICOM National Day will conclude with a cocktail reception at the InterContinental Hotel Ball Room. Jamaica's participation in expo is a cross-ministerial effort involving the Ministries of Industry, Investment and Commerce; Youth, Culture and Sports; Tourism; and Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, among others. As its overarching objective, Jamaica will seek to use the Expo to effectively position itself as the hub of the region for culture, trade and investment.

