

Music to form major part of Jamaica's 50th

Jamaica's music and, in particular, reggae will be receiving a major push in 2012 as the country celebrates its 50th anniversary as an independent nation.

That's the word from tourism minister, the Honourable Edmund Bartlett, who stated that he will be working closely with Youth, Sport and Culture Minister Olivia Grange in the promotion of the art form, leading into the 50th anniversary celebrations.

"We will be doing major overseas promotion of activities relating to our 50th anniversary of independence, and we want to sell Jamaica's music and other art forms to our visitors. The talents of our people are world renowned, so promoting Jamaica as a destination of world-class music festivals and top-quality entertainment will be part of our focus," said Bartlett.

The tourism minister added, "Festivals such as Reggae Sumfest and the Jazz and Blues festival will be complemented with other live music performances during the celebrations. These music festivals have drawn hundreds of visitors to the island, and we must make an effort to have more events of that nature; which should result in more entertainment-seeking visitors coming into the country."

New venue

Bartlett also pointed out that the opening of the Montego Bay Convention Centre had created a new venue for entertainment-type activities and that venue could now be marketed and utilised for the staging of high-class reggae events.

According to Bartlett, the 2011 staging of Reggae Sumfest, which was sponsored by the ministry through its agency, the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB), continued to provide a good example of what the country can produce.

"As usual, the festival has lived up to expectations. I know that the arrival figures for the show will be good and the restaurants, small and large hotels as well as our attractions, all benefited from the economic spin-offs from the festival," he said.