

Jamaica's initiatives announced for London 2012

Jamaica will offer the full national experience during the upcoming summer Olympics in London with 'Jamaica House 2012' and the 'Respect Jamaica 50th' live concert series, signature international events of Jamaica's 50th anniversary of Independence celebrations.

The two events were launched on Monday, June 11th at the Spanish Court Hotel in New Kingston under the collaborative efforts of the ministries of tourism, culture and industry. Hosted by JAMPRO Chairman Milton Samuda, the press reception saw presentations from Mr. Robert Bryan, Project Director of the Jamaica 50 Secretariat, Mr. Rob Hallett, President of AEG Live who are co-organizers of the Respect Jamaica 50th concert series, UK High Commissioner to Jamaica Howard Drake, Hon. Damion Crawford, Minister of State, Tourism and Entertainment, Hon. Lisa Hanna, Minister of Youth and Culture and Hon. Anthony Hylton, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce.

Speaking about the Respect Jamaica 50th concert, which will be staged in the Indigo2 at the O2 Arena in London, from July 26 – August 6, Mr. Bryan elaborated that the concert series is aimed at using the platform of the summer Olympics to raise the level of awareness around the world about Jamaica. 'The objective of the celebrations is to invite Jamaicans and others worldwide to meet Jamaica at 50, witness the next great moments in our country's history expected to occur during the celebrations, welcome our 50th birthday, celebrate our achievements and commit to developing and growing the economy over the next 50 as we continue the mission of rising to the very top in the world as a nation and people,' Bryan said.

The Respect Jamaica 50th concert is being co-organized by AEG Live, the live entertainment branch of AEG, an iconic global sports and entertainment brand. President of AEG Rob Hallett is no stranger to Jamaica, having worked in the reggae music industry in the beginning of his career with local act Tappa Zukie. Hallett has since worked with the likes of Beyonce, Usher, Barbara Streisand, among others and is honored to be working with Jamaica for this momentous occasion. Hallett said, 'We have assembled 50 artistes who represent a remarkable collection of the greatest artistes Jamaica has produced.' Some of the artistes booked to perform are icons such as Jimmy Cliff, Toots & the Maytals, Lee 'Scratch' Perry, Derrick Morgan, Marcia Griffiths, Yellowman, Sly & Robbie, among others.

Also taking place in London during this time is 'Jamaica House 2012' staged in the North Greenwich Arena (The O2) from August 3 – 12, 2012. Organized by JAMPRO, Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) and the Jamaica 50 Secretariat, this initiative represents a key component of the country's marketing and promotional activities in the UK. According to Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce Anthony Hylton, Jamaica 'missed the boat' with a lack of country presence in Beijing 2008 and Berlin 2009 when our athletes broke records and astonished the world. Minister Hylton however guaranteed the audience gathered, 'We will not be missing the boat in London.'

Jamaica House will seek to capture the essence of the island, highlighting its natural beauty, rich and vibrant culture, strong sporting tradition, high quality products, compelling business value proposition, and the warmth and creativity of the people. It will also serve as the base of Jamaica's National Olympic Committee. The North Greenwich Arena will host 40 -50,000 visitors daily and 2 million tourists are expected to attend London 2012 giving the country a substantial platform to further business and trade investment opportunities.

A key feature of Jamaica House will be 'The Jamaica Shoppe', which will have a range of Jamaican brands on sale. Visitors to the venue will also have the opportunity to schedule meetings to discuss the prospects of doing business in Jamaica. JAMPRO has been working with the Jamaica Business Development Corporation (JBDC) under its 'Things Jamaican' banner to enlist local exporters who are ready to showcase their goods in London. A promising number of exports have already been sent to London, with a second shipment to be sent soon for the Jamaica Shoppe. In the nights the venue will be transformed to provide live entertainment throughout the ten days in London.