

Thousands of Jamaicans to Clean Beaches

Thousands of Jamaicans are expected to participate in the removal of garbage and other debris from the nation's beaches, as Jamaica observes International Coastal Clean-Up Day on Saturday, September 20.

Activities are being coordinated by the Jamaica Environment Trust (JET) with support from several organisations and entities including the Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF).

The main project will be the cleaning of Fort Rocky on the Palisadoes Strip in Kingston, while the Urban Development Corporation (UDC), and National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA) are collaborating to remove garbage from the Hellshire Beach in St. Catherine. Programme Co-ordinator at JET, Suzanne Stanley, told JIS News that close to 9,000 persons have already registered to participate in the day's activities. "Last year it was about 6,000. Right now that figure is close to 9,000 and could get up to 10,000," she stated. She said the increased numbers is indicative of "a real interest" by Jamaicans in wanting to care for the environment. Ms. Stanley informed that close to 140 coastal areas that have been registered for cleaning by over 80 large and small groups including community organizations, corporate entities, service clubs, churches, schools, and groups of concerned friends. Manager of the Ecosystems Management Branch at NEPA, Andrea Donaldson, in noting the significance of the clean-up effort, said improper disposal of garbage presents a danger to wildlife. "Improper disposal of garbage causes wildlife to die. We have found seabirds with plastic caps in their stomach and there are the rubber back turtles that eat plastic bags believing they are eating jellyfish and they die," she stated. Miss Donaldson, who was addressing a JIS Think Tank on Wednesday, September 10, noted that activities such as the beach clean-up help to "teach the public why it is very important to dispose of their garbage properly." Environmental Co-ordinator at the UDC, Danae Vacciana, who also addressed the Think Tank, invited residents of Hellshire and surrounding communities to participate in the removal of garbage from the Hellshire Beach and other beaches across the island. "It's a fun day for families and a learning experience and we're also talking about protected areas," she said. Persons wishing to participate in International Coastal Clean-Up Day can visit JET's website at www.jamentrust.org to register. They can also access information on the entire list of activities, their locations, and the organizers of the events.