

**OPENING REMARKS BY
SENATOR THE HON. SANDREA FALCONER
MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO (INFORMATION)
TO THE CONFERENCE ON 'THE FUTURE OF MEDIA AND REGULATION'**

**TUESDAY, APRIL 8, 2014
PEGASUS HOTEL – NEW KINGSTON**

- *Professor Hopeton Dunn, Chairman of the Broadcasting Commission & other Commissioners*
- *Mr. Cordel Green, Executive Director and other members of the Commission's Secretariat*
- *Mr. Brian Schmidt, Vice Chairman, Media Association of Jamaica*
- *Mr. Neal Lemlein, our very distinguished Keynote Speaker*
- *Panelists, participants*
- *Ladies and gentlemen*

I am pleased to welcome you to this Conference on the Future of Media and Regulation, organized by the Broadcasting Commission.

The Conference invites everyone in this room and those joining on-line to explore the exciting new technical features, trends and opportunities in the future of broadcasting.

These, we have to admit are changing the conventional business models to which we have grown accustomed.

I commend the Broadcasting Commission for bringing together this impressive team of digital media specialists, technophiles, academics, broadcasting practitioners and students in meaningful dialogue on this very important topic.

I am sure that from today's exercise, you will have a heightened awareness of many of the developments in media and critical success factors for establishing, managing and sustaining the many aspects of businesses within the industry.

This Conference compels us to dedicate time to understand the challenges digital media brings. Each of us must not only equip ourselves with tools to *survive* in this new paradigm, but to detect and learn the rules of the era as they emerge, change and change again.

There is no blue print on what will happen next so we must be nimble and be ready to adapt in order, to grow, develop and *thrive*.

This Conference appropriately puts the spotlight on keeping pace with and anticipating changes in technology in order to deliver to consumers, wide access to content which is consistent with their needs and expectations.

It is fitting that Mr Lemlein who comes to us with impeccable credentials and vast experience in the world of media, marketing and financing, will set the pace for the day's discourse and for our 'futurecasting'.

Most of you here are Media Owners, Managers and trainers of media professionals. You have an important role to play in helping to manage the developments which are coming fast and furious.

I said it before and it bears repeating, you have to be nimble, you have to adapt, as you will have to face the unpredictable and inevitable.

The Companies most likely to succeed in making change work to their advantage are the ones which do not view change as a discrete event to be managed, but as a constant opportunity to evolve the business.

For our part, the Government and the regulator, in discharging our responsibilities, must not only be cognizant of convergence and other changes in the media landscape, but must be facilitators of this process.

The environment in which the future of media and regulation takes place must therefore be one that enables and encourages vibrant competition without affecting the viability of the electronic media industry.

We have to embrace and encourage creativity, while remaining vigilant in ensuring compliance with existing content, technical and other standards.

Simultaneously, the industry finds itself having to undergo continuous assessment as to its relevance, necessity and adequacy in an evolving digital space.

We remain determined to ensure that the welfare and diverse needs of the consumers of content are well served.

We have been working and, I am pleased to share that we have recently concluded a comprehensive phase of consultation in relation to the development of Jamaica's Electronic Media Policy.

This will provide an enabling framework for the new media landscape and importantly, anchor our ambitions in being regional leaders in innovation, content creation, cultural exchange and promotion, and regulation.

Transformational and related legislative changes are also programmed for this year to secure an environment where Jamaicans are key contributors to and participants in the Information Society and knowledge economy.

Along with these developments, as Minister and the Chair of the National Digital Switchover Steering Committee, I will shortly be forwarding for Cabinet consideration, the recommendations from that Committee.

I wish to thank the members of the Commission for their able support and invaluable contribution. The Committee was Co-chaired by Professor Hopeton Dunn, Mr. Lester Spaulding and Mrs. Winsome Witter all of whom led discussions with respect to DSO considerations for the broadcasting and cable industries.

Once again, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to this Conference, and particularly those who have traveled to our shores to share in this rich experience.

I do trust that amid the hard work, you will find some time to enjoy the warmth, beauty and hospitality of our island and our people.

I wish for everyone a productive Conference marked by meaningful and vibrant contribution, as we work to ensure a broadcasting industry with a bright future.