

Remarks
Hon. Fayval Williams
Minister of Science, Energy & Technology
NEO Jamaica Closing Ceremony
May 30, 2019 at 12:00 pm

Salutations:

- **Hon. Alando Terrelonge, State Minister, Ministry of Education, Youth and Information**
- **Mrs Colette Roberts Riden, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Social Security**
- **Mrs Alicia Glasgow Gentles, Executive Director, MYF/ NEO Jamaica Executing Agency**
- **Ms. Kemesha Kelly, Master of Ceremonies**
- **Specially invited guests**

A pleasant afternoon to you all!

A 2012 article on Business Insider.com titled, 'Why Executives Are So Bad at the Behavioral Side of Management' aptly states that "***hard skills can get the job done. Soft skills make the difference between a job that gets done and a job that gets done exceedingly well. Leadership requires a sophisticated approach to both.***"

Ladies and gentlemen, the world of work as we know it has changed significantly over the years. No longer is the workplace solely about having the smarts to do a job, it is also about creating a more rounded individual that can contribute to all aspects of the work environment.

This is why an initiative such as NEO Jamaica is critical to creating industry ready young people who do not only possess the knowledge for a job but those who also possess the soft skills which aid to getting the job done well.

Importance of partnerships

Ladies and gentlemen, it is indeed fitting that today you are honouring the executing agency, alliance members, task force and agencies involved in this project because **encouragement sweetens labour!**

The timeless song by The Letterman says **no man is an island, no man stands alone**, it is therefore important that we forge strong partnerships to impact development.

I believe that the partnership that NEO Jamaica has forged over the years has reaped great rewards and Jamaica is made better as a result.

The 21st Century Worker

Ladies and gentlemen, we are preparing for the fourth industrial revolution and the 21st century worker has to be prepared for the many changes that we will experience in this age.

By 2020, this revolution will bring advanced robotics, artificial intelligence and machine learning which will transform the way we live and work.

Therefore, this kind of worker not only needs to be competent but also needs to be **flexible** and **adaptable to keep pace with the changing times**.

The World Economic Forum (WEF) states that five years from now, over one-third of skills (35%) that are considered important in today's workforce will have changed.

The WEF goes further to state that soft skills such as emotional intelligence, co-ordinating with others, critical thinking, service orientation and problem solving will be among the most sought after skillsets in workers by 2020.

Unlocking the potential in our youth

Ladies and gentlemen, the time has come for us to unlock the potentials that reside in our youth and create a generation of leaders who will not only serve from the head but also from the heart.

As Technology Minister, I am passionate about ***unlocking the innovator in all Jamaicans, especially our youth, who must play an active role in shaping their future.***

Our youth have tremendous creative and innovative potential that when combined with life skills can tremendously advance our development and growth agenda.

Ladies and gentlemen, this century provides a fertile environment for our youth to think critically about using technology to address societal problems, create entrepreneurial avenues while engineering the next great innovation.

Closing

My commendations once again to NEO Jamaica and the many partners that have worked on this programme. A job well done!

I believe that the investments you are making and the skillsets you are developing in the generations of Jamaican youth will not only make them employable but will also empower them to be world changers in the future.

I wish you all the very best as you continue to positively impact this great nation.

Thank you.

