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it's our intention today to proceed with the motion standing in the name of Senator Samuda as Number 1 in respect of matters which concern our environment.

If you please, Mr. President.

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. President, I crave leave to speak from a seat which is not mine.

The PRESIDENT: Yes, very well, Mr. Samuda.

(Applause)

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. President, I now deal with item listed at Number 1, an order of business.

Mr. President, I noted your opening remarks, but if it pleases you I would also like to extend welcome to the members present from Generation 2000, specifically my Office Manager Miss Tricia Walters. I would also like to extend welcome to the members of the Jamaica Environment Trust.

If it pleases you I would also like to extend welcome to members of the Private Sector who are here from Red Stripe.

Mr. President, I rise fully humbled at the chance to debate what I have put forward. I am eager to articulate what I believe are the reasons why such action is required. I'm a firm believer in the domino effect, Mr. President, and as such, know that each positive step we take here today will lead to another one. I'm also fully cognisant that every action taken here will have far-reaching implications.

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Mr. SAMUDA: As such, Mr. President, I would also like to put on notice that we will make a minor amendment to the motion at the appropriate time.

Mr. President, on July 1, I tabled a Private Member's Motion in this Noble House, one that serves a cause I am deeply committed to, a cause which is in line with one that - with the Government's Agenda to create sustainable development and growth to protect the future of this country we all so deeply care about.

I note this Motion has received significant public attention, and stakeholders across society have made their opinions known, both privately and in the Press.

I wish to also state at the outset that this Motion was not tabled in isolation. Consultations with stakeholders in manufacturing, the Environmental Protection Agencies and organisations, along with academics who are well versed in the subject matter, were held.

As a pretext, my interest in matters of environmental sustainability was first stirred while I was in high school - not that long ago - as a member of Champion's Key Club. This first exposed me to the impact that we, as humans, are having on our environment, primarily in Jamaica. Through this club I was exposed to tree-planting initiatives, beach clean-ups, among other civic projects. These projects certainly sparked my curiosity to learn about these topics. I continued further these clean-ups and tree-planting projects through G2K, an organisation which I am proud to lead.

And, Mr. President, on a side note, we should all be aware that today is National Tree-Planting Day. And though today's

session may not allow our Members the time to participate, I would encourage them to do so over the weekend.

Mr. President, this keen interest has led me to places as far as China, to do courses on the impact of climate change to developing countries such as our own. It even prompted one of my business ventures in my younger youth days - which was a recycling company, which handled plastics and cardboard - before selling my stake, or rather, disposing of my stake - pun intended - in that operation.

Mr. President, there is no doubt that Jamaica has a waste management problem, we don't need an impending disaster to see that. A drive pass any of Kingston's main gullies will show you that. A trip to any of the nation's major trading areas in each of our towns makes that abundantly clear. However, interest is certainly heightened when the threat of flooding from blocked drains becomes a clear and impending danger.

The recent storm preparations, though well handled, have further strengthened my resolve to see this Motion through, and to work with our partners in Government, in the private sector and in civil society to play our part in finding and implementing the necessary solutions.

There are many underlying factors which contribute to our waste management problems. Mainly, I believe these include bad social practices and norms, weak and inadequate infrastructure for collection, and in some cases, poor town planning. For example, I understand that in excess of eleven thousand homes are within fifty feet of a gully in Kingston and St. Andrew, Mr. President, according to Mona GIS. Made

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worse, entire communities right behind these houses on the gully banks add to the weight. Many of these communities are unplanned settlements which have made the provision of basic services by the State more challenging and expensive. This includes solid waste management.

Most garbage trucks just can't go lane to lane to collect from each household, and in most cases for these communities a workable system doesn't exist for collection or central deposit. Even where garbage receptacles have been placed by the State, Mr. President, many have been hijacked for other uses, especially in times of drought they are taken to store water. This is one of the major reasons we have in excess of three hundred thousand tonnes of solid waste improperly disposed of each year in Jamaica.

The fact that a problem exists, I don't believe would cause much debate in this House. As we are politicians, no doubt the debate would be more around solutions and even unfortunately, who are to blame for a majority of the problems.

Mr. President, the Motion before us seeks to address a small part of our waste management problem, it does not seek to address the collection or storage of our solid waste. It is not the silver bullet which will solve all of our waste management problems. It is specifically worded to address two materials which impact our waste stream significantly.

There is no doubt that a dramatic transformation in the composition of our waste stream has taken place as consumption patterns have changed. Packaging options for food and beverage have trended towards cheaper alternatives.

In Jamaica this transformation was heightened and increased, starting in the nineteen nineties. No longer do we use glass bottles instead of plastic bottles, no longer do we use cardboard boxes at lunch time, instead we use Styrofoam; and no longer do we commonly use reusable market bags my grandmother used to carry when shopping, instead, we use "scandal bags", this with a few exceptions.

The two items targeted by the Motion, Mr. President, are plastic bags below a fifty-gallon capacity, and all finished goods made from Styrofoam. These items pose unique challenges, mainly for the following reasons, biodegradability. These items are estimated to take in excess of five hundred years before they degrade, and with that timeline it makes it impossible for scientists to say the total impact that this will indeed have during that process of biodegrading, on us as humans and in the environment, but generally, it is accepted to be negative.

Mr. President, it also poses unique challenges because of the lack of recyclability of the materials in question. Members, I have had the opportunity to run a recycling company. I can say with a fair degree of certainty that the items in question are virtually unrecyclable, Mr. President. It is too expensive to manage these items. It is also unrecyclable because of contamination because of the use of these items, Mr. President. These items in many cases are used to store food, and in the case of the single-use plastic bags, are used to store rubbish, as well. The sterilisation required for these items virtually moves them out of the category of recyclable materials.

Value after being processed as well, Mr. President, is a problem. Quite simply,

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the cost associated with the recycling process for these materials, even excluding the collection, storage and transportation cost, far outstrip the potential revenue from resale, making it impossible for any entity to take up the recycling process.

Mr. President, it is important to understand the scale of the problem being discussed. Thirty per cent of our waste is non-organic, and of that thirty per cent just under fifty per cent is plastic or Styrofoam. The NSWMA estimates that each Jamaican produces approximately one kilogram of waste daily, meaning approximately four hundred thousand kilograms of plastic and some Styrofoam waste is created each day. As plastic bottles no doubt account for the lion's share of that quantity, the question may be asked why this Motion doesn't consider those items, and this is because of the very reasons outlined.

Unlike Styrofoam and single-use plastic bags, Mr. President, plastic bottles are commercially viable for a recycling process, and in many cases are reusable. Styrofoam and to a lesser extent single-use plastic bags, have very little redeeming value.

Mr. President, Members, we are not alone in this deliberation. Indeed, many countries and municipalities are considering similar measures to treat with these same items of concern. For international context, many have either banned or taxed the materials in question. In CARICOM, Guyana has imposed a similar ban on Styrofoam, in Barbados they have implemented a *Returnable Containers Act* aimed at plastic bottles. On the African Continent, South Africa, Uganda and Rwanda have banned the use of single-use plastic bags. All across Europe taxes have

been levied against single-use plastic bags, with many local municipalities, including Paris, banning the use totally.

In the UK they have implemented a much-reported five pence charge for the use of each plastic bag, which they estimated cut and reduced usage by eighty per cent. Twenty seven municipalities in the Philippines have outright banned the use of Styrofoam, Mr. President. In the United States several cities, States and Local Authorities have banned Styrofoam, with only one being overturned in the New York State Supreme Court, Mr. President; the rest have been accepted and continue as is.

The international list is indeed exhaustive. The list of private companies which have decided to ban the use of Styrofoam and plastic bags grow daily, both locally and abroad.

Mr. President, we have local companies who have banned the use of Styrofoam, including Red Stripe, who have joined us here today. Furthermore, to address the problems associated with biodegradability, companies like National Bakery only use biodegradable bags for their products.

I am advised through consultation, that the nation's largest producer of Styrofoam, Wisynco, is actually pursuing a path of ensuring their items are produced with the enzyme that makes their Styrofoam products biodegradable.

Mr. President, my specific proposal as outlined in the Motion, calls for Jamaica to ban the importation of plastic bags below fifty-gallon capacity, and all finished goods made from Styrofoam. And that we further curtail the production of said items in

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Jamaica, unless they include that enzyme which makes them biodegradable. Just a reminder that the core of this Motion is the goal of reducing non-biodegradable material entering our waste stream all together.

The rationale for banning imports is simple. It would be difficult, dare I say virtually impossible for us at the ports of entry to identify, separate with any degree of certainty the imports of Styrofoam and plastic bags being biodegradable. Whereas, enforcement, Mr. President, is however, doable through agencies like the Bureau of Standards, with local manufacturers, so we would be able to ensure that these manufacturers produce goods that contain the enzyme that makes them biodegradable.

Mr. President, our target cannot be a simple reduction of these items in the waste stream by way of the non-biodegradable ones, it should be a total cutting of these items entering our waste stream all together. That, Mr. President, is one of the major reasons why the taxation option has not been considered.

Additionally, Mr. President, we should note that there is a cess on plastic bottles as it exists, and we have not seen any reduction from that cess being implemented on plastic bottles. In fact, what we have seen is an explosion of consumption of products in plastic bottles.

Mr. President, it is not beyond Jamaicans to use reusable bags when we go to the supermarket or wholesale. It is not beyond us to ensure when we use Styrofoam it is biodegradable or to consider other options by way of cardboard material, Mr. President. Companies like PriceSmart, KFC and Island Grill, are examples where similar

approaches have worked in this market, Mr. President.

I am not proposing an instant ban where you snap your fingers and you create havoc within the economy, Mr. President. The devil is always in the details, and these details would have to consider particular realities and phased implementation. It also has to consider particular realities, that over two hundred and fifty persons in one factory alone earn their living from the production of Styrofoam. It has to consider that the material being produced today, whether locally or internationally, will not have a place in the world in the near future. We have a duty to consider these factors and others when this rises to the level of Legislation and regulation.

Additionally, we must consider alternatives to these items. The Government will indeed need to establish a Committee for the implementation of this Motion, Mr. President, and we would expect that that would be housed within the portfolio Ministry for environment.

Indeed, the first and probably most regular question I have been asked since this Motion became public is, what are the alternatives to the use of these materials? Well, as it relates to non-biodegradable single-use plastic bags, the alternatives include paper bags, usually made from recycled cardboard, or multi-use sturdy bags, which are either made from different synthetics or even plastics.

A concern about how homes will collect waste, has been raised, Mr. President. This would be handled either with the use of the biodegradable options or through the use of larger bins above the fifty-gallon capacity, Mr. President.

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With regard to alternatives to non-biodegradable Styrofoam, the options exist to make these items biodegradable, as well as introducing cardboard alternatives, which are present in many stores, Mr. President.

The argument against most of the alternatives presented is usually based in cost. But I posit today that the long-term cost of not removing these items from our waste stream is far greater. It impacts generations today and generations to come.

Members, I appeal for consensus, not appealing for reckless abandon of your duty to do due diligence, but consensus that all of the available science tells us that these items represent problems to our environment and to world sustainability.

As a small island developing State, Mr. President, we are at greater risk than larger nations with the ability to weather the effects of climate change and manage the impact of pollution. We have a duty to act today. We have a duty to take further action as it relates to the other issues that we are well aware of in the near future.

Mr. President, thank you.

(Applause)

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Miss FRAZER-BINNS: Mr. President.

The PRESIDENT: Senator Frazer-Binns. (Applause)

Miss FRAZER-BINNS: Mr. President, though our population and consumption has increased over the past 50 years or so, the reality is that our response and our ability to manage our waste disposal have been lagging behind, and Senator Samuda spoke to some of these.

We on this side, and I speak for my colleague when I say, that we recognise the urgency with which the environment must be - issues relating to the environment must be addressed.

The fact you see, Mr. President, is that Jamaica generates an estimated amount of 1.7 million kilogram of municipal waste each year, and if one were to break that down, it translates somewhere to about five pounds per household each day, and an annual figure on or about a tonne of waste each year.

In 2015, there was a waste characterization study completed by the National Solid Waste Management Authority and it revealed, among other things, that at least 15 per cent of the garbage or the waste is made up of plastic, and so it is in that light that I rise today to lend my support to the spirit and the intent of the motion as advanced by Senator Samuda.

The latest Human Resource Development Report reminds us that nothing that—I am quoting—jeopardizes the environment sustainability of the planet can be regarded as progress, or as some would say, prosperity. There is absolutely no

doubt in my mind that we face a waste management crisis in Jamaica.

In fact, Vision 2030, the National Development Plan states that, when looking at Jamaica having a healthy human environment it highlights improper management of waste as one of the several challenges to us realising this goal, and we know the reality because just about three weeks or so ago, we had some rain and I think we are all appalled when we saw the photos, and certainly when we listened to news and saw the images of what happened at Marcus Garvey. It is my information and I do verily believe that approximately US\$15 Million represents the total amount of loss to equipment, to goods and to personal property.

In fact, lest we forget what happened few weeks ago, only this week, and I am staying home, only this week Monday, and I can attest to it because I was driving at the time when we had that downpour, we saw the effects of poor waste management. Where after 25 minutes, give and take, of rainfall, communities were flooded, our drains were blocked, roads were flooded, and that is the reality we face, and I believe it is some of those realities that would have prompted Senator Samuda, notwithstanding his other experience, to table this very timely motion. And for that I must extend my own congratulations to Senator Samuda for this. (Applause)

I must also extend congratulations and commendations to other civil society groups who have been charging this fight for a long time. We have the Jamaica Environmental Trust, we have the Jamaica—J-FLAG, we have the Jamaica Civil Society forum that have continuously spoken about the environment and the need to protect the environment.

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I am hoping that, and I do believe that perhaps it's part of your thinking, Senator Samuda. That at the end of this debate, the country will become even more aware of the importance of taking charge of the environment but more so of the use or the lack thereof of plastic, Styrofoam or anything that will negatively impact the environment.

As you correctly said, Styrofoam takes an approximate 500 years to decompose, and this in and of itself poses a challenge, but what we should also consider is that apart from the environmental effect the use of Styrofoam also poses a health consideration, and apart from the minor health challenges such as skin irritation to others which may include kidney challenges, the International Agency for Research on Cancer posits that Styrofoam is a possible human carcinogenic ingredient, and I think this is something for us to pay keen attention to.

So, having said that let me reiterate my support for the spirit and the intent of the Motion. But I have to confess, I do have at little discomfiture with the wording, and it is in that light, Senator, that I shall make some recommendations and I will share with you my thoughts, which I hope you will find agreeable and we can have consensus for the benefit of Jamaica.

The first thing I wish for us to consider, which you spoke to a little and I shall go in some detail, is the impact of this ban on the productive sector. And I know you spoke generally and you cited two—well, one main company, Wisynco, but I want to take it down notch and speak to the effect on small and medium sized entrepreneurs. Because you see there are two very indisputable facts: One is that over 70 per cent of Styrofoam is produced

locally, the second indisputable fact is that the majority of the retailers are small businesses and so we have to consider how this ban will affect those persons. And part of the consideration will necessitate the Government advancing incentives to help with any possible financial challenges that may result. (Applause by Opposition Members) And I want to use the example of George.

George is a little man—

Mr. SKEFFERY: Or Matthew.

Miss FRAZER-BINNS: Or Matthew.

(Laughter)

Mr. BROWN: Matthew, no, not Matthew!

Miss FRAZER-BINNS: Mark, Mary, Sophia, Sue, but let me use George because George I can talk about.

Mr. BROWN: Yes, George is not as dangerous.

Miss FRAZER-BINNS: George is a little small businessman with his cook shop, not even a proper cook shop because he does the cooking somewhere and has his trailer that he takes the warm food in.

Mr. SKEFFERY: George in Balaclava.

Miss FRAZER-BINNS: But the thing about George is that George services the offices in the nearby New Kingston; and the primary container that he packs these lunches and breakfasts in, you guessed it, it's Styrofoam. One therefore has to consider how the ban or the introduction of this new enzyme will affect the cost of production for George, and in considering that there are

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certain germane questions that we must ask ourselves as a country, as leaders.

One of which is, has a cost study been done? There is a need for cost study. What is the likely increase per unit cost for either the ban or the introduction of this biodegradable enzyme? Have we done what in my time, we used to call a SWOT analysis? And I find those questions critical, because if we look at the example of what happens across the world, you will see that the experience speaks for itself.

So, in New York, for example, a study was done in 2012 on how the ban on Styrofoam would affect the economy, and what that study revealed is that, the introduction of alternate containers would cost in increase of 94 per cent. In other words, whereas a Styrofoam cup would cost a \$1 the alternate, and let me just add that this is the minimum because there are different grades of alternate containers of products but this is the minimum alternate product. The alternate product would cost \$1.94 effectively doubling the cost of business. A cost you and I know is going to be passed on to the consumer. So you think is New York alone? No, it's not New York. So let me share with you what obtained in California.

In California the study showed that the impact of the ban would cost approximately \$1.4 Billion in output. It further showed, Senator Ruel Reid, that it would result in a loss of 335 million, some 8000 jobs, and the food service product would have an increase of \$378 Million per year, and these studies are within the last three to four years.

Therefore, therefore, Senator Reid, and I'm quite sure you would appreciate that the study is an indication; and it underpins

the argument that before one can go to ban or lobby for the introduction of the enzyme, that we have to do a cost analysis. It stands to reason. Therefore, whereas we are in agreement with the idea with the spirit of the Motion, there are certain realities that are not unique to Jamaica but must be given pride of place because of our economy and because of the role that our small and medium sized entrepreneurs play in our economy.

The second matter that I shall share with this Senate, and Senator Samuda spoke about it but I will share with you some more details, is what I call a phased introduction, and I think it is important for emphasis, I repeat, that because 70 per cent of our Styrofoam is produced locally, and, therefore, an immediate ban, whenever that takes place, whether it takes place in 2016, 2017 or 2019, a one-stop ban could have deleterious effect on the economy, and I am therefore proposing that a reasonable timeline perhaps could be five years.

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Ms. FRAZER-BINNS: I believe also that once a Joint Select Committee of Parliament is established, and we bring in all the experts then maybe a timeline that is perhaps more considered could be proposed. (Applause)

Mr. President, the truth is that any attempt to resolve this problem, and it is a monster of a problem, is going to call for across the aisle consensus, but also partnership, public and private partnership with all stakeholders. (Applause) And you know, we talk about Guyana and I agree Guyana has done something good and they are promoting the green economy and I support them, because as someone who supports the environment, I have to support what is being done in Guyana. But let us look at some of the best practices and some of the challenges that they have.

One of the things that they did in Guyana, one of the things they did in Guyana, is that it was not an immediate ban. The notice did not, or the proclamation did not say tomorrow you will have a ban; it took a minimum of a year. But more so what transpired in Guyana was there was a wide-based consensus - I mean, consultation. So you find that the importers had a say, the retailers had a say, the small businesses had a say and families and communities also had a say and I believe that that is a best practice that can be adopted and should be adopted in Jamaica. (Applause)

I don't believe, Senator Samuda, I don't believe that your thoughts are in conflict with mine in that regard. And, in considering the phased programme, I shall also recommend for consideration, that the Government of the day, whichever Government it is, consider incentivizing this action. (Applause) Listen man,

encouragement sweetens labour; and for reasons I have mentioned before, I believe that some form of incentive would be an added impetus in getting the work done.

And you see, again we talk about Guyana, and I have to reference Guyana. Because in Guyana that is something that they have given much thought to and action; so presently I note that they are considering some form of tax incentives for businesses who are interested in importing alternatives to styrofoam, and that is something that we can do.

Further, one of the things that they are doing in Guyana as well, is that biodegradable containers are tax free. And so I think that those are things that any Government, serious about the environment and encouraging environmental friendly practices should consider and implement. (Applause)

But you see, Mr. President, I can come with all these recommendations and Senator Samuda can come with his well-researched paper and the other Members of the Senate will make their inputs. But notwithstanding the many nights and hours and consultations that Senator Samuda would have put into this Motion, or notwithstanding the fact that I had to get up at 5 o'clock this morning because Nathan Charles decided that he is not going to give me a chance, yesterday to read over my papers, so I had to get up at 5:00 to go through.

(Sotto voce comments by a Member)

Miss. FRAZER-BINNS: None of that matters, if we don't - Nathan Charles is my son. (Applause)

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None of that, Mr. President, Members, matter if persons do not know. You know, when I was in high school I had a teacher and she always say this little thing, “**A little knowledge can do a lot**”. The truth Members is that, nothing at all matters if we do not have knowledge, knowledge is power. And so key to any action, any plan at all has to be an on-going public education programme, undoubtedly. And this programme has to be one where the citizens are encouraged to be a part of the preservation of the environment. It cannot be the normal run of the mill public education programme; it has to be one that we take to the hills and to the valleys, to the gullies and to the riverside, to the river bank where we talk to our people, so they can understand the importance of what we are doing.

I remember as a little girl going to school, and I am quite sure you may all remember prep school, primary school, kindergarten. There is a little song that we normally sing; “**Pick up paper, pick up paper, lying on the ground**”. Am I the only one?

A Member: Makes the place untidy.

(Sotto voce comments by Members)

A Member: In your days.

Miss. FRAZER-BINNS: Okay, in my days, which is just five years ago. (Laughter) But seriously though, Members, to this very day that song sticks with me; so I remember, going to Westwood, I remember you were taught as ladies you do not litter, so you take your garbage with you and then you dispose of it in the correct receptacle. That is the kind of public education you are - it is such that your

whole conscious level is changed, your consciousness is changed and that is the type of public education that we need to undertake. The kind of public education that is personal. So when you have an ad out there or when you talk to John Brown or Mary Stokes, you help him or her to understand that, listen man, when you use the styrofoam and then you dispose of it on the street then it goes into our waterway, it blocks our drains. When our drains are blocked, then what happens when it rains? There is no way for the water to run off so you are going to have flood. When you have a flood then what happens is that your house can be damaged, you or your families can lose their lives, that is the kind of public education that we have to undertake. (Applause) This highfalutin public education is not working, we have to take it to the persons so they understand the implication of what this means, because environmental protection is not just legislators problem it is a problem, for every single Jamaican. (Applause)

And so, Mr. President, I commend those recommendations for consideration.

And in wrapping up, I share further recommendations, the less detailed, which are not exclusive to styrofoam or plastic, but I believe that any consideration about the protection of the environment has to be holistic. And I hear the arguments Senator Samuda why you sought to focus on plastic and styrofoam. But I believe that we cannot, as a country in 2016, continue with a piecemeal approach, we have to... (Applause) ... I know you would love that, I know you would love that. That was just for you Senator Kavan.

Mr. GAYLE: I sat in that seat.

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Miss. FRAZER-BINNS: I know you would love that. I shall not use that phrase again.

But seriously, Members, we cannot, we have to consider the protection of the environment in a very holistic and all-encompassing way. And so...

(Sotto voce comments by a Member)

Miss. FRAZER-BINNS: And it is so. And so, in both during the Motion and the effort of Senator Samuda, I believe that we should recommend and note what I am about to say, the expansion of the Waste Separation Programme. Because, we already know that there is a partnership ongoing between JSIF and the National Solid Waste Management Authority where an experiment or a pilot project is being done in 30 communities across the island; and there are some lessons that have been learnt and that we continue to learn. I believe that we can use those lessons and expand the Waste Separation Programme island wide to hasten the efforts to protect the environment, and this is not a new phenomenon.

I remember living in the UK and we were given three or four different containers, and you had to ensure that the correct item goes in the particular coded – colour-coded container. And we know if that is not done, the implications of it. And many Jamaicans have left Jamaica, live overseas and have conformed. And I do believe it is something that through public education we can do and I commend it for serious national implementation.

The other recommendation I have is for an increase in the recycling operations and garbage receptacles. The truth is that, we do have garbage receptacles, but

somehow they are either far - you know, they are far and in-between. And whereas it ought not to be an excuse for persons to litter, the fact of the matter is persons generally think it is easier to dump their garbage once they are finished rather than walk with it. And if we can ensure that receptacles are placed in strategic locations in our towns, in our communities... (Applause) ...in our districts then I believe that a lot of benefits can be had and we would have gone miles ahead in our quest to protect the environment.

Somewhat of, and I will admit that it perhaps is a little controversial, but I am convinced that there are merits to this other proposal and it has to do with a deposit, and special charge legislation. And this legislation would allow for two specific things, among others which the experts can advise us.

One is that, it will allow for a special charge on single-use plastic bags. Senator Samuda spoke about single-use plastic bags, which we Jamaica call “scandal bag” but I think that the problem may not to ban it, because if you ban it, then there are consequences. He spoke about Pricemart, listen, how many of us really can afford to go to Pricemart, uuh? That is something we need to consider.

The other thing is, I know the inconvenience of going to Pricemart and don't have a bag because I forget my Price Mart bag. So - and for those of us who go to Pricemart, not all of us drive. So we need to - we need to make our proposals reflect the reality. And the reality of it is, a lot of us particularly those of us who may live below Torrington Bridge or who may live outside of Mandela Highway don't have a Pricemart. And so, there should be a policy

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that engages all persons and affects all persons. And so I believe that, until we get to the place where persons no longer use our single-use plastic bags or our scandals, then there perhaps should be that charge. And this is different from the environmental level which I will not speak to.

The other thing that this Legislation would do is, it would allow for a special fee or a charge on - I know the Motion does not go into that detail on bottles. Again, once you return that bottle or that plastic container then the fund is returned to you, and this not something new.

I was sharing with Senator Lambert because he is Kingstonian and I am country, that in St. Ann one of the things that we normally do, particularly in Christmas is, we would collect our D&G because those of us who remember D&G, collect our D&G bottles and we would take it to the depot and we would get our crate for Christmas. So it is not new phenomena, I think it is just something that we need to encourage in a strategic and standardized way.

There also is the need and I recommend it for consideration, for there to be the strengthening and the development of our legal and regulatory framework. And this will allow for matters such as the conversion of waste to energy, and also the regulations necessary for anti-litter and this has nothing to do with fines because I don't know if fines will be the answer to our dilemma at this moment. And countries, again, that have utilized this have seen the benefit. Countries such as United States, Puerto Rico, Australia and they have their own environmental protection campaign such as, "Keep America Beautiful" or "Keep Australia Beautiful" campaign and I think that we have a lot that we can learn from

these countries who have enjoyed the success.

And as I mentioned before, there has to be serious coordinated support and incentives for our small and medium-sized entrepreneurs.

But I appreciate, that my recommendations and the Motion put forward by Senator Samuda will take some time particularly if we are serious about participation, accountability, responsibility, consultation.

And so, I don't think that we should wait until we have completed that process to do some things, but there are some things that we can do in the now. And as such, my sixth recommendation has to be that there must be support, additional budgetary support for the work of the National Solid Waste Management Authority. (Applause)

The fact of the matter is that between 2011 and 2014, The National Solid Waste Management Authority received funds that only allowed it to allocate \$2.34 per person for garbage disposal, wholly inadequate; but I believe that in terms of our priority and our commitment to the environment, and our commitment to waste management that more can be done in the short-term, until we have realized the objectives as outlined in the Motion.

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Miss FRAZER-BINNS: Mr. President, the protection of the environment and its proper use is everybody's business and as leaders we can make the first step. In our own daily lives, we can seek to reduce the use of styrofoam perhaps we will start walking with our containers; perhaps we will ensure that when we go to Price Rite we buy the Price Rite bags and you take it to whether it is to Lee's or to Hi-Lo or to General Foods and utilize it instead of utilizing the single-use bags. All of us have to play a role. We cannot continue as business as usual. We cannot continue to do the same thing expecting a different result. You know what they say about persons who do that and I believe that time come; not thirty minutes as yet, but time come for us to make a change and to be proactive in our protection of the environment. The state of affairs impresses on us the urgency with which we must act and undertake these reforms.

We must do everything in our power for our children, their children and their children's children to protect and preserve the environment. It cannot be business as usual. The onus, therefore, is on me; it is on you; it is on all of us to play our part to make a commitment so that we protect the environment and ensure that every Jamaican in every parish, in every town, in every community, in every single household can enjoy the right as enshrined in section 13 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedom, that right of a healthy and productive environment.

And with that, Mr. President, I shall wish to share with Senator Samuda my proposals for amendments. The first two paragraphs in the preamble I am not—I have made some proposals for those, but the bulk—

The PRESIDENT: (Gavels) The speaker's time has expired.

Mrs. JOHNSON SMITH: Mr. President, may I ask that the speaker's time be extended to allow her to finish her presentation.

The PRESIDENT: The question is that the speaker be permitted adequate time to complete her presentation.

Put to the Senate and agreed to.

Miss FRAZER-BINNS: Thank you, thank you Minister. Thank you, Senator.

The bulk of my proposal comes at the prayer where—the first prayer:

*“BE IT RESOLVED that
Jamaica...”*

I have recommended a change, so it reads:

BE IT RESOLVED that Jamaica curtails:

- a) the production of Styrofoam containers unless they include the enzyme that makes them biodegradable; and
- b) that the ban on the importation of plastic bags and all finished goods be made from styrofoam...

Then we continue—

...on a graduated phase basis with a view to completely

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banning the use of styrofoam and plastic bags within five years.

The second prayer:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that—and this is all in the insertion—

- a) the Government put in place incentives to encourage the use of biodegradable alternatives;
- b) implements programmes and projects including financial assistance to small and medium-sized entrepreneurs who will be affected by this change;
- c) undertakes a nationwide ongoing public education programme on environmental protection including the proper disposal of garbage and all forms of waste; and
- d) implements a national garbage separation system at homes and work place;

I trust Senator Samuda, Members of this Senate that these recommendations will find consensus, because as I said at the end of the day the issue of the environment is everybody's business. It is not divided along

any lines or any colour and so I crave that we will all play our part in ensuring that we *nuh dutty* up Jamaica any more.

Thank you, Mr. President.
(Applause)

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, Senator Frazer-Binns. May I just remind Members that in the future that if you have proposed amendment that you could make several copies rather than the one for Members.

Miss LONGMORE: Mr. President.
(Applause)

The PRESIDENT: Go ahead, Senator. Thank you.

Dr. LONGMORE: Let me add my welcome to our guests today. I recognize that this is an issue that all Jamaica takes keen interest in and I particularly appreciate the presence of the persons who are here with us today.

Mr. President, I rise to recognize Senator Samuda's Private Member's Motion. It is no doubt that the environment and the protection thereof is of paramount import to all of us in these Hallowed Halls. It is quite ironic that my colleague on the other side and I are wearing the same colour today and I hope that is a subconscious recognition that we are united for Jamaica in this cause. (Applause)

(Crosstalk)

That's going green.

We, here, are reflection of the Jamaican society at large and in like manner the populace of Jamaica, in my opinion, is increasing their concern with and wanting to

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actively protect our country. Jamaica's legacy as an island paradise that we endeavour to preserve is under grave threat. As it is globally, we are quickly realizing the unfortunate impact human activity has had on this world we share. Unfortunately, the fervour that drives economic pursuits often times does not consider our innocent environment as a casualty. This is changing. Countries far and wide are recognizing and acting on this very critical subject. Jamaica, land of wood and water should be no different.

We, Mr. President, have a lot at stake if we do not heed to this concern and act. Our reality is that we have an economy that is delicately in the middle income level and we are gradually inching our way out of significant debt, but we are also a country that has approximately 82 per cent of our population living along the coastline—within five kilometres of the coast and are, therefore, heavily impacted by coastal processes. Our environment is the livelihood of our people in a number of ways. We have to strive to achieve and maintain that very delicate balance between economic prosperity and environmental protection.

And I agree, Senator, that we do need a cost basis analysis in terms of how much it would cost to make this move; what it would do to our economy and how best we can offset that to the benefit of our people. As a Small Island Developing State, Jamaica is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change particularly sea level rise and extreme weather. For example, climate change projections suggest that precipitation in Jamaica will be reduced by 40 per cent by 2018. We have to take this matter of our environment serious. If we don't, we may not have an economy to think about.

Ladies and gentlemen to achieve the balance prosperity and the protection of our country, we first have to come to accept that both are of equal weight and accordingly act to correct what has already gone wrong. We are taking that approach economically. We must now do so environmentally.

The Motion brought by Senator Samuda to ban the importation of plastic bags below fifty gallons and all finished goods made from styrofoam and, Senator, we recognize—I think I may speak on Senator Samuda's part—that we recognize your recommendations for amendment and they are worthy. It was things that we were considering ourselves, particularly the phased implementation and the fact that this is no quick-fix scenario. I also hasten to add that a significant public education programme must be embarked on particularly encouraging persons to dispose of their waste properly. I recommend the Jamaica Environmental Trust for their *Nuh Dutty Up Jamaica* campaign. It is something that I, myself, have bought into and encouraging that campaign amongst those who I connect with.

I doubt there is any Jamaican who does not know a scandal bag or a Styrofoam box. Not only are these staples in our everyday lives, there are also in my mind unfortunate markers for the damage that is unwittingly done by persons, such as myself, as we go about our business of shopping and having a box lunch. It only requires a little thought and a glance of the eye to see the damage done by the presence of these items in our environment. Our rivers, seas, reefs, flora and fauna are littered by items that will be there long, long after our great, great, great, great grandchildren have inherited our beloved Jamaica.

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With each Jamaican producing approximately one kilogram of waste per day, 30 per cent of it being organic and 70 per cent that is not organic of which 46 per cent is plastic, we here in this Chamber should be gravely concerned for the land we are charged to govern and protect. I take particular interest because of the health impact that this could have in our society. Physically, there are cancers too numerous to mention that have been linked to a lot of the chemicals in these plastics. Respiratory conditions, we have crisis situation with asthma as we have seen when the fire unfortunately happened at the Riverton Dump. Infectious diseases, chronic lifestyle diseases, childhood illnesses a lot of these environmental pollutants have been linked to possible neurodevelopmental disorders such as autism, ADHD.

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Dr. LONGMORE: Our community and our environment that our people live in; all would be impacted by this ban in a positive way. The large majority of plastics and Styrofoam used are non-biodegradable and will be in our eco systems for thousands of years to come. Let me be one of the first to recognise that there is no quick-fix situation and with the aforementioned delicate balance needed, we have to be strategic in how we proceed to enable the safety of our environment. However, we have to start somewhere and I think this Motion brought before us today is a very good place to do so. Let us join the global movement that is awakening to the realities of the need to protect our world. It is not only happening in faraway places but right here within our Caribbean community.

Mr. President, for the health and well-being of our future generations, for ourselves and paramount for our Jamaica land of wood and water, land that we all love, I rise to support this Motion. Thank you. (Applause)

The PRESIDENT: Senator Dr. Brown Burke. (Applause)

Dr. BROWN BURKE: Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I rise to add my voice in supporting the spirit and intent of the motion moved by Senator Matthew Samuda. There is no doubt that we define sustainability in these days around three issues: social cohesion, economic progress and environmental sustainability. The motion therefore speaks to the third, environmental sustainability. So I want to thank Senator Samuda for bringing this Motion forward and therefore giving us an opportunity to place some of the issues that

we are doing today on the table. Quite frankly, if we needed a reminder another Matthew not so long ago reminded us quite eloquently of the need - another Matthew, quite eloquently of the need to protect our environment and to look at some of our lifestyle choices.

Although the motion speaks to non-biodegradable waste and in particular plastic bags and Styrofoam, I want to also go a little bit further and talk about the concern that really has us here, which is really the concern about protecting our environment and making sure we have an environment worthy of being bequeathed to our children and our grandchildren. So we know that plastic products whether they are plastic bags or water bottles, tins, cans, tyres, metal products and electronics like computers and all of these kinds of non-biodegradable products create an impact in terms of how they are disposed of and whether or not they can be reused or recycled. And the truth is that as technology improves and as economies across the world develop, there is likely to be more and more non-biodegradable products which can withstand extreme temperatures which are durable and are easy to use. I don't think any of us in here can deny the convenience of the plastic bags themselves, synthetic and even Styrofoam, but it is true that we are at a point, having understood the dangers that they pose to the environment, for us to be called to action. This concern for the environment is important and one that I want to spend a little bit more time on.

In a long, long, long ago world where - not in my time, even before that, we were known as hunter-gatherers and as hunter-gathers, we had an appreciation for how our actions affected our environment. In fact, our very survival was bound up with

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protecting the environment. We learnt that we could not overfish an area because if we did we would not be able to feed our families. Most of you might be aware that Native American Indians traditionally are known to respect the earth and they recognise a certain spirituality in Mother Earth. I have always found their respect for Mother Earth fascinating. And if you permit me, Mr. President and colleagues, I would like to share a little of that with you. I do so in making the connection with our concern for the environment and the impact that can be created depending on how we use, reuse or recycle non-biodegradable products. I do so as well clear in my mind that part of the solution must include looking at the values we bequeathed to our children and the underlying values that we display by our own actions or inactions. And it goes a long way in the public education that Senator Sophia Frazer-Binns spoke about, but I want to take it beyond a public education concern for our present adult population.

In 1996 at the Gathering of Native American Men in Colorado, USA, the meeting defined seven basic philosophies that could help them preserve the values of their culture. I am not going to talk about all seven philosophies. We spoke to the role of women, the role of children, family, community, the Creator and self. I really want to talk about the one that is about earth. And so they said that, "Our Mother Earth is the source of all life, whether it be the plants, the two legged, four legged, winged ones or human beings. Mother earth is the greatest teacher if we listen, observe and respect her. When we live in harmony with Mother Earth she will recycle the things we consume and make them available to our children and to their children." They agreed then that it was important to teach their children to care for Mother Earth so she is

preserved for future generations. And so from then on, they agreed that each one would realise that the earth is our mother and that they would treat her with honour and respect, that Mother Earth is a living entity that maintains life and that they would speak out in a good way whenever they see someone abusing the earth; just as they would protect their own mother so would they protect the earth and they would ensure that the land, water and air will be intact for their children and their children's children, even those unborn.

Mr. President, the point I am making here is a very simple one. We must begin to teach our children the sacredness of our environment (Applause) and have them understand and appreciate the interconnectedness of human activity on the degradation of the environment and the possible negative impact on our own survival. Yes, I know that we cannot teach what we ourselves do not know and therefore public education is important. A former Prime Minister, I think it was Prime Minister P.J. Patterson, once introduced a Values and Attitude Campaign. Since then there have been several stops and starts under different names. My call in support of this Motion before us is not just to look at the health implications which are important or the economic possibilities, but to undergird all of what we are doing with a deeper understanding and appreciation for how totally bound up we are with the fate of our environment.

And here I want to quote another Native American saying: "Treat the earth and all her aspects as your mother. Show deep respect for the mineral world and the plant world and the animal world. Do nothing to pollute our mother. Rise up with wisdom to defend her." And I believe that

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the motion before us is an attempt to rise up with wisdom and defend Mother Earth.

A couple days ago as I did my own tours throughout the Corporate Area I was struck by the many drains that were blocked, and it is true that they were some that were blocked because they have just become too small to carry the volume of water that we had, and there were some that were full of silt, but there were several others that were overflowing with plastic bottles, with old fridge, with old stoves, tyres and so on. And the one that caught my attention it wasn't (George's) Cook Shop, it was another cook shop. And as I looked in the drain beside that cook shop it was filled with Styrofoam containers and with plastic bottles. I turned to the owner and I said to him, we have to do a little better than this. And he said to me, but, see, I have a drum, a container right there, which he did. The container was almost empty and right beside that container were heaps and heaps and heaps of Styrofoam boxes and plastic bottles. And what that says to me is that it's about civic pride, but it is also about a deeper value that we have not instilled in our children who have become adults. (Applause) And therefore, I would like to ask Senator Samuda to also include in the motion that need for public education and the need to instill the values from our infants of appreciating nature. And I say that because I want to be comprehensive and not piecemeal, because it would also cover our single-use plastic bags and our Styrofoam containers. But for me it is absolutely essential that we begin to inculcate and this is a good word in this sense, to inculcate that appreciation for our environment and how all our actions are interconnected and how they impact the environment which then in turn impacts us.

Today we are not talking about plastic bottles, but I believe that that is also another discussion that we need to have. We need to have that discussion, because we need to make sure that as Government when there are policies and regulations that are made that they do not negatively impact those individuals who are already in the industry. And often when we move to do - when we move as government, we do not consider how our actions will impact those who are already in the industry. And so the fact that a large percentage of our Styrofoam containers are made locally, I want to support wholeheartedly the notion of providing some kind of incentive so that individuals who are already making Styrofoam containers can be incentivized to get into the production of alternate material because I believe it is important. I am sure Senator Samuda appreciates inasmuch as we were once talking about a 5% growth agenda, I think I heard somewhere a little revision downward, that we cannot afford to slip any further and so it is going to be important to ensure that individuals who are in the business, in particular, Styrofoam containers, that they are given an incentive to join the movement, yes, of protecting Mother Earth, as I like to call it.

Senator Sophia Frazer-Binns spoke about the small business person, and I think she did so quite eloquently, so I really want to talk more so about the consumer and many of the individuals who actually use these single-use plastic bags. As an individual who shops every now and again at PriceSmart, I do every now and again, I don't always remember to take a bag but because . . .

Mr. MORRIS: I shop at Hi-Lo.

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Dr. BROWN BURKE: . . . no, because I have a vehicle I can in fact put what I bought in the back of my car. There are many individuals who don't shop at PriceSmart. There are many individuals who buy from the corner shop, who buy from a market, as we have several across the island, who buy certainly from our markets downtown or our wholesale . . .

(Sotto voce remarks by Government Senator)

Dr. BROWN BURKE: Or in the countryside, I said that, shops all over in our neighbourhoods and districts and they are going to need something to take that grocery back home in. And so we have to look at what that alternative is going to be and we have to be concerned about the price point for that alternative and what that impact may mean on the consumer.

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Dr. BROWN BURKE: For those of us who travel from time to time, you will know that your paper bags are more expensive than your plastic bags, yes; and that in many jurisdictions where there is an option, persons can't afford to actually buy the more expensive alternative. And therefore, in Jamaica, I believe that that study in terms of the impact on cost, and how that will be passed through, is an absolute necessity for us to determine the timeline as well as how we approach any substitution and any ban.

And so, the idea of a ban is one that I support eventually, but I believe that getting there is extremely important and we cannot...

(Sotto voce comment)

Dr. BROWN BURKE: The process - absolutely - and we cannot lose sight of that.

As I close, Mr. President, I want to add my voice to the others who say that protecting our environment is not something that is Government's responsibility. It is a responsibility that we all have to share, and that we all have to look at, in terms of - as individuals, as Government, as private sector, and as community-based organizations, because I believe we all have a role to play.

Again, I reiterate that the public education is important, but for me, the one that I really want to emphasize is the one of creating that principle, that value system that gets our children, and therefore our adults, to understand how their actions affect the environment.

And I know we begin first with compliance, and that's how we think of a

ban, but what I would want to see us create is an environment and culture of commitment that can only be done through education and the acceptance of that value system.

Thank you. (Applause)

The PRESIDENT: Senator Webby.

Mr. WEBBY: Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I rise to respond to the motion made by Senator Samuda, and I must really commend him, as a young Jamaican, with so much passion and commitment for such an important subject. (Applause)

I also, Mr. President, want to congratulate the standard and the level of the previous presenters, because it is really consistent in terms of my own thoughts, and I think Senator Frazer-Binns did a well-researched Paper, and I want to recognize you for that.

Mr. President, this Motion addresses the critical issue of our collective responsibility for the environment. Jamaica's current poor waste management practices pose a threat to our environment. The garbage that caused the Shoemaker Gully to overflow just recently, is a painful reminder of our failure to find a workable solution to our waste problem.

Mr. President, United Nations Environment Programme estimates that 5.2 trillion - trillion with a *t*, Mr. President - pieces of plastic are floating in our oceans. In an exercise that I was recently involved in on our International Coastal Cleanup Day - which was actually on September 17 of this

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year - 521 pounds of plastic were collected along the Harbour, and I am speaking an area of just a quarter mile stretch - 521 pounds. This garbage would most likely have floated out to sea and contributed to the 5.2 trillion pieces referred to by the UN.

Mr. President, I commend Senator Samuda for his focus on the critical issue of plastic bags and Styrofoam. The United Nations again, has indicated - and I agree - that the amount of waste that gets into our ocean, globally, is largely dependent on the extent and effectiveness of our solid waste collection and management.

I believe, therefore, that a comprehensive approach has to be taken to address our waste management issues. Our long-term approach must be twofold. We must first put the necessary legislation and infrastructure in place to establish a First World waste management programme with a robust recycling component. Secondly, and perhaps even more importantly, persons have to be educated about better waste management practices.

Mr. President, the Motion calls for a ban on the importation of plastic bags below 50 gallons, and I do understand very clearly the rationale behind this approach. However, Mr. President, we have to remember that this ban, as you heard earlier from all of the various presenters, include the common supermarket bags. And these bags are used to serve ordinary Jamaicans, and they use them to actually clean up their households. We need to think through very carefully what will be the replacement for these bags.

The common alternative being plastic bags and metal drums, are more costly and

are also prone to theft. We would need to be at a stage where all communities have adequate and accessible metal skips and garbage collections in a timely manner. If we had a total ban of plastic bags below 50 gallons without any improvement in our current waste management system, we could end up worsening the problem that we are trying to fix. (Applause)

Having said that, Mr. President, I want to support, again, Senator Samuda and Senator Frazer-Binns about a phased implementation of the programme.

A short-term initiative which can be employed, and which would have the effect of immediately reducing the use of plastic bags, is to have retailers charge consumers a small fee for the bags.

As Senator Samuda pointed out, when England introduced a charge on single use plastic bags last year, they recorded an impressive 85 per cent drop in usage in the first six months. It caused a change in behaviour - and I think that's where Senator Brown was going - and person convert it in reusable cloth or paper bags, and even brought back the reusable plastic bags.

I am proposing, Mr. President, that if we decide to go that route, that the proceeds generated from the fees collected, be used to fund environmental programmes, or other good causes, similar to the UK model.

Local retailers - and I have done my back of the envelope calculation - could also give a discount for the goods purchased, for the customers using environmentally friendly alternatives. The point that I am making, Mr. President, can be a win-win for businesses,

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consumers, and all Jamaicans on a whole to go that way. (Applause)

Mr. President, we do not have to look as far as the UK, we have a large local retailer who successfully implemented this model of reusable bags, despite some push backs - and I will not call the name of that large retailer. They were able to overcome the initial resistance to the introduction of this green alternative which, of course, came with a cost, and that's why the discussion about a cost benefit analysis is so important. They did so by launching a targeted educational campaign on the negative effects of plastic on the global environment. Other local retailers have also successfully introduced similar programmes which provide greater, greener, alternatives to their consumers.

This approach, Mr. President, should be encouraged, but we have to recognize that it will provide an upfront cost for the retailer as well as the consumer, but in the long run the benefits will far outweigh the initial price increase, and as I said earlier, this can be a win-win for all Jamaicans.

With respect to Senator Samuda's call for the ban on importation of Styrofoam, we all know - and we have heard it from everyone - the harmful effect it has, both on our environment - on our environment, both on land and at sea, and human beings, and therefore, alternatives must be aggressively pursued.

The timing of the implementation of the ban is critical as we have to be cognizant that there is heavy demand for the product and pulling it from the market with one go, could be very disruptive. And I am not going

to use that small shop alternative example for George. Again, it is important that it be thought through very carefully, in terms of a cost benefit analysis.

Mr. Speaker, we can look for solutions successfully implemented elsewhere. Other countries have phased in Styrofoam restrictions over time. Hardship exemptions have also been provided in some instances where small businesses, for good reason, are unable to comply. If such an approach is adopted in Jamaica in the short-term, this would have to be coupled with a long-term plan to innovate and create cost effective alternatives to Styrofoam, so as to reduce the harmful effects it has on our environment, both on land and sea.

Along with looking at international best practices closer to home, our local manufacturers have been exploring technology that would enable them to manufacture green alternatives, including biodegradable Styrofoam. I believe that these actions should be encouraged, and incentivized.

Mr. President, the scale of the environmental issues raised here, requires, in my opinion, all hands on deck. Let us look at another local initiative, launched just two years ago which has been quite successful. Recycling Partners of Jamaica has collected over 1.5 million pounds of plastic, and is an excellent example of public-private sector partnership that has been making a difference. Recycling Partners of Jamaica is a nonprofit public-private partnership which was launched in May 2014, under the theme *Recycle Now, Jamaica*.

The Government and several leaders in the manufacturing industry, came together

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to fund this partnership. The Recycle Jamaica partnership must be provided with the support needed to expand the scope of their collection programme, and to expand the processing facilities. This would allow them to increase their recycling programme in order to further reduce Jamaica's carbon footprint.

Mr. President, as has been aired before by both Senator Samuda, and other Senators, a national education programme which has buy-in from all relevant stakeholders will have to be developed and deployed. Recycle Jamaica, if properly funded, could lead the charge in raising public awareness of the need to recycle and engage in sustainable waste management practices. Continuous environmental education is key and must be implemented in order to change our actions and culture as it relates to waste management.

As has been said by Senator Brown, I would especially encourage us to support environmental education for our children in order to influence a generational change in behavior.

So, in closing, Mr. President, I have made some notes on the presentation, and I want to support Senator Samuda's Motion - Private Member Motion - and I'd ask that the following be considered: First, Mr. President, is a phased implementation of the proposed ban with the allowance for a hardship exemption. This would allow a more smooth transition to all stakeholders; that local manufacturers are incentivized to develop biodegradable alternatives supported by the necessary recycling infrastructure; three, that a national environmental education programme be developed and deployed. And,

finally, Mr. President, that a Committee be set up to give all stakeholders a voice in this very, very important Debate.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.
(Applause)

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The PRESIDENT: Senator Sloley, I'm sorry, Senator Gayle, Senator Golding.

Mr. GOLDING: Mr. President, I intend to be brief. As it's been said, the idea – spirit behind this motion of seeking to improve Jamaica's record when it comes to solid waste disposal is one which I think everybody will support and it is clear that we have a big problem with solid waste disposal. It's a problem that impacts on our infrastructure and also the quality of life in many of our communities and it's a broad problem to do with the funding of the agency that is responsible for solid waste, the nature of our infrastructure and its capacity to cope with the volume of water – storm water in particular that arises and how we treat the aquifers, how we protect our aquifers and so on. So it's the protection of Mother Earth that Senator Brown Burke stressed is really at the core for the sustainability of our planet and our society and therefore, this a very serious matter and one which is worth spending some time on.

Having said that, sir, I'm very wary of any kind of motion brought to the Senate that it attempts to be prescriptive on the response to what the problem is because the ramifications of a particular course of action need to be fully ventilated and considered, there needs to be fulsome consultation with all persons who are involved and in fact would be impacted by the new rules around it so that their points of view can be taken into account and not overlooked.

So the idea of the Senate calling for a ban on importation or a ban on production of

certain items is not something I could support in that form because I don't know who would be impacted and in what way by this and we've heard in the course of the debate this morning references to the fact that 70%, for example of Styrofoam usage in this country is locally produced. Obviously, therefore, it has capital that has been invested in that and it has employees who are involved in all aspects of that activity from production through the rest of the supply chain, so a ban on that is something which would have to be very carefully considered and how we would introduce it to what – and the process by which we arrive at that decision is very important.

And similarly, when it comes to importation, as Senator Wehby has mentioned, the prolific use of small plastic bags in our retail system and which then are used in people's homes as a way of collecting garbage and how that is disposed of and so on. This thing warrants some serious thought and consideration, consultation and a participatory approach towards identifying a timeframe for taking action and what action needs to be taken.

So what I would say is that if we can find an alternative formulation for the prayer that takes into account that those aspects or that approach to the resolution of the issue, it would have my support and I don't – I'm not proposing anything specific, I will leave it to others to – who are looking at the specifics to take that on board.

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The other point I wish to make concerns education - and Minister Reid is here in the Senate - I happen to have occasion to visit Costa Rica recently, and the environmental protection in that country is at a level way above where we have reached. I mean it was heartening and just sad to drive over river after river which looks so much like the Jamaican rivers, but they all had constantly flowing water. The concept of dry river beds and so on wasn't something that they had to deal with and when I spoke to the person I was travelling with, he too was a local person, he said to me, "Well, we focus on the children and the school system.' Teaching environmental education, the importance of protecting Mother Earth, respecting Mother Earth and getting the children to buy into the idea that you don't throw away garbage in a particular way; separate garbage, things that are bio-degradable, *et cetera*, all of the wholesome aspects of dealing with waste is something that has to be inculcated in a very methodical and deliberate way from an early age and so what I would like to see is that the education system and the curriculum reinforce that going forward because we do always have such a critical problem in our attitudes towards waste. I mean the casual way in which people just throw something out of their car when they're driving or just dump things on the ground which then ends up in a gully or blocking a drain. That behaviour - it's going to be difficult to change the behaviour of adults if necessary, but it's much easier to get the necessary values and attitudes instilled in children

from an early age and then they can make the difference as they grow up and they can even teach and exhort their parents and other adults to adapt a more responsible way or approach towards handling waste. So I'll just say to the Minister who is here that I would really like to see environmental education, especially around attitudes and treatment of waste in very practical ways be reinforced and drilled into our children so that the next generation will have a very different attitude towards this issue than the ones that now prevail.

Mr. President, apart from that, I'll just reiterate that we support the spirit of this motion; congratulate Senator Samuda for bringing to the Senate and I'm sure we can find a suitable prayer that would shape the consensus around the final motion in its final form.

Thank you.

(Applause)

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, Senator Skeffery, for yielding. Thank you, Senator Golding. Madam Leader.

Mrs. JOHNSON SMITH: Thank you, Mr. President.

I want to join my colleague in congratulating Senator Samuda in having raised, through this Motion this morning, the very important issue of the imperative of how we currently treat with the management of non-biodegradable waste and I want to add my voice to the support expressed by other Members in respect of the intention of

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the motion and to assure Members that Senator Samuda will propose amendments that I'm positive will meet the support of all Members present on both sides.

In the context of assuring Members present about the holistic approach of the Government to these environmental concerns and in the context of my recent attendance at the Third Our Ocean Conference in Washington DC just two weeks ago, which emphasized the importance of ensuring the sustainability of our oceans and seas and how important that is to Maritime nations such as ourselves, to small island developing state like Jamaica with a Maritime area of approximately 24 times the size of our terrestrial space.

The importance of oceans and seas and their health becomes of particular importance and why I raised that issue is because of Senator Samuda's statement at the outset of his presentation, which is that the motion is intended not to be a silver bullet in respect of all our waste management issues, but to address the issue of what is introduced into our waste stream.

Senator Wehby raised the issue of – raised a figure in respect of the amount of plastic in our ocean and I'm aware also of studies that have found that an estimated 14 billion pounds of trash is dumped in the world's ocean every year and that the majority of that garbage, that trash is plastic. So what enters our stream - our waste stream, what crowds our gullies, what requires our waste management and – both

from a collection perspective and from an educational perspective is very, very important to Jamaica.

At last year's Our Ocean Conference held in Chile, the government of the United States and the UN Environmental Programme, the Caribbean Environmental Programme within the – along with a new partnership called The Trash Free Waters Initiative, which involved countries in the wider Caribbean region with a view to reducing marine litter in their respective countries. Jamaica, along with Panama, was selected as a pilot country to participate in this initiative and it is my pleasure to announce that in keeping with our commitment back then, the Jamaican Government officially launched, through NEPA, the Trash Free Waters Initiative for Jamaica on the 18th of August 2016.

We are in the process of establishing a National committee comprised of stakeholders from the Government, private sector, academia and civil society to ensure the operationalization of the initiative. And what may be of particular interest to Members present is the fact that among the projects to be developed will be a robust public education campaign that outlines the effective management of solid waste and the reduction and eventual elimination of use of plastic as one of its main components. (Applause)

I want to ensure also that we – well assure Members present, as a matter of fact, that we are committed as a Government to

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ensuring that we secure the environment for present and future generations. It's a task for all of us that has been said earlier, no one agency can do it because there are elements of central and local government; there are elements of the environment, health and education sectors which all must be brought in. Non-governmental and governmental agents must be part of the change process; changing the views of our children, which we can do in our homes, in our families and in our communities as well as ensuring that we change our own practices, as we address the legislative and policy components.

So I wanted to simply raise the approach which is taken from an international perspective in that the Jamaican Government has an initiative which was recently launched which will address waste management. Senator Samuda will speak later in his closing about other aspects which are being embraced in the amendments he will put forward and I want to just add my own personal commitment to the behavioural changes that are necessary. When we speak about the amount of plastic we use in our supermarkets, the amount of Styrofoam we use in our cook shops, it is clear that behavioural change will be at the heart of this and must be - the human element must be a part of the considerations taken into consideration. When we weigh the cost of keeping things the same against urgent action, I think it is indisputable and requires no study to say that as Senator mentioned, time come, full time come, we must take action now.

Thank you.

(Applause)

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Mr. SKEFFERY: Mr. President...

The PRESIDENT: Senator Skeffery.

Mr. SKEFFERY: Yeah. I just rise to make a brief intervention and...

The PRESIDENT: I beg your pardon?

Mr. SKEFFERY: I rise to make a brief intervention and propose a way forward.

I support the intent and spirit of the Motion so moved by Senator Matthew Samuda. And many of the issues that were laid on the Table here are quite indeed relevant.

I am going to make a specific proposal, but I want to reinforce the issue of public education, and I heard many persons speak about it. And once we have issues like public education, the objective of it is always to change behaviour or mindset. And I think the best way to start in any formal way is at our early childhood level. Many times we speak about public education even in the schools, and we start at primary or secondary. But a formal structured mechanism that is in the curriculum at the early childhood level is often placed on the back burner. And if we are going to change the mindset we have to understand that that mindset won't change overnight with creating a new generation with a new thinking, and the best way to start is at that tender age. So that's one thing we need to put in.

There is also the environmental clubs that are in our schools, and I think a lot of them need greater strengthening and

support. They do very well and we need to ensure that.

And the private sector needs to come on board. Just this morning when I was coming on the way in, I heard Lasco having a particular programme where they have activity to support environmental programmes in terms of tree planting, school gardening, and things like those. And we need other private sector entities to support the schools in that initiative, because that is how we are going to get the greater appreciation from the youngsters and the wider community.

I know, for example, the Tourism Enhancement Fund, they have invested a lot of funds towards creating a change of behaviour where the environment is concerned. So I think those are very critical issues. And public education has to drive that change of behaviour which will give us a re-culture of a people and a new paradigm, going forward.

And because I think that this Motion is so absolutely relevant I don't think just debating it, reshape the prayer and vote yea or nay will really achieve the true intent of the Motion by Senator Samuda.

And I know in the last sitting of the Senate I remember former Senator Duncan Price brought a Motion on the Road Traffic issues. And because it was such a national issue - and I think this Motion bears similar resemblance.

I want to propose, Mr. President - and you will remember that we set up a Special Select Committee of the Senate, Members of both sides, and we have the critical stakeholders in this particular issue coming to that Committee, and we are able

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to flesh out - because the approach in supporting the Motion, there are those against and there are those that are somewhere in the middle. And I think if they could come and put their issues, and we have a clear recommendation and a clear Report coming from that Committee re-tabled in the Senate, debated and passed as a Report from the Senate, and sent to the Government for policy formulation and hopefully Legislative changes where necessary, I think that would be more effective in terms of getting the public out there understanding that the Senate of the land is seeing this issue as a critical one, and is not just voting on the Motion for going through a "Motion", but want to make serious policy changes. Because this Motion is going to require policy changes, it's going to require funding, in terms of how we move, going forward. And more importantly, it's going to require enforcement of those Acts that are currently in place and any new ones. Because if we don't enforce them it goes back to where we...

So, I support the intent and spirit. And other Members have some issues in terms of rewording the prayer. But I don't want us to leave it here today. I want this to continue to be an Agenda item from the Parliament, where we have the stakeholders coming to us and we flesh it out and move forward as we seek to get our environment the way we want it, if not for us but for future generation .

Thank you, Mr. President.

(Applause)

Mr. GAYLE: Mr. President.

The PRESIDENT: Senator Gayle.

Mr. GAYLE: Mr. President, permit me to participate in the debate of this very important Motion put forward by Senator Matthew Samuda.

Before I do so, though, I want to - because I think it's important that today we are speaking of environment - that we recognize the tremendous work that has been done by the environmentalist group. And we urge them to continue to the action that they have done over the years.

(Applause)

Senator Samuda, you have brought forward a very thought-provoking, penetrating Motion with a lot of exuberance, and I commend you for it. You are a very brave man. You have brought forward a Motion that I don't expect that if we agree today this should be the end-all and be-all of it. Work needs to be done continuously if we are going to protect our environment. And so, wherever we land, wherever the agreement ought to be, it is going to require a culture shift steeped with education, discipline, alternatives and support. And, you know, the various debaters have spoken about the public education that is required, the sensitization that is required for the public at large, the wider population and in schools.

But I want to suggest clinically, that for the agencies and entities that operate in terms of waste management, the workforce that carry out that waste management ought to be educated fully on this Motion.

(Applause)

You know, Senator Lambert Brown, the global labour movement speaks about green jobs, so you can't divorce yourself from green jobs.

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(Laughter/Applause)

And based on the extent of this debate it appears in my mind that Jamaica is embracing an agenda of going green.

(Laughter/applause)

But green jobs are those that help reduce negative environment impact, ultimately leading to environmentally, economically and socially sustainable enterprise and economics. More precisely, green jobs are decent jobs that reduce consumption on energy and raw materials, and minimize waste and pollution that protect and restore the ecosystems.

So, Mr. President, countries are developing policies and implementing strategies to improve waste management, and Jamaica must positively enhance its approach towards waste management.

And whilst we are not on waste management today, Mr. President, I am somewhat compelled to advance the following. And we spoke about the cleaning of gullies and drains, and we saw over the recent days the impact. But our authorities must establish a regular cleaning of gullies and drains on precise schedules. We must establish the frequency of collection of garbage in communities and townships with an established, publicized garbage-collection schedule that is essentially important.

Mr. President, we have to resolve this long-standing issue with clarity as to who is responsible for cleaning the gullies and the drains. And, you know, we seem to be focusing on that crime in this country is only limited to murder, robbery, theft, scamming, corruption.

But Mr. President, the enforcing of anti-dumping laws should be dramatically elevated with increased fines, harsher penalties.

(Applause)

And, Senator Frazer-Binns, you spoke of the "*Nuh dutty up Jamaica*" campaign. But that needs to be embraced and promoted as a mantra that the entire population focuses towards it.

(Applause)

Now, we are coming from a situation, you know, where we are speaking of the scandal bags and the Styrofoam. But, Senator Wehby, I remember before we got to those plastic bags - because they were - you referred to them as single-use plastic bags. But they are not really single-use, you know, because we use them over and over and over again.

(*Sotto voce* comment from Mr. Brown)

But I remember before we had the plastic bags that why the name "scandal" was attached to it was because it really scandalized the contents at a time. And so they changed it to the "black scandal bags" so that you can't see through it. But I remember, Senator Wehby, the Grace paper bags that were durable and could carry a lot.

And I remember the days in school when on a Friday, Senator Lambert Brown, my friends and I at school used to save up and that was the day when we bought the box lunch, in the box. But you know, the box lunch, once you move from point 'A' to point 'B' with it, everything mix up. And so you now came with the Styrofoam

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containers that separated. But the other presenters spoke about the effects of that.

But I am suggesting that we have to find alternatives, we have to find options. This is not a situation where we can simply abolish or abandon these materials, as they are an integral part of human existence. But we certainly can cut down the usage. And so the presentations and the debate calls for a partnership, it calls for consensus. And when it comes to the environment and protecting the environment, there can be no divide.

(Applause)

So, as a country, our goal must be to foster partnership that will enhance our economy using environmental improvement that creates cleaner, safer environment.

As a society, Mr. President, we must be committed to working with businesses, community groups and our neighbours, to improve the place we live in and do business, by implementing projects that benefit our communities socially and economically.

Mr. President, the mission of this Government must be to create safer neighbourhoods in which we all live, by working together with the people to improve and sustain the environmental quality. And so that is what it means by the collaboration, the support, the working together.

We have a duty to protect our environment for the next generation. As a society, we all must accept that heavy responsibility of the current situation, and we must act to repair, Mr. President, what can be repaired, and protect what can be protected.

You know, I like to sometimes quote Franklin D. Roosevelt. And he said:

"A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself. Forests are lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people."

Mr. President, what is happening in the Caribbean right now, in terms of another Matthew, another Matthew that we really want to stay away and to be disposed of, this environment in which we live already has to fight with ravages of disaster, and so we must - we must not add to it. And if we don't promote, prescribe and support proper waste management systems, then we are adding to the decay of our environment.

So, Senator Samuda, we have to find some consensus. I understand the extent to which you have placed forward your Motion and the intent. But I would simply and humbly recommend that if we are going to embark on this shift of culture, this change in behaviour, then we have to find a reservoir that seeks collaboration and consensus. And coming out of this Debate, I would agree with any concept that interfaces the participation of stakeholders.

And, with that in mind, Mr. President, I support the objectives of the Motion.

Thank you very much.

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Mr. BROWN: Mr. President

The PRESIDENT: Senator Brown, your brief remarks.

Mr. BROWN: Very brief, very briefly.

Mr. President, the Motion is well-intentioned and it has earned the support in principle of this side. I wish to make it clear that the proliferation of plastics is but part of the progress made by mankind globally and locally. It's part of the progress, it's part of the price we pay for competitiveness; for being able to compete in a global economy. It's the price we pay for research and development. So, as we address the issue of plastic and its negative impact on the economy, let us not fail to recognise that it came as part of the modernisation of life, and of society. So we shouldn't run from it, we should seek to control it. We should seek to manage it, and just as others found way to take us forward in the past, so too the globe and us here must find ways to take us beyond the problems of plastic while embracing the potential of plastic. So I start with that.

I could go through and tell you that the deposit policy benefitted a lot of small people who used to go out and buy the pint bottles and the quart bottles. My grandfather did that, and I have gone on the donkey cart through the hills of St. Andrew with him, and then down Hagley Park Road to liqufruita; to Diamonds and Kelly's; to Jureidini's further down Spanish Town Road; to Canada Dry and Diamond, and D&G.

So, when we had that deposit on glass bottles there was an industry that many small Jamaicans participated in. They were wiped out when you got to the plastic. They

are like the white working class in Ohio and Pennsylvania who have been impacted by progress. Gladly ours weren't complaining, they took it in stride but it meant for a company, you said Red Stripe, it meant they no longer had to be employing people to collect the bottles, to wash them, the capital maintenance cost of the washing machine to push through the bottles and to have people on the line looking for impurities in the bottle. That went. So the bottom line improved. So I make the point. There are people who suffered but there are businesses who benefitted from this course. So, it's important for us to note. Profit improved, competitiveness improved, unemployment resulted.

So, also the progress we made and the difficulties we face when we never listened to the environmentalist. We didn't put in place the necessary safeguards to protect the country from the dysfunction, the side effect of the plastic proliferation.

I recall when I represented the workers at D&G, and D&G then was producing mainly in bottles, glass bottles, having a discussion with Noel DaCosta and saying to Noel, "Noel, how long are you going to continue in glass?" Because the Pet bottles were dominating everywhere else. Noel's answer to me then was, "There is an environmental levy coming and that will take care of plastic. The rest is history. Plastic remain king and became as destructive as hurricane Matthew.

In a sense, when I look at the Motion, Senator Matthew Samuda, I got the feeling that the Prayer banning this, banning that, was Senator Gayle. I wrote this long ago, about two weeks, three weeks ago, so it's not in response to your green jobs. I'll deal with the green jobs. But what I wrote was this. "Reading the Prayer at the Motion

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the call seems to say, turn them back. Turn them back to the old days." It also says, "Stop the progress as no alternative, no alternative to the plastic was really proposed." What you saying, let's go back to the high costs cardboard box?

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Ruel Reid)

Mr. BROWN: I listened to the speech, it is as implicit as some others things I won't go into today. Suffice it to say that, we can't just turn it back. We can't just turn it back. We can't just stop the progress. And in the Motion and in the discussion on the Motion thus far, while we have recognised the danger of Styrofoam and plastics we have not paid attention to the possibilities and the efforts that have been made thus far to deal with the dangers of plastic.

In 2014, former Prime Minister opened with a recycling plant on Spanish Town Road employing 100 people, aimed at encouraging entrepreneurship and seeing a problem trying to find a solution to the problem. Because it's easy for us to be caught in the problem and not think locally and globally what is the solution to it. So I know that efforts have been made. Senator Noel Sloley, head of TEF, encouraged through TEF public education in the schools. Much have been said about public education, Mr. President, I don't need to repeat it but this can't go forward without public education.

I think it's important for us to recognise that there are opportunities, there are opportunities arising from the problem of plastic and styrofoam. Just recently in September, different type of foam, albeit, but a Jamaican company started exporting waste foam to China and earning money. So

we mustn't see the solution as just limited to this little piece of the rock. We are part of a global economy. There are people in the world now looking to turn these plastics into fuel. A big industry will arise. Ours shouldn't be going down the Shoemaker Gully, it should be going in containers from the Port to fuel the plastic to fuel industry. Let's think big. Let's not be trapped in the difficulties of now, but let us expand our vision to the possibilities of cooperation in the world.

So Jamaica Foam exports its waste to China. This is what is reported in the Gleaner of September 7, 2016. The Managing Director made the point that we manufacture EPS foam and we generate scrap. Rather than sending that off to the dump we are finding ways to preserve the environment while making cash doing it. Then he went on further addressing Styrofoam. He said, "The foam maker is now"—it is reported—"The foam maker is now pointing to a possible business opportunity in the recycling of Styrofoam plates, cups and other containers, saying agencies like the Solid Waste Authority or an entrepreneur should explore the possibilities." "There is a way...", he is quoted as saying "...to deal with that, which involves a separate operation where we would wash them to take out the grease and then the machine will liquify that form by melting and then prepare for export by making ropes or coils. In other words, the motion sees the problem. We have pronounced on the problem but every problem carries an opportunity.

Adversity provides not just opportunity to cry doom but provides opportunity to find positive solutions that enhances mankind. I didn't quote that from anybody, I made it up. So you can quote me in future.

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(Laughter by Opposition Members)

You see, in other words, we can be trapped, Senator Wehby, through you Mr. President, in the problems, the problems, and as a union man I find that every time I talk to workers who come to me with problem, problem, and when you try to point them to a solution they come back to the problem. To the problem. Some business people are like that too.

So, let's look to see—if we could get these plastic bottles, Styrofoam into business opportunity. Maybe new, not just looking at the Jamaican market but to export so we can earn cash, we can earn foreign exchange, and hopefully hold down the movement of the dollar. I'm so happy, Mr. President—so, we look to the future, there are opportunities.

Mr. President, I'm happy that Senator Matthew Samuda spoke to, taxation not an option to be considered, but that runs contrary to what is written in the letter of intent on the 30th of August this year, by Minister Audley Shaw to the IMF in which he made it clear that the Government is exploring environmental taxation, and I would hope that as the Motion says, we need to consider well thought out solution, that this environmental taxation is also well thought out, if it's going to go forward. Who is going to bear the burden of that taxation? The business people? George? And there are thousands of the Georges and Miss Adassa throughout the country, in every parish, in every town, in every district who rely on the takeout food business. Thousands of them, all throughout the country.

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Mr. BROWN: So, will they be the ones paying the taxes? Will it be the consumers who pay the taxes? And I think, Senator Samuda, almost everybody has agreed that a cost benefit analysis needs to be done, I think that is a consensus we have arrived at there.

So, who is going to pay the taxes? And, Mr. President, I am worried because that environment taxation that is proposed is on top of \$16 Billion more to come. It is all in the Letter of Intent. It is on top of the increase in Property Tax, all in the Letter of Intent and that is why I am careful about this Motion. It seems we are agreeing, Senator Samuda that taxation is not such a good thing and the people in this.

It brings me, finally, Mr. Speaker, so that we can get to the point where ...

(Sotto voce comments by a Member)

Mr. BROWN: Don't bet on that. But it brings me to the issue of the role of Parliament. Senator Skeffery has pointed out the tool used in the past with Private Members Motion. How do we get it to the Cabinet, how do we get it to Cabinet? How do we get the focus of the nation on it? And he pointed out the Motion and traffic issues brought by former Senator Imani Duncan Price, debated, Senate Gayle you will recall. I don't know if Senator Reid was around at the time might have been...

(Sotto voce comments by a Member)

Mr. BROWN: The Senate Leader would be aware of it, debated, we set up a select committee, we heard the representations, went to the Cabinet and it is informed in the Road Traffic Bill that is to come. That to me is the proper approach to

be adopted. I will suggest to you my friend, Senator Samuda that it will be a waste of Parliamentary time for you to bring this Motion here and then Parliament outsource it. This is not one to be outsourced, and in not outsourcing it, it does not exclude the multi-stakeholders because they come here, and we would reason with them, we would question them, we would look at the pros and the cons, and we would learn a lot from them coming to the sovereign Parliament. And then the report is sent to the Cabinet, the Parliament that you are a part of, becomes owner of the product of the stakeholders. Instead, it seems to me to be the reverse that the stakeholders who have no direct access and for whom the Cabinet may or may not respond. But once it comes from the Parliament the Cabinet has a duty to response to it and to address the submissions from Parliament. So if the mission we want is to get action on this thing, and if the mission is to include the stakeholders, I say, it can be achieved. It can be achieved by a Select Committee, of the Senate that meets and look at it. I have no problem with that, but consider that route.

You see, Mr. President, how consistent it is, how compatible it is with the Standing Orders that guide us, and I make the point it will not exclude the stakeholders; and it will give the Committee, the power of national concern. No higher body than the Parliament is paying attention to this. Don't let your Motion be devalued, don't let it depreciated, don't let it be belittled. You have brought people here today, lift up your Motion, lift up your Motion, lift up your Motion and lift up yourself. Not like, the other Matthew because you will still be grounded in the fact that you have moved a Motion that has compelled the Opposition's support.

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(Applause) And I hope that my own Motion will find similar favour. (Laughter)

So lift it up.

A Member: It is on the Order Paper.

Mr. BROWN: I know it is on Order Paper that is why I am not going there. So lift it up.

So, Mr. President, the Motion, the intent has our support. The method is where we have difficulty. And may I urge the Leader to consider not closing the issue today, but to give thought to all that has been said. Don't - the stuff that we are not going to the parliamentary route. You have gotten consensus use it; don't tell us that what we say is not worthy of further consideration because you have closed the gate.

Mr. President, with that position I thank you for allowing me the little latitude beyond brevity. (Applause)

The PRESIDENT: Senator Charles. (Applause)

Mr. CHARLES: Mr. President, I rise to join with my colleague Senators, in lifting up, the submission made by Senator Samuda...

A Member: Lift up Jamaica.

Mr. CHARLES: And, I not only support it in spirit, but the substance and in it being an initiator of a very relevant discussion, one which touches and concerns the interest of our people.

Mr. President, I will just very briefly say this, I believe that what we have

demonstrated today particularly through Senator Samuda is a focus, and a common interest in increasing the quality of life of our people; and in doing what is necessary, to connect the dots. This submission, speaks not only to environmental protection, waste management and all of the things that we have heard today, but it is also concerning our national security. And I dear say, Mr. President, that within our national security policy, environmental degradation and climate change are actually defined as tier two non-traditional threats to our country. And so, it is very important for me to lend my voice in support. And I will acknowledge Senator Gayle reiterated the importance of us focusing also on enforcement of our legislation; and we spoke a lot but about education which is critical. But the bottom line, Mr. President, is that protection of life and the protection of our resources is paramount. And I believe that that is the objective that we are all trying to achieve. And any effort, any effort to mitigate the risk and the impact of disaster, flooding, environmental degradation and anything of that sort must be supported.

I am so pleased, Mr. President, to see that today we have shown Jamaica that regardless of where we sit, in this Upper House that we have a consensus. And in a large part, I am very pleased for the reason and the relevant deliberations that we have exhibited today. And like my colleague Senator Wehby, I think it is important to acknowledge it, and I believe that this is going to be and hopefully, will be reflected in all of our future deliberations. (Applause)

Mr. President, I think we have said it all and I will just say this. Every action - I remember as a student of Science, Mr. President, before Law, I used to do

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Environmental Impact Assessment and our Representatives from JET will understand what I am speaking about. This is where you go out, and you actually go through formulas to make assessments. The objective is to ensure that we are protecting our resources. And what we learnt there as students of the University of the West Indies; in the Pure and Applied Science Faculty is that every action has a consequence, and also every inaction. When we do not do, it is as dangerous as when we do things that are deleterious to our environment. And so, this is such a critical discussion for us to have had, and I rise to support it. I commend my colleague Senator, because today, as he said, in his opening remarks, he does not seek to identify silver bullet, or to achieve 100 per cent solution, but without Senator Samuda's Motion being placed before this House, we would not have the discussion about education programmes, about strengthening our environmental associations, about the impact on security, and the impact on our people.

And so, we must commend it, we must encourage it, and again, Mr. President, I really hope that in our future deliberations, the interest of our people will be paramount as we seek not to fear but to be bold enough to stretch across the aisle through consensus.

I thank you, Mr. President.
(Applause)

The PRESIDENT: Senator Samuda.

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. President, do I have to again, take leave to speak from a seat that is not my own?

The PRESIDENT: Okay.

Mr. SAMUDA: Just checking. What has come out today, for sure is that urgency for this matter to be attended to is recognized by the sides.

It has been said by both sides that the time is now. Ban Ki-Moon says,

“Saving our planet, lifting people out of poverty, advancing economic growth, these are one and the same fight.”

We must connect the dots between climate change, water scarcity, energy shortages, global health, food security and women's empowerment. Solutions to one problem must be solutions for all.

I am indeed, happy that I believe we have reached consensus on a number of the issues discussed today. We have disagreements admittedly on some of the points of implementation, but we have all agreed about the spirit of the motion and where we want to get to.

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Mr. SAMUDA: Senator Brown, you need not worry. We're not turning back the progress, rather ushering in sustainable prosperity. (Applause)

A Government Senator: Quite so.

Mr. SAMUDA: No turning back. However, finding a better way forward. (Applause) I wish to thank all the Members for their contributions today. I wish to thank all of the teachers who inspire, teach our young people the right way and socialize them to not "*Dutty* up Jamaica". I wish to thank all of the environmental advocates and workers in the environmental agency that tire every single day to protect the Jamaican requirement.

Mr. REID: Hear, hear!

Mr. SAMUDA: They need not worry, as Senator Brown needs not worry. This will not fall into category of a talk shop and our Government isn't piecemeal government, so there won't be piecemeal solutions. (Applause)

GOVERNMENT SENATOR:
Quite so.

Mr. SAMUDA: But it is precisely because the time is now and because we feel action must be taken now that the major point of disagreement is that we go to a multi-stakeholder committee under the Ministry with responsibility for the environment rather than going through the parliamentary time. Not to say we are ignoring parliamentary participation, because we will be asking for all stakeholders including the Opposition to participate in the Committee. The nation can also be assured that the Minister with responsibility will keep them apprised of the

progress as we seek to create this framework of how we go forward. But what is clear is that .

(The President gavels)

Mrs. JOHNSON SMITH: Mr. President, the time being 1:20, I ask for the suspension of Standing Orders and that Senate be allowed to sit beyond 1:30 to complete the business of day.

The PRESIDENT: The question is that the Standing Orders be suspended to allow the Senate to sit beyond 1:30 to complete the business of the day.

Put to the Senate and agreed to.

(The President Gavels)

Mr. SAMUDA: Thank you, Mr. President. We have also taken note that every person's every Member of this Senate's contribution has spoken the importance of public education and the nation also need not worry as they would have seen the strength of our communication and public education in recent happenings as we prepared for what could have been a disaster and that will certainly form a part of the Committee's work going forward. But I wish to read—

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Brown)

The last time I checked green was a colour in the flag of Jamaica so I don't think it's a worry and I notice that you are sitting in green chairs so it can't that big of a problem.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Brown)

Mr. SAMUDA: But I would like to read the motion with amendments as agreed

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to show that we have, indeed, engaged in consultation and found consensus:

WHEREAS Jamaica has a waste management problem due to poor habits and inadequate resources and much of the items that enter our waste stream are non-biodegradable;

AND WHEREAS these items pose their own individual challenges to our waste management conundrum and offer very little opportunities by way of recycling and reuse;

AND WHEREAS as a Small Island Developing State, Jamaica is particularly susceptible to the efforts of climate change as a result of poor environmental management by the use of these materials;

AND WHEREAS action is required to significantly reduce unrecyclable material entering our waste stream while simultaneously creating production opportunities for local manufacturers for alternate packaging materials;

AND WHEREAS no single action will solve our problems in this area, but rather a series of well-considered policies over the short term;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable Senate call on the Government of Jamaica to take such steps as may be necessary to reduce non-biodegradable

material from Jamaica's waste stream; and that in so doing, it accordingly establishes a multi-stakeholder committee within the Ministry responsible for the environment charged with recommending to the Government of Jamaica:

- a) a framework for the banning on a phased basis of single-use plastic bags below fifty gallon capacity and all finished goods made from styrofoam;
- b) a framework to curtail the production in Jamaica of said items unless they include the enzyme that makes them biodegradable.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this multi-stakeholder committee encourage the input and participation of entities and individuals who may wish to make representation on the issues and who may not be members of the committee in establishing the framework mentioned above.

I ask, Mr. President, that the Motion be approved.

The PRESIDENT: I have deal with the amendments first.

Mr. SAMUDA: Sorry.

THE HONOURABLE SENATE

The PRESIDENT: Are there any comments on the amendments? They were as a result of some consensus, I understand.

Mr. GOLDING: The only comments on the amendment is as has been stated, we think the proper place to have this review done would be in a parliamentary committee not some multi-stakeholder committee outside of Parliament. That's a big point for us, but it hasn't been accepted by the other side.

The PRESIDENT: So, can I put the amendments as presented by Senator Samuda.

I put the amendments as suggested by Senator Samuda and read into the record.

Put to the Senate and agreed to.

I now put the Motion as amended.

Put to the Senate and agreed to.

The Motion is carried. (Applause)

Minister, may I just say before you rise to the Members who contributed: those who are presently in the Chamber and those who left, I thank you very much for the manner in which the debate was conducted and I think that we did accomplish something.

Leader Golding—may I see you Leader (Speaking to Mrs. Johnson Smith) and Leader Golding in my Chambers immediately after we adjourn.

Mrs. JOHNSON SMITH: Mr. President, it is not intended to do any further business today. I ask that the Senate be adjourned for a date to be fixed.

The PRESIDENT: The question is that the—

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. BROWN: Mr. President, on the motion for adjournment, I didn't raise with you. It has come to our attention that the death toll in Haiti has been significant—much more than what we thought earlier and I'm wondering whether or not Senate sitting would be minded to ask that a letter be sent to the Haitian Ambassador here expressing the condolences of the Senate given the magnitude of the loss. My apologies for raising it outside of...

The PRESIDENT: It's not a problem.

Mrs. JOHNSON SMITH: Just to say there is no Haitian Ambassador resident here, but I would concur that the Senate be asked to issue a letter to the Government of Haiti the appropriate mechanism.

The PRESIDENT: And I would really say the Government who have been affected, because you were pointing out that we didn't speak about St. Vincent earlier, so.

Mrs. JOHNSON SMITH: Indeed. To the four countries which have been primarily affected within the Caribbean region.

ADJOURNMENT

The PRESIDENT: Thank you. The question is that the Senate be adjourned to a date to be determined.

Put to the Senate and agreed to.

The Senate now stands adjourned.

THE HONOURABLE SENATE

The Senate accordingly adjourned at approximately 1:29 pm.