



Opposition Demands Answers from Minister Hill on Lack of Economic Progress

Kingston, Jamaica. January 2, 2025: The Opposition Spokesman on Investment, Trade, and Global Logistics has called for greater accountability from Minister Hill following his recent article, "Tony Hylton is Searching for Relevance." Rather than addressing the real concerns raised about his stewardship of the Ministry of Industry, Investment, and Commerce (MIIC), Minister Hill has resorted to personal attacks and unsubstantiated claims, deflecting from the critical issue of Jamaica's economic stagnation.

"It is unfortunate, but not surprising, that instead of engaging with the facts, Minister Hill chose to respond with ad hominem attacks. My objective critique of his ministry's lack of vision and failure to deliver meaningful results was met with a long-winded diatribe filled with irrelevant personal slights rather than any substantive economic data," said Tony Hylton. "I am searching for answers, Minister Hill—not relevance."

Hylton emphasised that while the Minister focuses on outdated talking points, his actions have failed to yield meaningful results. "Minister Hill's speeches about the need for an export-focused economy are nothing new. They echo the policies already put in place by our administration and supported by multilateral institutions. However, we have yet to see any transformative action from this Minister," Hylton noted.

As the main architect of Jamaica's ambitious Logistics Hub Initiative, Hylton highlighted the immense potential of this project, which has the capacity to attract USD 30 billion in investments, build three new towns, and generate over 100,000 direct jobs and 400,000 indirect jobs, as endorsed by the World Bank. Despite this, the initiative has languished under Minister Hill's leadership, with little to no concrete steps to advance any of its goals.

Hylton also called for greater transparency regarding the costs to Jamaican taxpayers incurred by the Minister's numerous overseas trips, questioning their tangible benefits. "What specific investments have been attracted, and what policies have been developed to enhance local production and exports? Where is the evidence that the Minister's jet-setting is contributing to any new markets opening or economic growth?" Hylton demanded.

While Minister Hill has attempted to justify his frequent foreign trips by boasting of travelling with 189 businesspeople from 126 companies, the reality of his claims is deeply concerning. According to the Minister, only three businesses secured new contracts or business opportunities as a result of these trips. Furthermore, he alluded to the success of some ICT companies without providing any concrete figures or evidence of significant impact.

If we measure the success of Minister Hill's efforts based on the number of companies and businesspeople that travelled, against the total cost to taxpayers as well as the private sector businesses that have not yielded success, the figures raise serious questions about the effectiveness and value of the resources spent on these missions. What happened to the rest of the citizens, industries, and businesses that were promised benefits from these engagements? Where are the policies and strategies that should have attracted real investments, boosted industry, and advanced commerce across the country?



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The Jamaican people deserve better. It is not enough to claim success based on isolated examples. The government must deliver meaningful results for the entire country—not just a select few businesses or industries. Public resources must be used transparently, with real returns delivered to the Jamaican people.

The Opposition is demanding the following answers from Minister Hill:

1. A breakdown of taxpayer costs for his overseas trips and the economic returns from these missions. Since assuming portfolio responsibility, how much has it cost Jamaican taxpayers for your “foreign investment” trips? Include costs from agencies under your portfolio, as well as other agencies and staff involved in these missions.
2. What are the specific financial and economic benefits accruing to the Jamaican people?
3. The specific policies and strategies implemented to stimulate exports (apart from the trips), assist the MSME sector, address growth constraints, and improve FDIs.
4. What specific investments have you and your team attracted into the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) regime that were not already in progress before you assumed office?
5. How many companies have exited the SEZ regime over the past two years, and how many jobs have been lost as a result?
6. Provide data on improvements to trade deficits, market access for Jamaican products, and the Ministry’s impact on the wider economy.
7. What policies have you developed to assist Jamaican businesses in increasing exports or local production levels?
8. What major policy initiatives has the Ministry introduced to address identified growth constraints?
9. What is JAMPRO’s current role? Has it been subsumed into the Ministry, and have you effectively become the CEO of this and other agencies without accountability or a clear strategy?

“We deserve more than rhetoric and costly international jaunts. It’s time for Minister Hill to provide concrete answers and show that his efforts are making a real difference in the lives of Jamaicans,” concluded Hylton.

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