

The Jamaica Debates Commission conducted the National Political debates between the two major Parties, Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) and People's National Party (PNP), in December 2011. The Socio-Economic team debate was held on December 10 at the studios of the Creative Production & Training Centre (CPTC). Participants were Parliamentary Secretary for Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, Senator Warren Newby; Member of Parliament, Dr. Sapphire Longmore and Member of Parliament Senator Marlene Malahoo-Forte for team JLP. Representing PNP were Spokesperson for Culture, Youth and Sports, Lisa Hanna; Member of Parliament, Dr. Dayton Campbell and Member of Parliament, Raymond Pryce. On December 15, the Economic & Financial debate was held also at the CPTC studios between Minister of Finance, Hon. Audley Shaw representing JLP and Spokesman for Finance, Dr. Peter Phillips for PNP. The Leadership debate (townhall style) between Leader of the Opposition Hon. Portia Simpson-Miller and Prime Minister Hon. Andrew Holness was held at the Faculty of Law, University of the West Indies, on December 20.

A survey showed that attention paid to the debates was slightly higher compared to 2007. The majority found the debates useful and they caused over 25% voters to make decisions or changes on voting. Most persons were pleased with the young political representatives in the team debate format and also appreciated the inclusion of audience questions at the Leadership debate. Some suggested the length of the debates were too short and they should be held more frequently.

Jamaica's first Local Government team debate was held on March 22, 2012 at the studios of CPTC to examine the parties' vision and policy direction on local government, proposed or amended structures, governance procedures and especially the scope of local government activities. The participants representing JLP were Acting JLP Chairman, former State Minister for Local Government and former Mayor of Port Maria, Robert Montague; former Mayor of Kingston, Spokesman on Local Government and Member of Parliament Desmond McKenzie; joined by the Head of the Association of Local Government Authorities and Mayor of May Pen, Mayor Milton Brown. PNP was represented by Local Government Spokesman Noel Arscott, PNP Vice President and Senator Angella Brown-Burke along with the Mayor of Mandeville Brenda Ramsay.

The JDC also conducted a workshop at the Mandeville Hotel prior to the debate examining a number of important issues related to the coverage of Local Government.