

The Media Association, Jamaica Limited (MAJ) wishes for all Jamaicans a peaceful and a productive New Year. For members of the media fraternity our special wish is for a safe and energetic 2010.

From all indications the past year has been one of the most challenging for the industry. There were significant activities relating to efforts to change the onerous defamation laws in the country; efforts to strengthen and improve compliance with the provisions of the Access to Information Laws and efforts to cope with regulatory issues in the electronic media.

Internally, activities by working journalists towards establishing a "Journalism Code of Ethics" received support from the MAJ and this will continue. The Association's drive to expand its membership made progress during the year and work will be continued. Activities to strengthen our business relationship with the Advertising Agencies Association of Jamaica were significant during 2009. Our plans are to conclude several important components early in 2010, so that the industry can be further strengthened.

The MAJ continued its strong support for Peace and Love in Schools (PALS), Crime Stop, the Ad Council, the National Transformation Programme and many, many other national programmes last year.

In the coming year we will tackle a disadvantaged business position that exists for media as it relates to the collection and remittance of General Consumption Tax, GCT. We will continue to advocate fair and certain regulations that are consistent with international norms and best practices. The MAJ will be insistent that laws relating to noise abatement, lewd music and conduct in public spaces and on public transportation, as regards public entertainment activities and related areas are all drawn to the same standard as the media, so we can make tangible progress in cleaning up the social fabric of the country.

We renew our call for the speedy conclusion to the deliberations on changes to the defamation laws of the country. We urge the swift adoption of the recommendations made to improve Access to Information on behalf of the people and members of the Jamaican public.

We will on behalf of our employees in newsrooms be guardians against registration or licensing approaches of journalists that could impinge on the freedom of the press to operate; and we will work closely with the Press Association of Jamaica to ensure that they take steps to improve training and journalistic responsibility.

The MAJ and the media in general would love to report hope, goodwill and positive developments across Jamaica in 2010 and wish these prospects for all our fellow citizens.