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## PREMIER GOLDING, ITC DISCUSS JAMAICA'S NEW EXPORT DRIVE

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Jamaica's Prime Minister Bruce Golding held talks with the head of the International Trade Centre (ITC) Patricia R. Francis on Monday on the Caribbean island state's drive to boost exports and spur economic growth.

Under Jamaica's National Export Strategy, drawn up with ITC help and launched in May, exports should accelerate over the next four years to comprise 33% of economic output by 2012, sharply up from 20% at present.

With Jamaica's traditional industries such as mining and tourism suffering deeply in the current economic climate, the plan puts special emphasis on promoting non-traditional sectors such as services, creative industries and processed foods.

"Our long-standing ability to innovate will help drive the competitiveness of our export sector. With a 'can do' mentality, we will make the strategy work with the support of international partners such as the International Trade Centre," Prime Minister Golding said.

While Jamaica ranks in the top third in the Americas in terms of competitiveness, according to the World Bank's *Doing Business Report*, it has been hit hard by the global financial crisis.

Earnings from tourism have declined by 14% in the last six months, although visitors' arrivals have increased. Remittances from Jamaican emigrants have also declined in the last year. A slump in demand for aluminium has forced the closure of two of the three companies producing bauxite, once a mainstay of the island's economy.

Monday's discussions focused on assistance ITC can provide in implementing the strategy, notably in upgrading trade intelligence and trade facilitation, and helping business exploit the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) on trade in services with the European Union.

Together with farmers, food processors, buyers and government officials, ITC is already working on a sector-specific approach for fruits, vegetables, herbs, spices, roots and tubers that targets domestic hotels, supermarkets and restaurants, as well as Caribbean, US, British and Canadian markets.

"There is a positive correlation between export competitiveness and economic growth," said Ms Francis, ITC Executive Director. "Competitiveness is what this new strategy aims to deliver," she said.



ITC is a joint agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations, with a special mandate to help businesses in developing countries compete on global markets to increase economic growth and so meet Millennium Development Goals.

[To view photos of the Prime Minister's visit please click on this link](#)

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