

**Press Release  
For Immediate Release**

**February 11, 2016**

**Private Sector (JMA) Calls for Decision on Political Debates**

With an impending General Election underway, the Jamaica Manufacturers' Association (JMA), the Private Sector Organization of Jamaica (PSOJ), the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce (JCC), the Jamaica Exporters' Association (JEA) and the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA) are now deeply concerned about the lack of confirmation regarding the staging of the political debates, despite the persistent efforts by the Jamaica Debates Commission. The existing delays are quite perplexing, particularly as both political parties had signed off on the terms of a memorandum of understanding to cover the three debates, on November 11, 2015. As a coalition of private sector entities, it is our utmost belief that all political aspirants have a responsibility and a duty to share their vision for the sustainable development of Jamaica, and to make themselves available to participate in such a forum.

The cornerstone of any participatory democracy is the informed voter. We fervently advance that the political debates provide an opportunity for the electorate to adequately evaluate the policies proposed by the candidates and ultimately make an informed decision. We ardently assert that the political aspirants would be derelict in their duties to the people of Jamaica, if they were to forgo the highly anticipated political debates.

It is also disquieting that with merely fourteen days before the national polls, the two major political parties have yet to make available to the public their Manifestos. We continue to appeal for their release, so that the people of Jamaica are able to substantially analyze the content proposed to drive the country forward. All Jamaicans deserve such an opportunity to further grow and strengthen the democratic process.

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**BUY JAMAICAN...CREATE JAMAICAN JOBS**

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