

Bath Community to be Transformed into Wellness Zone

Plans are underway to transform the Bath community in St. Thomas into a 'Wellness Zone', incorporating its botanical gardens and mineral spring.

This was announced by Minister of Health, Hon. Dr. Fenton Ferguson, during his contribution to the 2013/14 Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives, on Tuesday, June 25. 'The development of the Sports and Fitness Park at the nearby sports field - all supplemented by the healthy fruits, juices and foods produced from Bath, Ginger Hall and surrounding communities - is also on the agenda,' the Minister said. Dr. Ferguson, who is also Member of Parliament for Eastern St. Thomas, said the vision is that visitors to Bath looking for comfort and healing in the hot springs, can also avail themselves of natural foods and juices, as well as exercise their way into a healthier lifestyle. Bath boasts the second oldest botanical gardens in the Western Hemisphere, which was established in 1779 by the Government of Jamaica. The Bath Fountain (or mineral spring), discovered by a runaway slave in 1695 was acquired and developed by the government in 1669. The water is drawn from both hot and cold springs, and its high mineral content (sulphur and lime) is said to be effective in the treatment of skin diseases, gout and rheumatism. Highlighting other initiatives being undertaken in his constituency, Dr. Ferguson informed that an extensive drain cleaning exercise is being carried out in flood prone areas of Plantain Garden River in St. Thomas, with funding from the Sugar Transformation Programme. In addition, the Minister informed that work has begun on close to 300 sugar worker housing solutions in Hampton Court and Golden Grove, while an additional 20 units are to be built in Bell Rock in Duckenfield. On another matter, the Health Minister informed that during the year, 100 fisher folk in the constituency also benefited from credit assistance valued at \$16,000 each, to purchase fishing gear lost or damaged during Hurricane Sandy, through the assistance of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.