**Speech Delivered By Mayor of Kingston, Delroy Williams at the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development Local Governance Conference held between July 17 – 19, 2018 in Montego Bay.**

How do we strengthen our responsiveness and accountability to the residents of the municipalities we serve. Responsiveness and accountability are critical features in the effective and efficient delivery of services to the residents of our municipalities. There are many things that we must bring into contemplation

**Firstly**, Good urban governance, responsiveness and accountability require*technocratic and professional expertise*. It requires a *capable municipal service* even as the political directorate sets the overall direction based on the electorate’s aspirationsand interest. Capable municipal service is critical to strengthening responsiveness and accountability.

**Secondly**, City managers and urban planners ***must adopt a future oriented and long term outlook in policy formulation.*** Why Future? Why Long term? This will help us to avoid the pitfalls of making decisions that might be expedient in the short term but prove costly later on.

**Thirdly**, decisions must be derived from robust debates and conversations among stakeholders. We have to involve stakeholders in policy formulation and the decision making processes.

**Fourthly**, we ought to build flexibility in our urban planning regim**e**. We live in a changing and volatile environment. An environment which demands that we always raise questions relating to assumptions. City managers and leaders must develop the mindset that is always willing to reverse decisions if those decisions are flawed and based on wrong assumptions. We must become committed to developing within the public sector a culture of always seeking to do things better and cheaper. We ought to understand that *public sector culture* affects how civil servants, public officers and politicians carry out their responsibilities.

In a climate of limited resources and limited sources of revenues city policy makers and managers must frame the mind in always seeking to find solutions that maximize the effectiveness of scare municipal resources. Maximizing the effectiveness of scare municipal resources is paramount to the efficient delivery of services and enhancing the quality of life of our residents.

**Fifthly, c**reating robust institutions and processes that maximize the expertise available brings invaluable benefits to municipalities, and therefore, must always be pursued in earnest. Although strong, good and visionary leadership is important to the municipalities’ successes decisions cannot be made on judgment and biases. Robust institutions and processes are critical ensuringthat all available resources and expertise within the municipal corporations are fully utilized.Earlier, we made the point that responsiveness and accountability hinge somewhat on a professional and capable staff complement. That has to become the norm within the municipal corporations. Therefore, building institutions and processes to ensure the full utilization of this professionalism and expertise is essential. The maximization of the expertise is a major step in developing responsiveness and accountability. Why is this important? It is important because central to the achievement of our objectives and responsiveness is the fostering of human capital, institutions and processes. As leaders we must spend time to build institutions and processes that will result in a capable technocracy.

The sixth point is that we have to pursue an aggressive talent recruitment, development and retention policies for the municipalities. The municipal staff complement is central to the development objectives of the municipalities, and hence the need for talented officers to carry out these objectives. Examples of how this can be achieved in part is to find ways to issue scholarships for talented students who are then bonded to serve the municipalities for a time. Along with this we have to foster staff morale, promote staff well- being and encourage consistent training and continuous learning.

The seventh point is that public engagement has to become an integral part of municipal governance processes. The inculcating of a sense of civic ownership. Launching programs and projects (whether they be adopt a park, clean city, tree planting or community gardening) and getting community involvement is also crucial. In addition to public consultation we must take more aggressive steps to canvas for ideas from the public. An empowered citizenry participating in the policy making process and taking shared ownership over public outcomes is essential for public policy success.

This public engagement efforts must of necessity be accompanied by a Municipal Service Transformation. There must be a shift from a transactional mode of governance to a more relational one. We must seek to create a more empathetic and citizen centric municipal service. Remember we are speaking about our responsiveness.

**My final two points now follow. We must focus on a results oriented approach to policy making**. As managers and leaders of municipalities our approach to urban governance ought to be unsentimental, rational, pragmatic and results oriented. We strongly believe that an unsentimental and pragmatic focus on results would lead to the efficient provision of services to the public. We must nurture good habits in policy making. We must resolve urban challenges through the utilization of policies grounded on the proper assessment of the likely or logical outcomes. A result oriented approach to governance requires careful thought and assessment. We always take the time to examine the performance of existing policies and discard or rework to obtain better results. Once policy is decided the Municipal Service must put its full weight behind the policy to implement them well.

The final point, a very important one.

Municipalities must confront complexity well in order to flourish. Municipalities that make the effort to understand and manage complexity will gain a competitive advantage. How to confront complexity?

In building municipalities, the agencies of government must emphasize alignment so that our efforts are coordinated and not fragmented. This is absolutely necessary in a changing and complex environment. The public service needs to be aligned to respond to changing circumstances. We have to look at cities as systems in which everything is interconnected or interdisciplinary. Which must mean that collaboration /coordination is essential for solving the big urban challenges. Seamless coordination is an important competitive advantage. Modern urban and municipal challenges fall outside existing organizational boundaries. They tend to involve multiple dimensions. Seamless coordination gives us our best chance of addressing these challenges well.

The digitization is important. Do not think of digitization in terms of increasing productivity. Think of digitization in terms of mastering complexity. Giving us the mastery of complexity.

How can we begin this? A project to put together the most comprehensive geospatial dataset ever collected in Jamaica including buildings, roads, terrain, water bodies, vegetation, bridges etc. A comprehensive 3D map data would provide a rigorous geospatial foundation for policy makers to develop solutions for complex urban challenges.

I hope this presentation would have some meaning to you all. Thanks very much for the invitation to share with you all.