

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

US\$70M Runway Project enhances SIA potential, safety

Montego Bay, Jamaica – May 6, 2024

The runway extension at the Sangster International Airport (SIA) in Montego Bay was officially opened on Thursday, May 2, 2024. The US \$70 million Runway Extension and Associated Works project significantly advances the aviation capabilities and safety standards at Jamaica’s busiest airport.

The project included the runway extension by 408m and the establishment of a Runway End Safety Area (RESA) at both ends of the runway, ensuring full compliance with ICAO standards, installation of runway lights, signs and markings, relocation of the western end runway lights, installation of new approach lights for the eastern end of the runway, relocation and installation of air navigation equipment, including an Instrument Landing System (ILS).

Additionally, the airside works involved widening Taxiway Echo and installing a Jet Blast Deflector along the perimeter fence to improve the efficiency and safety of the airport operations.

Kent Avenue, a section of which was blocked off to vehicular traffic many years ago, was realigned with significant shoreline protection works at the western end to safeguard the airport’s coastal infrastructure against storm surges. Lands required for the project have also been acquired and transferred, bridges built across two drains and public utilities, including water mains and electrical poles, were relocated and upgraded to better serve the surrounding communities and comply with aviation safety standards.

Chief Executive Officer of MBJ Airports Limited, which operates the airport on behalf of the Government of Jamaica via a 30-year concession agreement, Mr. Shane Munroe described the improvements as “a strategic vision of enhancing operational efficiencies and ensuring compliance with the highest international standards set forth by the International Civil Aviation Organization.”

He said compliance with these standards represented a collective commitment to safety at the airport and aviation in Jamaica.

That note was a common thread among speakers at the opening ceremony, among them President of the Airports Authority of Jamaica (AAJ), Mr. Audley Deidrick who said an additional US\$100 million would be spent on the SIA by MBJ. He advised that “several more projects are now in progress (and) plans are being crafted for bigger projects ahead to meet the growing demand of Jamaica’s travel and tourism industry.”

Since MBJ took over the concession in 2003, over US\$396 million have been invested on capital projects to date.





Deputy Prime Minister Dr the Hon Horace Chang said the extension has now placed the Sangster International Airport as one of the finest in the Caribbean, “not only in service but it has the capacity to absorb the long flights and keep Montego Bay as the centre of tourism activity in Jamaica and one of the primary destinations in the Caribbean region.”

Minister of Science, Energy, Telecommunications and Transport, Hon Daryl Vaz, was unavoidably absent but in his speech given by Mr. Mark Hart, Chairman of the Airports Authority of Jamaica (AAJ) said, “This runway extension represents a crucial step forward in enhancing our country’s connectivity and positioning Jamaica as a regional aviation hub.” In addition to increasing the airport’s capacity, he said more flights will be accommodated, boosting tourism and trade opportunities for Jamaica.

SIA facilitates more than 85 percent of tourists arriving in the island and, in 2023 the airport served over 5.2 million passengers.

A host of dignitaries joined Dr Chang and Mr. Munroe for a ribbon cutting on the extended runway, signifying its official opening.

The runway extension will result in increased capacity for travel, trade and tourism; increased safety of operations at SIA through the establishment of Runway End Safety Areas (RESAs), and the widened Taxiway ‘E’; improved quality of Kent Avenue and local public utilities, as well as increased climate change resilience at SIA.

Among other speakers lauding the project were Deputy Director General, Air Navigation Services of the Jamaica Civil Aviation Authority, Mr. Howard Greaves; Mayor of Montego Bay, Councillor Richard Vernon and Chairman of the Airports Authority of Jamaica, Mr. Mark Hart. There was also participation by the Custos of St James, Bishop Conrad Pitkin with MBJ’s Manager for Commercial Business Development and Marketing, Mrs. Sharon Hislop-Holt as master of ceremonies.



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About Sangster International Airport:

Sangster International Airport (IATA: MBJ, ICAO: MKJS) is an international airport located 3 mi (4.8 km) east of Montego Bay, Jamaica. The airport is capable of handling nine million passengers per year. It serves as the most popular airport for tourists visiting the north coast of Jamaica. The airport is named after former Jamaican Prime Minister Sir Donald Sangster.

About MBJ Airports:

MBJ Airports Limited, the operator of Sangster International Airport, connects Jamaica to more than 60 international destinations. A record 5.267m passengers used the airport in 2023. MBJ operates SIA under a 30-year concession awarded in 2003 and the airport provides employment to more than 7,500 persons. SIA has been named the Caribbean's Leading Airport by World Travel Awards for 15 years.

