



Briefing for the Public Petitions Committee

Petition Number: [PE1585](#)

Main Petitioner: Isabel Lennox on behalf of Flag Up Scotland Jamaica

Subject: Scottish Jamaican Relations

Calls on the Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to create a formal bilateral partnership with Jamaica and make it a Priority Country for trade and international development as a means of acknowledging that trade with Jamaica has contributed significantly to the foundations of economic growth and prosperity in Scotland and recognising that Scotland should now seek to advance the prosperity of Jamaica.

Background

[Flag Up Scotland Jamaica](#) is a recently established project to promote the connections between Scotland and Jamaica. The project seeks to develop a closer partnership which will benefit both nations.

The Flag Up Scotland Jamaica project has highlighted the historical links between the two countries through the story of the Jamaican flag. The Jamaican flag contains the saltire (St Andrew's Cross) which was inspired by the Scottish flag.

Flag Up Scotland Jamaica has published a [story of the flags](#), which states "Rev William McGhie, a Presbyterian missionary from Scotland had become a friend of the Prime Minister Alexander Bustamante and it was after a conversation with him about the flag that suggested that he drew his design based on the Scottish flag."

The Scottish Executive published a report on [Scotland and the Slave Trade](#) (2007) marking the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade act. The report highlights the role of ports like Greenock and Glasgow in the slave trade that can still be seen with "street names such as Jamaica Street in Glasgow."

The Scottish Executive report also states "Many islands such as St Kitts and Jamaica, as well as the area of Virginia in mainland America, had Scottish owners and overseers."

Flag Up Scotland Jamaica published an overview of [Jamaican-Scottish connections](#). This includes large numbers of Scots prisoners of war sent to Jamaica in 1656 by Oliver Cromwell. In the 17th century refugees from Scotland's failed colony at Darien arrived in Jamaica.

Flag Up Scotland states that "Campbell is the most common surname in Jamaica and it is said that there are more Campbells per square acre in Jamaica than in Scotland".

The latest [World Bank](#) statistics show the Jamaican population at around 2.7 million (2014) with an economy valued at around \$14 billion (current GDP \$US 2013). The World Bank also provides an [overview for Jamaica](#):

"Jamaica is an upper middle income country and the largest in size and population in the English speaking Caribbean. For decades, Jamaica has struggled with low growth, high public debt and many external shocks that further weakened the economy. Over the last 30 years, real per capita GDP increased at an average of just one percent per year, making Jamaica one of the slowest growing developing countries in the world."

The World Bank has highlighted that government reforms are beginning to bear fruit. For example "Institutional reforms and measures to improve the environment for the private sector have started to restore confidence in the Jamaican economy."

In recent years Jamaica has risen to rank 64 among 189 economies worldwide in the 2016 [Doing Business](#) ranking. The 2016 report places Jamaica in among the top tier of countries implementing reforms to make it easier to do business, one of the top ten countries in the world.

HMRC publishes detailed [trade statistics](#) including exports from Scotland to Jamaica (based on administrative data). The HMRC figures show Scottish exports to Jamaica of around £1.5 million each year on average over the last five years for which data is available (2010-2014).

Richard Marsh
Senior Research Specialist
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