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PRESS RELEASE

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ODPEM Clarifies Government Status, Hosting and Financial Arrangements of Support Jamaica Platform

KINGSTON, JAMAICA — The Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM) wishes to address recent statements, media reports and public commentary concerning the ownership, hosting, financial arrangements and data governance of SupportJamaica.gov.jm.

Following recent parliamentary discussions and a public response that did not fully set out the contractual, technical and financial arrangements, ODPEM has reviewed the relevant agreements and operational framework and provides the following clarification for the Jamaican public and international donors.

Support Jamaica is an official Government of Jamaica disaster-relief and recovery platform operating under the Government's ".gov.jm" domain. It was established as the authorised national portal through which Jamaicans, members of the diaspora, international partners, organisations and friends of Jamaica could support national relief and recovery efforts. Additionally, no private company can own, register or hold a government domain.

Government Platform and Technology Arrangements

The Support Jamaica technology was initially developed by Amber, a Jamaican company, following Hurricane Beryl in 2024 under a royalty-free licensing arrangement. After the original donation site had served its purpose, it was decommissioned. Amber repurposed the technology and scaled to support the national response for Hurricane Melissa.

Amber provided the platform free of charge as a philanthropic contribution to national recovery not as a paid contract and has continued to provide hosting, software maintenance and technical support at its own cost.

Under the Software-as-a-Service arrangement, Amber serves as the technology provider, while the Government, through ODPEM, is authorised to use and operate the platform for official national disaster-relief and recovery purposes.

The use of a private technology provider does not alter the Government status of the platform. SupportJamaica.gov.jm is an official Government of Jamaica platform operating under ODPEM's authority.

Donations are Deposited into Government Accounts

Amber has never received, held or controlled funds donated through Support Jamaica. The platform serves only as the digital interface through which donations are initiated. Transactions are processed through ODPEM's designated financial institution and payment gateway for settlement into official Government of Jamaica accounts.

Amber's role as technology developer and hosting provider does not give it access to or control over those accounts. All donations remain subject to established Government financial-management, procurement, audit and reporting requirements.

Data Migration and Protection

The agreement provided that the associated Government-controlled data would be migrated from Amber's hosting environment to a Government-designated environment. Amber's hosting role was always intended to be temporary and technical.

ODPEM acknowledges that it did not complete the migration as agreed and accepts responsibility for the delay. The Board has directed that the process commence immediately, subject to the necessary technical and security feasibility, and be undertaken in a controlled manner that protects the continuity of the platform, the integrity of donor, volunteer and transaction records, and continued authorised access.

ODPEM has retained access to and operational control over the information collected through the platform. As the Data Controller, ODPEM determines how donor and volunteer information is used and processed. Amber acts as the Data Processor under a legally binding Data Processing Agreement. Amber does not own the data. Amber's technical access is restricted to software maintenance, hosting support, system updates and cybersecurity monitoring, all subject to role-based permissions, the principle of least privilege and system audit trails.

System Security

The agreement did not require formal SOC 2 certification but required and received security safeguards aligned with the SOC 2 Trust Services Criteria, which address the security, availability and confidentiality of information systems. ODPEM has received no report of a security breach, data compromise or unauthorised disclosure of donor or volunteer information through the platform.

Accountability and Public Confidence

The Board acknowledges ODPEM's responsibility to strengthen its access-management, data-protection, reconciliation and public-reporting arrangements. Corrective action has been directed, and the outstanding governance and administrative measures are being addressed.

Chairman of the ODPEM Board, Trudy Deans, stated *“Support Jamaica is an official Government of Jamaica platform. Amber provided the technology, hosting and technical support during a national emergency, but it did not receive, hold or control donated funds, nor does it own donor information. Where a gap is identified, the Board will act to correct it and strengthen the relevant systems. The migration was not completed as agreed, and we are taking immediate action to house the Government’s data. We must uphold the public’s right to transparency while ensuring that the facts are accurately represented. The people of Jamaica and our donors deserve accurate information, proper accounting and visible results. The Board’s direction is clear: complete the transfer, correct the governance gaps, manage donor information, account fully for the funds received and ensure that the generosity shown to Jamaica produces tangible and measurable benefits for the people who need them.”*

ODPEM expresses its sincere appreciation to Amber for stepping forward during an unprecedented national crisis to develop critical digital infrastructure and for continuing to provide technical support while the platform is transferred to a Government hosting environment.

Public scrutiny is essential to accountability, but it must be grounded in verified facts. Unsupported claims can unfairly damage the reputations of individuals and organisations and may discourage partners from providing urgent assistance during future national emergencies.

ODPEM remains committed to transparency, proper financial reporting, the protection of donor information and ensuring that all resources entrusted to it produce measurable benefits for the Jamaican people.

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