

**PRESS RELEASE -CONSUMER PRICE INDEX  
March 2004**

The March Consumer Price Index Bulletin released by the Statistical Institute of Jamaica reveals that the All Jamaica "All Group" Consumer Price index for March 2004 was 1820.8 percent showing an increase of 0.5 per cent over the index recorded for February 2004. The rate of inflation for the month of January was 0.8 per cent. The rate of inflation for the fiscal year was 16.8 per cent. The rate of inflation for the calendar year to date was 1.9 per cent.

A look at the three regions shows increases for 'Kingston Metropolitan Area' 0.7 per cent, 'Other Towns' 0.7 per cent and 'Rural Areas' 0.0 per cent.

For the month of March all groups recorded higher indices than in February. There was a 0.3 per cent increase in the index for the group "Food and Drink. Increases in the index for the sub-groups 'Meats, Poultry and Fish' (1.0 percent) ' Dairy Products, Oils and Fats', 'Vegetables & Fruits' and 'Other Food & Beverages' each recorded an increase of 0.6 percent. However a significant decline of 1.3 per cent in the sub-group, 'Starchy Foods' allowed this increase to be contained.

The index for the group 'Housing and Other Housing Expenses' and Household Furnishings and Furniture' increased by 1.7 per cent respectively, the main contributor to the increase in the index for the group Housing & other Housing Expenses was a 2.1 per cent increase in the sub-group 'Other Housing Expenses'.

The Consumer Price Index Bulletin - March 2004 further outlines additional information and may be obtained from the Distribution Office of the Statistical Institute of Jamaica located at 7 Cecelio Avenue, Kingston 10.