

**NEWS RELEASE**  
**EXTERNAL TRADE BULLETIN**  
**March 2008**

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The January to March 2008 External Trade Bulletin released by the Statistical Institute of Jamaica showed that Jamaica's expenditure on Merchandise imports for the first quarter of 2008 were valued at US\$1,809.6 million. This was an increase US\$312.6 million or 20.9 per cent when compared to the US\$1,497.0 million recorded for the similar period of 2007. Total exports were valued at US\$588.2 million; representing a 2.9 per cent increase above the US\$571.7 recorded January to March 2007. At the end of the review period, the trade deficit stood at US\$1,221.4 million, representing an increase of US\$296.1 million or 32.0 per cent.

"Mineral Fuels, etcetera" was the largest commodity group imported during the three month review period and was valued at US\$644.5 million or 35.6 per cent of the country's total import bill. When compared to the US\$407.1 million recorded for the similar 2007 period, the imports of 'Mineral Fuels, etcetera' increased by US\$237.4 million or 58.3 per cent due to rising oil prices. "Machinery and Transport Equipment" was the second largest group imported and was valued at US\$306.9 million. Compared to the US\$326.1 million recorded for the previous year, this commodity group declined by US\$19.1 million or 5.9 per cent. "Chemicals" were valued at US\$214.1 million increasing by US\$29.4 million or 16.0 per cent. "Manufactured Goods" amounted to US\$210.6, an increase of US\$38.9 million or 22.6 per cent. "Food" imports were valued at US\$205.7 million, increasing by 23.5 million in comparison to the US\$182.2 million earned for the period January to March 2007.

**Domestic Exports** for the first quarter of 2008 earned US\$575.0 million, increasing by 3.0 per cent above the US\$558.5 million earned in the first quarter of 2007. Exports of 'Mineral Fuels, etcetera' grew by US\$48.5 million or 70.2 per cent above the comparable period. Re-exports for the period were valued at US\$13.1 million, representing a marginal decline when compared to the US\$13.2 million recorded for the period January to March 2007.

**Traditional domestic exports** were valued at US\$388.9 million increasing by US\$1.6 million or 0.4 per cent. Non-traditional domestic exports for the review period were valued at US\$186.2 million, growing by US\$14.9 million or 8.7 per cent.

Imports from our **CARICOM** partners during the first quarter of 2008 was valued at US\$362.2 million increasing by US\$111.5 million or 44.4 per cent. Imports of 'Mineral Fuels, etcetera' amounted to US\$303.3 million and accounted for 83.7 per cent of total imports from CARICOM. Total exports amounted to US\$15.5 million, compared to the US\$14.7 million earned in the comparable 2007 period. The trade deficit at the end of the period was US\$346.7 million widening the trade gap by US\$110.6 million or 46.9 per cent.

The January to March 2008 External Trade Bulletin outlines additional information and may be obtained at our Distribution Office, 7 Cecelio Avenue Kingston 10. Data is also available on the STATIN website at [www.statinja.com](http://www.statinja.com).