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# Jamaica Prime Minister Calling on Residents Not to Panic Buy

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Jamaica Prime Minister Andrew Holness in imploring Jamaicans not to embark on panic buying.

According to Jamaica's government-run new service, speaking at Progressive Grocers' 20th Anniversary Banquet at The Jamaica Pegasus hotel in New Kingston on Monday, just hours before Jamaica confirmed its first case of COVID-19, Mr. Holness said he has been assured by players in the retail industry that there will be an adequate amount of supplies available and that prices will remain stable.

"Many of you would be seeing videos circulating of panic buying and empty shelves. I want to take this opportunity to say to our Jamaican consumers, that there should be no need for panic buying," he said.

He said that in the current situation where there is a global threat that could disrupt supply chains, retailers and suppliers in the distributive network have a critical role to play in ensuring general stability in the economy.

“It is important that we recognise the critical role that the distributive trade will play in any disruptive crisis that may affect Jamaica, in ensuring that all hotels are stocked, and that our consumers can get access to critical supplies,” he noted.

Prime Minister Holness urged stakeholders in the retail industry to ensure that they have embarked on “forward planning” and “pre-positioning” and have put plans in place to have the necessary supplies in reach of the island, should the situation escalate.

“I’m certain that we have the suppliers who are thinking in that light to ensure that there is no disruption or minimum disruption in Jamaica as it relates to our supply trade,” he said.

In the meanwhile, the Prime Minister congratulated Progressive Grocers on its 20th anniversary milestone, while lauding the entrepreneurial spirit and innovation of the founding members and directors.

“The growth of Progressive Grocers has been fueled by a customer value proposition based on providing high-quality products at reasonable prices, and superior customer service. This ethos is one that all businesses can emulate,” he added.

Managing Director of Progressive Grocers, Sing Chin, for his part, thanked all its suppliers and customers for their continued support, while hailing the team of workers for their focus and dedication.

Mr. Chin said the company is ready and poised for even more success, and is looking to double capacity in the next 10 years.

“This should tell you how confident we are, not just in our collective ability but also in this country,” he said.

“We want to be the supermarket of choice through quality products, superior customer service, total value, and ensuring security for our employees and contribute to the community in which we serve,” he added.

Progressive Grocers, which was formed by a group of businessmen in 1999, is the leading supermarket chain in the country. It owns and operates 22 supermarkets and is affiliated to seven others.

The supermarket chain employs 18,000 individuals islandwide.