



To: All News Editors

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## **NWC REMINDS CUSTOMERS TO STORE WATER FOR THE HURRICANE SEASON**

The 2011 Atlantic Hurricane Season has officially commenced with moderate to heavy rainfall already pelting the entire island. As Jamaica's primary provider of water and wastewater services, the National Water Commission (NWC), is at this time reminding its customers of the vulnerability of its systems to extreme weather conditions, the ease with which its services may be disrupted as a result of adverse weather conditions and the need to make appropriate arrangements for water storage as a critical part of their preparations for the Season.

According to Corporate Public Relations Manager at the utility, Charles Buchanan, NWC urges all its customers to follow the advice of the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM) and store as much water as possible to last at least 7 days for every member of the household.

The Corporate Public Relations Manager says, "The NWC is doing its best but everyone has a responsibility to do his part and be prepared by storing potable water for an emergency. There is no such thing as a 'hurricane-proof' water system anywhere in the world and some countries actually require, by law, that householders do personal water storage. We are simply asking that persons do the right thing, prepare for the hurricane season and store water," Mr. Buchanan said.

Pointing to the vulnerability of its water systems to storms and hurricanes, Charles

Buchanan says many of the 460 water supply systems across the island, of necessity, have intakes in riverbeds and are susceptible to turbidity, flood damage and blockages; of the other systems, wells are often located in low lying plains and are susceptible to flooding; most systems are heavily dependent on National Power Grid for operations; more than 9,000 kilometres of undulating pipeline are susceptible to landslides, pipeline dislocation and breakages; water sources are at risk of contamination and muddy inflows (high turbidity) after heavy rainfall; and most water systems are at least partly situated in very remote areas that are difficult to access.

"Within the limitation of our available resources, the NWC has already taken several steps to prepare for this Hurricane Season, and has taken into consideration both the best practices within the water industry worldwide and the cumulative experiences of our employees in preparing our particular systems to operate as much as possible during the current hurricane season", says Corporate Public Relations Manager Charles Buchanan.

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