

B/W. Miller of Portia

# All set for Portia

Colourful inauguration  
ceremony on at King's House



SIMPSON MILLER... being sworn in as prime minister for second time

BY HG HELPS  
Editor-at-Large  
helpsh@jamaicaobserver.com

**P**ORTIA Simpson Miller takes the Oath of Office as prime minister of Jamaica in a ceremony at King's House — the governor general's residence — later today, faced with a tough economy that will need immediate attention, those close to her have admitted.

Simpson Miller will be taking her second Oath of Office as the island's most senior political official in almost six years, after she became the first woman prime minister in Jamaica's history on March 30, 2006. She served until September 3, 2007, when the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) won the general election.

Simpson Miller led her People's National

Party (PNP) to a crushing victory by 42 seats to 21 over the Andrew Holness-led JLP in the general election of December 29 last year.

The ceremony, set to begin at 4 o'clock, is expected to last an hour and 15 minutes, according to Inauguration Committee Chairman Phillip Paulwell.

Paulwell told journalists at a news conference at the PNP's headquarters in Kingston yesterday that the ceremony, at which horns and other noise-making items are not allowed, is budgeted to cost \$3.3 million.

The original budget for the inauguration that was being arranged

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## 10,000 guests invited to Portia's swearing-in ceremony

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by another committee, Paulwell said, was \$4.2 million, adding that Simpson Miller wanted it cut to \$2.9 million, before agreeing to \$3.3 million.

"There are two themes for the inauguration, sobriety and national unity," Paulwell said.

"We are going to be insisting on order and discipline," he said, adding that plans were well advanced for a successful event.

Several officials from the Caribbean Community (Caricom), an eight-man delegation from Socialist Cuba headed by a vice-president, a six-member team from the Cayman Islands, led by premier McKeeva Bush, as well as prime ministers from the region, are due to attend.

Representatives from the Diaspora, officials of the United States Congress, and members of the local business, political, academic and other communities are also numbered in the

10,000 guests invited.

Simpson Miller is expected to start making members of her Cabinet public by Friday, according to chairman of the transition committee, Dr Omar Davies.

"The PM-elect is far advanced in terms of the structure of government and several critical factors must be taken into account when making these decisions.

"By tomorrow we will be able to be more definitive. There will be, at the minimum, the swearing in of a few critical positions on Friday. The prime minister-elect is looking to complete the full package, so that we can have a full swearing in by Friday. We are on target to have a fully functional government up and running by next week," Dr Davies said.

Dr Davies, minister of finance and planning in the last PNP administration, said that if he had a choice in getting his wish of a Cabinet appointment, he would go for an extraordinary post.

"I can tell you what my request of the prime minister would be ... I would like to be in charge of public cleansing," Dr Davies said, referring not to garbage collection, but corruption in the public service.

Simpson Miller, 66, is expected to deal specifically with matters related to an agreement with the International Monetary Fund within days of her inauguration.

The 'ghost-like' Stand-by Agreement with the IMF has been shrouded in secrecy and mystery since the early part of 2011, with former finance minister Audley Shaw giving little detail about the programme under which Jamaica is seeking to borrow US\$2.7 billion from the multilateral lending agency.

Other pressing issues, like the PNP's highly touted Jamaica Emergency Employment, Programme (JEEP), the rolling back of general consumption tax on electricity, achieving short-term and long-term economic growth, reducing crime, addressing unemployment, and improving the island's physical infrastructure will also be high on the 'to do' list of the new administration, the PNP said.