

‘Little Island, big Waves’

Jamaicans in Germany to mark 50th anniversary of Independence

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MUNICH, Germany — Jamaicans from across Germany met in Berlin recently to set in motion plans to mark the island’s 50th anniversary of political Independence from Britain to be celebrated next year.

Led by Jamaica’s Ambassador to Germany Joy Wheeler, the Germaicans, as they often refer to themselves, also used the occasion to lay out plans to commemorate 50 years of diplomatic relations between Jamaica and that European country.

They came from Munich in the south to Hamburg in the north. But one couple made their way from Austria to ensure that the wider DACH (Germany, Austria & Switzerland) area was also represented at what was a rare gathering of its kind.

After the welcome formalities and pleasantries, Jamaica's attaché for tourism and culture, Patricia Samuels highlighted some of the work that the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) had been undertaking to promote Jamaica as a tourist destination not only in Germany, but also in Europe in general.

Samuels announced the addition of another direct flight per week from Frankfurt to Montego Bay by the carrier Condor, which brings to two the weekly number of direct flights from Germany to Jamaica by that airline. In addition, Air Berlin operates a once weekly direct flight from Germany to Montego Bay.

She said that among emerging nontraditional markets for Jamaica were Russia, Poland and the Czech Republic, and talks were underway with travel operators to secure weekly direct flights from both Poland and the Czech Republic to Montego Bay, starting as soon as the next fiscal year.

Ambassador Wheeler led the discussions on the 50th anniversary celebrations and revealed a special logo for the event. The meeting agreed on several activities including a launch ceremony in January 2012, under the theme “Little Island, big Waves”.

This will take place in the form of a reception, to be attended by the diplomatic community, government representatives, and the Jamaican Diaspora in Germany. It will feature live musical performance by a top second-generation Jamaican singer not yet named. At this event the 50th Independence logo will be publicly unveiled.

The Germaicans will piggy-back on the Berlinale — Berlin International Film Festival — which will take place in February 2012, to present several films/documentaries highlighting Jamaica's journey and achievement over the past years will be shown. This could include recently made movies as well as some now regarded as familiar classics.

The activities will also seek to honour Jamaica's contribution to and achievements in sports, including a sports forum to be held shortly after the Boys & Girls Championships in Jamaica, which takes place in March and before the 2012 Summer Olympic Games slated to take place in London.

At least one outstanding Jamaican who has made a major contribution to Jamaican sports over <http://activepaper.olivesoftware.com/Default/Scripting/ArticleWin.asp?From=Archive&Source=Page&kin=JObserver&BaseHref=JMO%2F2011%2F11%2F24&ViewMode=HTML&PageLabel=4&EntityId=Ar00500&AppName=1>

the year will be honoured at this event, and participants will include Jamaican sport enthusiasts who have documented Jamaica's past achievement in sports.

The highlight of the celebrations will be the staging of a Grand Charity Ball during the summer — possibly on Independence day, featuring a (Jamaican) live band playing popular Jamaican dance rhythms. Proceeds from this charity event will go to two selected charities; one in Jamaica and the other in Germany.

In addition to the events to be spearheaded by the Jamaican Embassy in Berlin, discussions are also taking place with the possibility of other events to be planned by consulates and other representatives of the various regions in Germany, as well as in the other 30-something territories throughout Europe which are covered by the Jamaican Embassy.

It would not be a Jamaican event, if there were not more than enough to eat. At the end of the meeting, attendees were offered a standing buffet with an assortment of treats, ranging from barbecued chicken wings to a variety of tasty Jamaican cakes.

Notably present were Nicole Haughton, recently appointed attaché for airline liaison and Denise Sealy, counsellor from the Jamaican Embassy, as well as vice-president George Llewellyn and adviser Karl-Olaf Kaiser from the German Jamaican Society (Deutsch-Jamaikanische Gesellschaft, eV).



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