



GOVERNMENT OF JAMAICA



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**Building Back Better from the Coronavirus Disease (COVID 19) while Advancing the
Full Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

MAIN MESSAGES

May 3, 2022

PREAMBLE

Jamaica's presentation of its second Voluntary National Review in 2022 reflects continued commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Vision 2030 Jamaica – National Development Plan (NDP). The national development planning framework, implemented through successive 3-year Medium Term Socioeconomic Policy Frameworks (MTFs), is strategy-based and policy-driven and employs an integrated evidence- and results-based management approach that informs institutional processes and partnerships. In 2021, the SDGs were over 95 percent aligned with Vision 2030 Jamaica.

PEOPLE

Rates of poverty and extreme poverty have trended downward, post Agenda 2030 to 11.0 percent in 2019, which is attributed mainly to key social interventions, increased remittance flows and declines in unemployment.

Threats to food security include climate change impacts and a decrease in agricultural production due to inward migration. During the Pandemic, food shortages were reported among families, more so, among female headed households. The health sector has expanded the promotion of wellness, however challenges remain. The reduction in communicable diseases including HIV AIDS and NCDs which remain a leading cause of death, have been prioritized. Sustainable health financing is required to improve service delivery and respond to challenges.

The government allocates one of the largest shares of its budget to the education sector, signalling commitment to building human capital. There is equal access to education for both sexes, however within the 17 to 24 age cohort, females were more likely to be enrolled in school and programmes targeting unattached youth. At the tertiary level, males, persons from the poorest quintiles and from rural areas are underrepresented. There is need to address challenges in education for children with special needs.

Overall, the measurement of gender development indicates medium to high equality in achievement between sexes. Progress on gender equality requires more attention to gender mainstreaming and data to measure progress and research on root causes of inequality. The development of a multidimensional poverty index is underway to improve targeting of interventions and address group-based inequalities.

Jamaica remains committed to leaving no-one behind, and through policy, legislation and programming, prioritizes the most vulnerable.

PLANET

In 2020, Jamaica updated its Nationally Determined Contributions with more ambitious emissions reduction targets and a broader sector scope. Jamaica also surpassed the 2020 targets of SDG 14 for conserved marine areas, introduced new legislation for forest management and control of invasive species and increased forest areas under protection. The country continues to build adaptive capacity for climate action and resilience. Challenges remain in the pace of reduction in fossil fuels use and the flow of financing to propel the move to renewables.

PROSPERITY

Prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic, positive trends were observed in key economic indicators, of note, unemployment and debt, which reached historic lows. The Pandemic intensified longstanding threats to development: low levels of training among the labour force, lack of diversification, underemployment, as well as high levels of informality.

PEACE

Safety and access to justice has been prioritized through a combination of measures to improve safety and access to justice. Enacting legislation, social interventions, capacity building in the security and justice sector, and promoting equal access to justice have been among the priorities advanced.

PARTNERSHIPS

Financing for development remains a challenge, with limited fiscal space to support key development priorities. Innovative financing mechanisms have been pursued, including efforts to channel private financing to national development priorities and the SDGs, and improving efficiencies in the use of domestic financing. The domestic financing framework is also being strengthened through the phased implementation of the Results Based Budgeting Programme and the planned costing of the MTF for more effective resource allocation.

International development partners have been consistent in supporting advances in key sectors. Further interest for SIDs and MICs include addressing country eligibility for access to concessional financing, supporting universal social protection and decent work as well as investing in global digital cooperation and connectivity to close the digital divide.

As we recover from COVID-19, Jamaica's focus remains on improving the livelihoods of citizens through sustainable, inclusive approaches to development and solidifying the country's reputation as a key international partner.