



**PERMANENT MISSION OF JAMAICA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**PRESENTATION BY**

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**OF**

**JAMAICA'S VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW (VNR)**

**AT**

**THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM  
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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## **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen**

Jamaica is pleased to present its first Voluntary National Review Report on its efforts to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda. We represent a dynamic nation, populated by a people of great resilience. We are fully committed to realising the Jamaica we want by 2030, leaving no one behind. The journey is filled with challenges but we are inspired by the profound statement of one of our national heroes, Marcus Garvey that **“Progress is the attraction that moves humanity”**.

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The successful implementation of the SDGs requires long term planning, within the framework of development strategies that supersede the finite cycle of political regimes. In 2009, we created our National Development Plan, Vision 2030 Jamaica, an insightful, strategic and practical roadmap, designed to make *Jamaica the place of choice, to live, work, raise families and do business*. Like the 2030 Agenda, Vision 2030 Jamaica reflects the three (3) dimensions of sustainable development, and is built on four (4) goals:

1. Empowerment of Jamaicans to achieve their fullest potential
2. Creation of a secure, cohesive and just Jamaican society
3. Development of a prosperous Jamaican economy
4. Promotion of a healthy, natural environment

Vision 2030 Jamaica, therefore, serves as the axis around which implementation of the 2030 Agenda is organized. In fact, the Medium Term Socio-Economic Policy Framework (MTF), which is reviewed in three year cycles and through which Vision 2030 Jamaica is implemented, is fully aligned with Agenda 2030. The UNDP Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support Assessment (MAPS) recognizes a 91 per cent alignment between Jamaica’s national planning frameworks and the SDGs. Therefore, by implementing the priorities set out in the MTF, we will simultaneously be implementing Agenda 2030.

Jamaica has been formulating policies and implementing programmes and projects in an integrated and cross-cutting manner. This calls for not only a whole-of-government but also a whole-of society approach. The establishment and composition of a National 2030 Agenda Oversight Committee is reflective of our multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach to the delivery of the SDGs, in particular the youth, who play a critical role as custodians of Vision 2030 Jamaica and the SDGs. We will continue to focus on harnessing the demographic dividend to invest in young people. Thematic Working Groups, which guide the implementation of Vision 2030 Jamaica, also reflect the whole-of-society approach to the attainment of sustainable development for all.

We also believe that the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda and our own Vision 2030 Jamaica calls for a process of accountability for goals and targets, by Government as well as all the people - including children and youth.

Undoubtedly, we have made commendable strides in the country’s implementation of both Vision 2030 Jamaica and Agenda 2030. A summary of the progress made under the framework

of national outcome indicators and targets for Vision 2030 Jamaica, shows that at the end of 2017, 67.2 per cent of the total indicators have shown improvement over the baseline year 2007.

As a Small Island Developing State, however, we are still faced with significant challenges, given our economic, environmental and social vulnerabilities, narrow natural resource base and limited institutional capacity. Additionally, we are frequently adversely impacted by extreme weather events, which severely retard our development prospects.

Development financing also remains a major challenge for Jamaica. We are burdened by a high debt to GDP ratio and our designation as an upper middle income country has precluded us from receiving certain types of aid and concessionary financing for development programmes. In particular, access to financial solutions for climate disaster risks is of critical importance, given our vulnerabilities as a SIDS.

Although the Addis Ababa Action Agenda provides the framework for financing Agenda 2030, we grapple with identifying practical ways to mobilize resources to drive our ambitious sustainable development agenda. Jamaica, through its engagement with the Group of Friends for SDGs Financing, has been seeking to mobilize institutional capital from the private sector for various priority projects. Strategic resource mobilisation is, therefore, required towards the identification of new, non-traditional and innovative financing modalities.

We remain concerned about inadequate access to high quality data, which is a critical requirement for making Agenda 2030 a reality. We cannot overstate, therefore, the importance of capacity building to support the strengthening of data systems and producing high-quality disaggregated data. We recognize that the development agenda is complex and requires coordination among public and private sectors, international development partner community as well as also coordination with civil society organizations and other major groups.

#### **Dr. Wayne Henry intervenes....**

In partnership with the UNDP, we developed a Roadmap for implementation of the SDGs in Jamaica. The roadmap articulates key issues utilising the MAPS tool. A key element of the Roadmap is our prioritization of transformative actions that can simultaneously drive progress across multiple goals and targets, through a set of accelerators. These include:

- Social protection outreach to those furthest behind;
- Multidisciplinary efforts to tackle the drivers of NCDs;
- Strengthening the effectiveness of the judicial system;
- Violence prevention programmes;
- Building disaster risk resilience; and
- Advancing the development of the blue and green economy.

We can already report many successes, including macroeconomic stability; sustained improvement in labour market outcomes; greater social inclusion; and strengthened inter-sectoral linkages. However, in planning for the medium term, of special concern to Jamaica is the potential impact of hazard events, having regard to dislocation of population, disruption of livelihoods, and damage and losses, which have historically been equivalent to 1-2% of GDP per

annum. We have come to realize, therefore, that our climate must be more deliberately factored across all dimensions of sustainable development planning.

Jamaica also recognises that critical to the advancement of the national development agenda is the promotion of increased institutional coordination at the national and sub-national levels for policy coherence, coupled with targeted communication and advocacy, particularly for vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, the elderly and women and children. We are committed to ensuring that no one is left behind.

Over the next three years, therefore, some of the transformational programmes and projects that Jamaica will implement as key components of our medium term framework are to:

1. Develop an innovative National Spatial Plan to ensure the optimal use of the nation's land and marine resources and outline the framework for their effective use and management, along with addressing issues regarding climate change and advancing the blue economy;
2. Improve risk identification and a reduction in vulnerability in eight coastal communities;
3. Strengthen our Fiscal Responsibility Framework to secure gains already achieved through economic reform and fiscal discipline;
4. Establish science and technology parks as a critical nexus between business and science;
5. Enhance the capacity of communities to participate in creating a safe and secure society; and
6. Implement the National Financial Inclusion Strategy to increase the access, knowledge and usage of financial services to the underserved population.

The implementation of these priorities by the Government of Jamaica will require the continued support of key local and global partners, which will be critical to the achievement of stronger and more inclusive growth. Jamaica remains committed to leading the charge to advance Vision 2030 Jamaica and Agenda 2030, and welcomes the support of partners in our quest to achieve the **Jamaica We All Want**.

#### **Ms Delatie-Budair intervenes...**

We welcome the fact that the 2030 Agenda has reignited the discussion on the importance of data. It has reinforced the fact that official statistics are vital to analysis, proper planning and decision making. It also reinforces the importance of all members of the National Statistics System (NSS) working together in a cohesive way to produce high quality statistics to monitor progress towards achieving the **Jamaica We Want**. Recognizing this, the Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN) is championing the requisite legislative and institutional reforms to improve coordination for the production of official statistics.

In preparation for this review, baseline indicators on the SDGs were produced and are presented in our Statistical Annex. We are proud to announce that Jamaica's NSS was able to produce approximately 49% of the indicators, as defined by the IAEG-SDGs, including 12% proxies. This is above the sub-regional average and exceeds our expectations of 30% based on our 2016 assessment.

Many of the indicators provided have also been disaggregated, and efforts are ongoing to improve the disaggregation having regard, in particular, to the situation of the most vulnerable in our society. This baseline report also features geospatial information, and includes the use of advance techniques and technologies for data-gathering such as satellite imagery, administrative data, and small area estimation.

There is, however, a lot more to be done to improve official statistics in Jamaica. The greatest paucity of indicators exist in the domain of environmental statistics. In other domains, some indicators are dated and several key surveys have not been conducted in recent years, due to lack of funding. Additionally, as our population ages, there is need to rebuild and sustain institutional knowledge through training and capacity building for young statisticians.

As we look ahead, with the support of national and international partners, Jamaica's National Statistical System will continue to be guided by the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics that are essential to effectively inform policy and decision making.

#### **Minister Charles' Concluding Remarks ...**

We reiterate the call for the international community to create an enabling environment at all levels to support this sustainability agenda in the true spirit of global partnership. These partnerships require appropriate technology transfer and innovation, capacity building, exchange of best practice, as well as access to adequate, affordable and appropriately designed financing. We also call on members of the international community to ensure that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is supported in its entirety.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, my country is firmly committed to advancing this shared global agenda to contribute to a better world – one in which there is peace, equity, prosperity, partnership and, importantly, a healthy natural environment. Jamaica has begun the journey with the commitment of leaving no one behind as we go for the Goals!

I thank you.