



**TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**NATIONAL STATEMENT BY**

**HIS EXCELLENCY  
THE MOST HONOURABLE DR ANDREW HOLNESS  
PRIME MINISTER OF JAMAICA**

**AT THE**

**GENERAL DEBATE  
of the  
80<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**26 September 2025**

***Madam President, Excellencies,***

On behalf of the Government and people of Jamaica, I extend warm congratulations to you, Madam President, on your election to preside over this landmark 80th session of the General Assembly. Your leadership comes at a pivotal moment, and Jamaica pledges its full support as we navigate the critical challenges of our time.

I also wish to commend your predecessor and Secretary-General Guterres for their steadfast commitment to multilateralism in changing times.

### **The UN at 80**

Just last week, Jamaica marked 63 years as a proud member of the United Nations. As we celebrate the UNs' 80th anniversary, we reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the principles of the UN Charter.

From decolonization to peacekeeping, from eradicating diseases to promoting human rights, the UN has achieved remarkable successes over the past eight decades.

Yet, as we confront global challenges including pandemics, climate change, armed conflict, and persistent poverty, we must

acknowledge that our multilateral system requires urgent reform and revitalisation to meet the needs of the 21st century.

The UN80 Initiative is an opportunity to strengthen multilateralism with concrete action, institutional reform, and renewed political will. We must build a system that is more democratic, representative, and responsive to evolving challenges.

Jamaica is honoured that our Permanent Representative is co-chairing the Working Group on UN80 Mandate Implementation Review, along with the Permanent Representative of New Zealand, and we look forward to meaningful outcomes.

***Madam President,***

Jamaica believes in a future where multilateralism works for all, where no country is too small to be heard, where the concerns of Small Islands facing rising seas are addressed, where the benefits of globalisation are equitably shared, and where

international cooperation is based on respect for the sovereignty of each nation.

### **Climate Resilience**

**Madam President,** Climate Change is not a distant threat. It is a daily reality for Small Island Developing States like Jamaica. Frequent hurricanes, droughts, and erratic rainfall destroy infrastructure, displace communities, and set back decades of hard-won progress.

Jamaica has demonstrated unwavering leadership in climate action despite our limited resources. We have committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 and have implemented our National Adaptation Plan with specific measures to build resilience across key sectors and we are on track to achieve our renewable energy target of 50% by 2030.

However, our efforts, and those of other SIDS, are severely constrained by the lack of predictable and accessible finance. The promise of \$100 billion annually remains unfulfilled. The Loss and Damage Fund established at COP28 was historic, yet its initial capitalization of \$800 million is grossly inadequate. Developed countries must honour their commitments and scale up climate

finance, recognising that adaptation is a necessity for the survival of SIDS.

International financial institutions must integrate climate risk into lending decisions and develop new financing instruments to address climate vulnerability. The Seville Commitment offers a roadmap for transforming the global financial architecture to support climate action and sustainable development.

### **Financing for Development**

The global financing system remains fundamentally flawed. It penalises reforming economies like Jamaica with high borrowing costs while ignoring our vulnerabilities.

Through sacrifice, discipline, and sound management, Jamaica has reduced its debt-to-GDP ratio from 144% to now 62%. Yet we remain locked out of concessional financing because of outdated metrics based solely on per-capita income.

Jamaica supports the application of the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index that more accurately assesses countries' development needs and their eligibility for concessional financing.

Jamaica also strongly supports innovative financing mechanisms, including debt-for-climate swaps, debt-for-nature swaps, and blended finance instruments that can unlock private sector investment in sustainable development projects while reducing debt burdens. We welcome initiatives such as the IMF's Resilience and Sustainability Trust and call for its expansion to support more countries in building climate resilience.

### **Cuba Embargo**

Madam President, multilateralism must deliver fairness for all. Jamaica continues to believe that constructive dialogue and engagement offer the best path forward for the people of Cuba to fully participate in the global economy. We encourage continued domestic reform in Cuba and greater integration into international systems, supported by policies that enable progress rather than isolation.

### **Situation in the Middle East**

***Madam President,***

Jamaica once again condemns the heinous October 7, 2023 attack on Israel and deeply regrets the devastating humanitarian consequences of the counter-offensive in the Palestinian

territories. A just and peaceful resolution to the conflict is only possible through diplomacy and dialogue.

We continue to support United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 and support the call for a ceasefire agreement that includes the release of all remaining hostages and definitively ends the protracted war and human suffering.

## **Haiti**

### ***Madam President,***

Political instability, gang violence, and humanitarian crises in Haiti, affect not only the Haitian people, but the entire region.

As current Chair of CARICOM, Jamaica has led and participated in efforts to restore peace and constitutional order in Haiti. Last year, we welcomed, and participated in, the deployment of the Multinational Security Support Mission (MSS) to Haiti, and we commend Kenya's leadership in this initiative.

The security situation remains dire. As we contemplate next steps, we urge Member States, especially those in the Security Council, to operationalise the recommendations made by the

Secretary General for a transition to a more robust hybrid mechanism to deal with the situation in Haiti.

We call on Member States to provide the necessary financial and logistical support to ensure the success of this initiative. The cost of doing nothing would be unthinkable.

But security operations alone will not suffice. Haiti's governance deficits and fragile institutional framework must be addressed. Once stability is restored, the international community must help rebuild democratic institutions, ensure free and fair elections, expand humanitarian relief, and invest in infrastructure to support long-term stability. Haiti's recovery requires sustained global support.

### **Transnational crime**

#### ***Madam President,***

The Haitian crisis has laid bare a wider truth: transnational criminal networks trafficking arms, narcotics, and people are existential threats to states; organizing violence, and destabilizing institutions. Gangs are now global syndicates with resources that rival Nation States.

Jamaica has made significant progress in tackling gangs and reducing our homicide rate by more than 50% in recent years. But we know that unless these networks are totally dismantled, our gains remain fragile. This is why we call for nothing less than a **Global War on Gangs**—a coordinated international campaign to cut off the flow of weapons, money, and influence that sustain them.

This requires deeper engagement from all Member States. We urge full implementation of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the International Tracing Instrument. Major arms-exporting countries must tighten export controls, strengthen end-use monitoring, and ensure rigorous post-delivery verification.

Equally, Member States in our region and beyond must commit to intelligence sharing, joint operations, and technical assistance for law enforcement, border security, and port control.

The Caribbean has created regional security mechanisms, but these efforts alone cannot match the scale of the threat. What is needed is a united front, with the same urgency, resources, and

coordination the world has applied to terrorism. Only then can we turn the Caribbean—and indeed the wider region—into a true Zone of Peace.

## **Conclusion**

Madam President,

At this 80th session, let us revitalise multilateralism and recommit to building a more resilient, equitable, and sustainable world. The challenges before us — climate change, debt, poverty, conflict, and crime — are formidable. But our capacity for collective action is greater.

Jamaica has shown that with sound policies, fiscal discipline, and good governance, small nations can achieve great progress. But to build on this progress, we need an international system that is fair, inclusive, and responsive.

The world is watching us. Future generations are counting on us. And History will judge us.

Let us not leave this Assembly with words alone, but with commitments that deliver real change.

Jamaica stands ready to work with all Member States in partnership and solidarity to create a future defined by peace, prosperity, and dignity for all.

Thank you, Madam President.