



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

STATEMENT

BY

**MS. ALLELE REID
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAMAICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**ON THE OCCASION OF
THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE WFUNA (WORLD FEDERATION OF
THE UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATIONS) INTERNATIONAL MODEL UN
CONFERENCE 2026**

**UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK
MONDAY, 9TH FEBRUARY 2026**

Mr. Secretary General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour to join you this afternoon for the convening of the 2026 WIMUN conference. This year's conference marks a significant milestone, with the largest number of delegates participating since its inception. This shows the growing interest of young people in multilateralism and is a positive and welcome signal.

Multilateralism faces immense strain in today's world, with greater fragmentation and division being seen between and among States. Yet, there is no better time than now to fully champion the principles of the United Nations, as we try to solve some of the most complex issues of our time.

Over the next few days, you will participate in a series of negotiations on critical issues that the United Nations is currently seized with, including decent work, digital health, global peace and security, climate change, youth engagement, and the rule of law. As you participate in these simulations, you will begin to understand in greater detail how these issues affect our world today, and how multilateralism is striving to address them. I urge you to make full use of this opportunity and to look from a wider lens at just how integral international cooperation is in resolving these persistent global challenges.

Excellencies,

Your participation in the Conference this year is timely and should inspire you to contemplate how multilateralism can be further strengthened. Just last September, the United Nations commemorated 80 years since the

signing of the UN Charter. This milestone provided a moment of reflection for the Organization; one in which the many successes since 1945 were acknowledged, but also one that considered what a future UN ought to look like and what it should deliver for the people of the world.

Though we can celebrate many successes of the UN, including the lifesaving humanitarian support that has been provided to millions of people across the globe and the numerous Declarations and International Conventions that have facilitated cooperation among States, there is no doubt that the UN is in need of renewal and structural changes to improve its effectiveness and efficiency.

This acknowledgement has prompted the initiation of the UN's most comprehensive reform process to date - the UN80 Initiative. This initiative provides an opportunity to refresh, reenergize and improve the Organization by reducing duplication, removing unnecessary bureaucracy and making the UN more fit for purpose for the long term.

Jamaica currently serves as one of the co-chairs of the informal ad hoc working group on mandate implementation review, alongside New Zealand - the second of three workstreams of the UN80 initiative. This workstream seeks to assess and improve the system of mandate creation, review and implementation, ensuring that mandates given to the Organization are relevant, effective and actionable. Through the ongoing work of the various workstreams of the Initiative, Member States hope to put the Organization in

a better position to deliver the best possible outcomes for the people we serve.

Excellencies,

There is no doubt that there is uncertainty around the state of multilateralism today. We see time and time again how the system is undermined and how it fails to deliver for the most vulnerable. It is easy to give up hope and to adopt the view that the system is not working in its current form, and should therefore be discarded. However, I implore you to make a critical assessment before resigning to this position and to further contemplate the political dynamics which often restrain the UN in its functioning.

Despite its challenges, the UN's role in preserving international peace and security, upholding human rights, and promoting development is indispensable. There is no other body where all 193 Member States are represented and are able to listen to each other, share their views and seek to collaborate on a multitude of issues. No other institution has such convening power and allows all countries of the world to have an equal voice on international issues, irrespective of size or military power. We must seek to preserve and improve the most representative international body that exists today.

As the world faces increasingly complex threats, Member States must cooperate in order to effectively address them. No one country can insulate

itself from the impacts of climate change, cybersecurity threats, pandemics and wars. It is therefore our duty to find meaningful ways to confront these and other issues together.

As young people, you may be wondering *What role you can play in making the world a better place?* I urge you to continue to champion the values that millions before you fought for; those of equality, peace and justice. As agreed in the Declaration on Future Generations during the Summit of the Future in September 2024, it is the responsibility of current generations, which includes you, the youth, to protect the needs and interests of those who will follow you.

Continue to create spaces for open dialogue; let your voices be heard and listen to others. Encourage inclusiveness, cooperation and understanding. Build bridges rather than igniting division- and never underestimate the power that you hold in the decisions made by your respective governments. It is through your voices and values that government policies are formulated and ultimately taken by diplomats to the UN as national positions. As young people and global citizens, continue to advocate for change, and shape the outlook of decision makers in your various communities and countries.

As you deliberate on various issues during the next few days, I encourage you to not only familiarize yourselves with the substantive material, but also consider how the multilateral system, and particularly the UN, can be improved to better serve the citizens of this world.

In the face of new and persistent global challenges, there is need for critical thinking, strong advocacy for our shared values and a drive for improvement. The world belongs to us all, irrespective of our place of origin, social status, gender, race, religion or any other factor that seeks to differentiate us. It is our common responsibility to protect it and to make it a fair and just place for everyone.

As future Ambassadors, I call on you to carry the torch forward and to uphold the core values of this Organization. Continue to advocate for peace, human rights, justice and solidarity.

I am confident that under your stewardship, future generations will inherit a better and fairer world.

Thank you.