



PERMANENT MISSION OF  
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

**STATEMENT BY**

*His Excellency Mr. Stafford Neil  
Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the United Nations*

**TO THE 58<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE  
UNITD NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**ON**

*High Level Plenary Meetings Devoted to the Follow-up to the  
Outcome of the Twenty-Sixth Special Session:  
Implementation of the  
Declaration of the Commitment on HIV/AIDS*

New York, September 22, 2003

*[Final Text]*

Mr. President

The grave implications of the HIV/AIDS pandemic for long-term human survival and for the socio-economic development of countries all over the world require us to come together to find urgent solutions. Against this background, my delegation views with grave concern what is reflected in the Secretary General's report before us, that the financial, technical and human resources needed to fight HIV/AIDS remain below the required levels. This situation is worrying and places in jeopardy the effectiveness of national and regional efforts to combat the spread of the disease.

Mr. President,

The issue of adequate resources is critical for the expansion of access to treatment and care in developing countries, as well as the sustainability of progress achieved to date. In Jamaica, for example, the high cost of anti-retroviral drugs remains a major problem. While the Government has been able to negotiate with leading pharmaceutical companies for some reduction in the price of these drugs, the costs are still a significant problem.

We acknowledge the efforts made with respect to the establishment of the Global Fund to provide additional resources and we welcome the agreement reached within the WTO to give developing countries greater access to cheaper medicines; but much remains to be done to take the process forward. Accordingly, we underscore the need for support to be given to developing countries to effectively utilize this mechanism, so that drugs can be provided to those suffering from HIV/AIDS. We would also wish to encourage greater investment in research and development on HIV/AIDS as well as to urge greater financial support to the Global Fund.

Combatting the spread of HIV/AIDS requires a coordinated and collaborative response and Jamaica supports the strengthening of links between governments and civil society. We believe that this will facilitate and promote a multi-sectoral and participatory approach to fighting the pandemic. We acknowledge that there are challenges to attaining this objective, in light of the varying cultural and gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS. But Jamaica is confident that this kind of collaboration can provide meaningful results. One of the issues we hope it will advance is the protection of the human rights of those living with HIV/AIDS, as well as to place greater emphasis on the special needs of children orphaned by the disease.

Developing this broad based approach to HIV/AIDS has become a central feature of Jamaica's response. The National Strategic Plan for the period 2002 to 2006 has as one of its goals the development of an effective multi-sectoral response to HIV/AIDS, with special emphasis on preventive programmes which promote behavioural change and target vulnerable groups within the society, through media campaigns, educational materials and outreach programmes including the participation of persons living with HIV/AIDS. In addition, there is the HIV Mother To Child Transmission Programme currently being expanded to parishes all over the island as well as Centres providing free HIV Testing and counselling. These efforts are reinforced at the regional level within the context of the Caribbean Regional Strategic Framework, aimed at mitigating the consequences of the disease at both the national and regional level through the development of regional plans of action.

Mr. President

Jamaica will continue to make its contribution to this critical international campaign. As members of the UN, we are all charged with creating a viable future for our own and succeeding generations. Let us not falter in fulfilling this obligation.

*Permanent Mission of Jamaica to the United Nations*

*New York*

*September 22, 2003*