

Statement by

**Ambassador Raymond Wolfe, Permanent Representative
of Jamaica to the United Nations at the Ministerial
Meeting on**

**“Reducing Disaster Risks in a Changing Climate”,
29th September 2008**

Mr. Secretary-General,

- It is indeed timely and fortuitous that you should convene this meeting on "Reducing Disaster Risks in a Changing Climate". A few months ago, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) declared unequivocally that climate change, if left unchecked, could be devastating if not catastrophic over the coming decades. We are already experiencing the manifestation of this statement.
- Only a few weeks ago, Jamaica was struck by Tropical Storm Gustav which resulted in major damage to our country's infrastructure and loss of lives. Haiti, also from the Caribbean region, was also severely battered by at least four (4) hurricanes resulting in colossal damage to the fledgling economy and loss of hundreds of lives. Cuba also suffered severely from the onslaught of two (2) hurricanes.
- In the last three years alone, Jamaica and other Caribbean countries have been hit by more than five major hurricanes which have impacted adversely on the lifeblood of our economies - the agricultural and tourism sectors.
- This scenario, Mr. Secretary-General, underlines the extreme vulnerability to the impact of natural disasters that small island developing states (SIDS) like Jamaica face. The impact is felt not only in relation to our development prospects given that significant developmental gains are reversed following the passing of a single hurricane, but even to our very territorial existence. In all these instances of natural disasters, it is the poor and most vulnerable who suffer the most.
- The alarming frequency and intensity of severe weather patterns and events such as hurricanes, is but one of the debilitating effects of climate change. Efforts to reduce disaster risks will undoubtedly go a far way in addressing climate change. SIDS like Jamaica cannot be expected to undertake these efforts alone. The support of the international community is critical given the scale and magnitude of the challenges being faced.
- Within this context, Jamaica continues to support calls for major emitters of greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) to significantly reduce their emissions in keeping with the longstanding principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. Equally critical is the provision of new and additional financial resources and technology to

assist developing countries like Jamaica with adaptation as well as mitigation strategies.

- But even as we focus on the reduction of greenhouse gases, it is critically important that we also pay attention to disaster risk reduction, which must be a core element of climate change adaptation. In this regard, my delegation believes that we must ensure that in both Poznan and Copenhagen, disaster risk reduction is explicitly included in the post-2012 framework. We must recognize the linkage between adaptation, disaster risk reduction and development.
- Thank you Mr. Chairman.