



PERMANENT MISSION OF
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT

BY

**MRS. JOAN THOMAS EDWARDS
DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS DEPARTMENT
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS & FOREIGN TRADE**

IN

**THE FOURTH COMMITTEE
68TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

ON

**AGENDA ITEM 55:
*QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION***

18TH OCTOBER 2013

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Madam Chair,

My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statements previously delivered by the delegations of Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77, Cuba on behalf of CELAC, and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on behalf of CARICOM.

Jamaica commends the work of the DPI and wishes to thank Mr. Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal, Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information for his enlightening presentation to the Committee.

I now wish to add a few brief remarks in my national capacity,

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on Questions relating to Information contained in document A/68/315 that provides a synopsis of the activities of the Department of Public Information during the period February to July 2013 and the Report of the Committee on Information contained in document A/68/21.

Madam Chair,

In today's interconnected world, it is well established that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is the great equalizer. The ICT sector globally presents the greatest opportunities for job creation and income generation. The Government of Jamaica is therefore committed to improving its ICT sector and is implementing several initiatives aimed at improving training and access throughout the country. Internet access within the country is now 55%, and the island is ranked 15th among countries in the world with top broad band standards. In spite of these accomplishments, it cannot be overstated that even with access to the most sophisticated technology, one cannot capitalize on technology unless people are aware of the opportunities and have the skills needed to compete globally.

The use of technology in education therefore, is a logical starting point. Within developing countries especially, a shift in the approach to education through the use of technology will put countries at a technologically competitive advantage and significantly narrow the digital divide between developed and developing countries. In recent months the Government of Jamaica launched the School Tablet Computer programme which aims to distribute thousands of tablet computers to over thirty institutions across Jamaica. This initiative will facilitate every student and teacher of selected institutions to be equipped with a tablet free of cost.

Madam Chair,

It is in this regard that Jamaica fully supports the thrust of the United Nations in its use of ICT to share information. It is noted in the Secretary-General's Report on the Work of the Organization A/68/1 that the UN is utilizing affordable emerging technologies to facilitate information sharing, collaboration and internal communication. The use of social media is viewed as a cost effective tool for expanding the reach of the Secretariat to millions of followers and in all the official United Nations languages. Significant progress has also been made in digital dissemination of United Nations knowledge products. The organisation's use of webcasting is noteworthy in this regard.

My delegation welcomes these developments. At the same time we would wish to reiterate that there are disparities among some member states with regard to reliable access to modern, updated versions of programmes. These disparities can adversely affect their ability to access information sent from the Secretariat. Therefore, balance between the use of modern technology and traditional means of communication should always be borne in mind.

Madam Chair,

Social and development issues, peacekeeping and political matters, public and civil society outreach are all areas where the United Nations is active and making tremendous contributions to the lives of millions, yet sometimes the message is not heard. The medium of transmitting the United Nations' story is therefore essential if one is to reach a wide cross section of audiences. It is, therefore, commendable to see in the visual presentations to the Committee that the UN is fully utilizing media and music festivals as a means to disseminate its message to the world. The untold stories on UN staff in the field and the use of pop and TV icons to tell the UN's story is obviously reaching large audiences and having an impact.

Permanent Memorial

Madam Chair,

The unveiling of the winning design for the Permanent Memorial to be erected here at the United Nations in honour of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade on the 23rd September remains a precious memory to my delegation.

The Assembly has adopted, annually, a resolution on the Permanent Memorial which calls for increased focus of activities by the organization on the issue of transatlantic slavery, including the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade on March 25th. The DPI has since inception played a pivotal role in fulfilling the outreach mandate of the resolution. Jamaica is particularly pleased with the activities staged by the Department of Public Information in its promotion of the Permanent Memorial Initiative, and the series of activities organized to mark the sixth annual observance of the International Day, including the recent screening of "Akwantu: The Journey" depicting the story of the Jamaican Maroons who in the 18th Century during the struggle for freedom, triumphed over the British colonisers.

Post 2015 Consultations

Jamaica commends the work of the DPI in its messaging and outreach plans on the Millennium Development Goals and its efforts at raising awareness on the follow up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2014.

The public dialogue on the Post 2015 Development agenda is of the utmost importance to my delegation. We look forward to the DPI's continued efforts at raising awareness on the follow up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

Madam Chair,

The year 2014 will be an important year for Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Indeed the General Assembly has designated it the year of SIDS. In addition, the Third International Conference on SIDS will take place in Samoa in September 2014.

My delegation wishes to thank the DPI for the updated website that provides timely background information relevant to 2014. We would urge the DPI to work along with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, (DESA) to promote the year and assist Member States in their promotional activities at the local levels.

Jamaica welcomes the sterling work of the DPI in the redesigning and updating of the UN portal on MDGs, as well as the use of the various forms of media including social media to inform about the United Nations' work in these topical thematic issues.

The United Nations Information Centres (UNICs)

Madam Chair,

My delegation continues to underscore the importance of the United Nations Information Centres in improving understanding about the work of the United Nations. It is heartening to learn that the results of the 2012 regular surveys carried out on UNICs and their outreach activities show that 87 percent of respondents found that the activity had been more effective in improving their understanding of the United Nations. This is encouraging and signals that there is meaningful impact in the efforts of the United Nations in its public and civil society outreach.

In this regard, we note the work of the United Nations through the Resident Coordinator's Office in Kingston, Jamaica in its commemoration of International Days. Special activities on International Women's Day, World Aids Day, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and the UN model Assembly were successfully executed earlier this year.

In closing, my delegation expresses its appreciation to the Dag Hammarskjold Library for providing the online documentation system that for small missions such as Jamaica is an invaluable resource for research and ultimately to the effective functioning of the work of the Mission.

I Thank You.