



PERMANENT MISSION OF
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT BY

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TO THE

**MILLENNIUM SUMMIT OF THE
UNITED NATIONS**

New York, September 7, 2000

Your Excellencies,

- Co-Presidents of the Millennium Summit
- President Halonen and President Nujoma
- Colleague Heads of State and Government
- Secretary-General of the United Nations
- Distinguished Delegates
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

The closing decades of the 20th century have brought mankind to new horizons, extending beyond the nation state to create a wider circle of human identity and creating a new sense of global consciousness.

In earlier times, philosophers, poets and other visionaries recognized the existence of one human family.

It is a concept which our people have grown increasingly to accept.

Photographs from space, showing a single Earth suspended in space, have served dramatically to confirm the sense of one borderless world, giving a powerful stimulus to the spread of this perception of human unity and global oneness.

Acknowledgement of this reality must be the starting point of this Assembly as we mark the start of a new Millennium.

Your Excellencies,

The establishment of the United Nations was one of the principal achievements of the century and the Charter is unquestionably a landmark document, giving a clear signal in the movement to a wider, global identity.

During the 50th anniversary of the United Nations, several important contributions were made to strengthen the capacity of the world community to address the major global issues which confront us. Significant institutional reforms were proposed to strengthen multilateral cooperation so that we could conquer ills which have plagued us over many generations.

Discussions on reform were launched but enthusiasm was lacking and inertia triumphed. Reform was subverted into a crusade for downsizing and retrenchment.

And so we embark on the New Millennium with a glaring structural deficit: the absence of an Organ, comparable in standing and authority, but more representative in its composition to address major global questions in the economic domain, the social field or the environment of our planet.

This leaves a yawning gap in the institutions of global governance that we must quickly fill.

As we face the New Millennium, universal global peace and security remain under constant threat because of large-scale and persistent poverty; increasing instability in the world economy; the looming global contest between resources and consumption; the prospect of poor countries being obliged to pay for the indulgence of the rich.

Poverty remains the single greatest challenge facing mankind. Even as globalisation presents new vistas of opportunities, half of the world's peoples suffer the deprivation, despair and powerlessness of extreme poverty. We perpetuate and deepen their social exclusion while abundant wealth is created, so long as the benefits of globalisation are skewed so unfairly.

We must seize this unique moment to forge global partnerships for decisive action against poverty.

We live in a fool's paradise to think that the *status quo* can be indefinitely maintained. The challenges, indeed, are multiplying.

The poor have neither the time nor the interest to discuss the theories of economic globalisation. Even as they experience its harsh realities, the globalized media, with a vastly extended reach, now enable the poor to see how the rich actually live. They can observe that if the roads of the cities of the industrialised world are not paved with gold, they are a gateway to much greater opportunity than their present life offers.

The digital revolution is a demonstrable source of tremendous benefit to mankind. Yet information technology is dangerously poised to become the new barrier – a powerful force of exclusion in the New Millennium.

Let us exploit the digital revolution for human development, in the creation of a global knowledge-based economy. Let there be effective and meaningful collaboration among all stakeholders in the international community so that information technology can impact positively on the lives of all our people.

There must be no gender disparity in this new revolution. It must embrace our children and youth; the disabled; our rural communities and ethnic minorities. Community access is pivotal to the process of empowering the marginalized and the eradication of poverty.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The challenge that faces this Millennium Assembly is the age old one that has faced humanity at all turning points in history. Do we ignore the signals of self-destruction, or do we heed them and change course?

Indisputably, we must respond to them with the spirit of global solidarity that is essential to their fulfillment.

To do any less is to fail in our duty to our own and future generations.

And there is no better, more practical, more effective way to start than to endow the United Nations with the capacity and competence to bring that spirit of global solidarity to the fulfillment of the long stated aims and objectives of the Charter.

We must strengthen the United Nations by making it a truly democratic instrument of human progress.

Only serious and courageous action, and genuine commitment to changing the *status quo*, will be worthy of our coming together here in this commemorative session.

We must become good stewards for this and succeeding generations.

New York
September 5, 2000