



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

STATEMENT

BY

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE
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AT THE

CONFERENCE OF PRESIDING OFFICERS

OF

NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS

ON

**"PARLIAMENTARY VISION FOR
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
AT THE DAWN OF THE THIRD MILLENNIUM"**

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Madam President of IPU
Chairman of Session
Secretary-General of IPU
Colleague Parliamentarians
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great honour to be at the rostrum of this very special place at this particular time and under the aegis of the IPU.

This opportunity to join fellow parliamentarians on the eve of the UN millennial conference, to affirm and confirm our commitment to international cooperation is deeply appreciated.

Truly this is history of an exceptional kind. The legacy of the 20th Century is a paradox of promise and pain. Man's brilliance is evident everywhere, contributing to enormous good but also generating destruction and evil.

Science and technology propel space exploration while here on earth globalization and liberalization are transforming countries and entire regions. Undoubtedly the finest achievements have been the growth of new democratic governments; the restoration of democratic rule to many countries who had other forms of governance imposed on them for varying period and the further strengthening of well established democracies.

But the evidence of man's inhumanity to man is quite overwhelming. Atrocities and misery prevail, painful events are deeply etched in minds and memories and visible scars remain. Destructive imbalances, double standards and even new forms of domination have emerged.

While we applaud the fact that many more children do not go to bed hungry, live beyond their 5th birthday, are going to school, have shelter and other amenities. The millions who are still hungry, malnourished, dying or already dead from AIDS and other diseases, working children, the uneducated and untrained, the homeless, the girl child with no security of life or liberty. They all daily confront us and these intolerable situations are entirely preventable. A sizeable portion of humanity reaps **no benefit** from the acclaimed economic successes. Indeed a large number has had their painstaking efforts and hard earned successes suddenly destroyed before their very eyes.

Our women remain in drudgery, experiencing increasing violence; our men – untrained, unemployed and underemployed. Low wages offer no respite from the generational poverty cycle. Debt burden and economic underdevelopment make mendicants of those who would rather produce trade, earn and create growth. Even the finest democratic achievements reveal deficits. For though more women are in some parliaments and other positions of responsibility a considerable number are not only without but are actively denied the opportunity to be within.

Parliaments are increasingly concerned with the processes of globalization and liberalization which have already brought significant challenges to democratic regimes.

Madam President,

Democratic transformation is a journey not a final destination. It is always a work in progress requiring constant care and endeavour to make it more effective and efficient, vibrant and visible, flexible and responsive to the needs of current and future electors.

It is the evidence of maturity, stability and vitality of a people – a people who expect the fruits of democracy; a people whose expectations daily increase; a people whose patience daily decrease.

When democracies across the globe are presented with economic political and environmental situations that seem insensitive and more threatening than sustaining, then Parliaments must become very concerned and more involved.

For the forces of globalization and liberalization alter relationships within and between countries and these situations require analysis, discussion, debate, foresight and insight.

Legislation and even constitutional change are thus required to facilitate the very best outcome of globalization for us all and give our peoples security and prosperity.

The challenge which we face then is first to strengthen our national parliaments and then to contribute to the creation of an international environment which allows the global economy to flourish and benefit all of us, while guaranteeing individual rights and national sovereignty; sustaining spiritual values and those cultural practices that enhance the human condition and enabling our democratic processes and institutions to grow and develop.

We must insist that that international agencies also demonstrate the democratic ethic and moral certitude that we continually strive to attain. These objectives are within our capacity, for man has always been able and continues to make todays seeming impossible tomorrows inevitable.

This conference therefore reemphasizes the urgent parliamentary and personal wish we all must do nationally and the absolute necessity for international cooperation and collaboration to make planet earth the place we desire to live.

I thank you.