

PERMANENT MISSION OF JAMAICA

TO THE UNITED NATIONS

**Press Release**

**Jamaica Elected to Chair UN General Assembly First Committee**

Jamaica was today (June 18) elected to chair the United Nations General Assembly's Committee on Disarmament and International Security at a General Assembly meeting in New York. Ambassador Courtenay Rattray, Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the UN, was nominated by the Member States from the Latin America and the Caribbean Group (GRULAC) and elected by acclamation during today's meeting to elect the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the six main committees in which the majority of the Assembly's work will be done for the 69th Session of the General Assembly, which begins in September 2014.

The First Committee, as it is commonly known, seeks solutions to the global challenges and threats to international peace and security. It addresses a range of issues on the international agenda, including nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, strengthening international security cooperation, and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

"It is an honour for me to assume this role and for Jamaica to be able to exercise further influence over the work of the General Assembly and by extension, the UN," said Ambassador Rattray. "The nomination by GRULAC and the approval of the other 192 UN Member States is an indication of the positive regard in which Jamaica is held in the UN and by the international community." The Ambassador pledged to use all his skills and leverage Jamaica's goodwill to ensure that the First Committee successfully addresses its broad agenda of often contentious and sensitive issues.

The Permanent Mission of Jamaica in New York, in carrying out a Foreign Ministry priority of enhancing Jamaica's international image and reputation, devised a strategy to increase Jamaica's visibility in the work of the United Nations. Jamaica has a track record of positive contribution and punching above its weight, demonstrating that small countries also have much to contribute in the global community's efforts to identify, address and overcome the traditional, new and emerging challenges that confront the world.

"Despite being a small country we have given much and still have much to give," said Ambassador Rattray, referring to a number of past, ongoing and upcoming initiatives and projects. Jamaica played a leading role in negotiations for the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), is currently leading in efforts to address the threat of non-communicable diseases, as well as for the recognition of the negative effects of racism and slavery, and has nominated the well experienced international jurist, The Honourable Patrick Robinson, to serve as a judge on the International Court of Justice - the highest court in the world.

At the same meeting, Jamaica was also elected as Vice-Chair of the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee, commonly referred to as the Third Committee, which addresses human rights including those of women, children and the disabled, social development matters such as youth, family and ageing, as well as racism, criminal justice and international drug control. Mr Kurt Davis, Counsellor in the New York Mission, will represent Jamaica.

The other countries elected to chair committees were Italy (Second Committee), Timor-Leste (Third Committed), Nepal (Fourth Committee), Slovakia (Fifth Committee), and Tanzania (Sixth Committee). The General Assembly elected H.E. Sam Kutesa, Foreign Minister of Uganda, to succeed H.E. John Ashe of Antigua and Barbuda as President of the General Assembly for its 69th Session which begins on September 16.

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*Permanent Mission of Jamaica to the*

*United Nations*

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