



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

OPENING REMARKS BY

**MRS. DIEDRE MILLS
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAMAICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**AT THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR
PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT: FILM NIGHT**

**UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK
THURSDAY, 8 DECEMBER 2016**

Ms. Cristina Gallach, Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information

Ms. Marie-Paule Roudil, Director of the UNESCO, NY Office

Madam moderator and distinguished panellists,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Jamaica is excited to partner with the Department for Public Information and UNESCO to host this film night in the context of the International Decade for People of African Descent. Certainly the turnout this evening reinforces our view that this is an important occasion to consider the inter-relatedness of cultural expression, economic development, and People of African Descent. These are of great importance to Jamaica and, without hesitation, we were convinced that this was a worthy collaboration.

Jamaica played a prominent role in the General Assembly's proclamation of the International Decade for People of African Descent, and our delegation was active in negotiating the Programme of Activities, which aims to make the Decade effective. Indeed, we view the Decade not just as an opportunity to reflect on the injustices of the past and consider means of redress, important as that is, but also as a means of changing the narrative around the status and contribution of People of African Descent in today's global society. The Decade, through its Programme of Activities, provides us with a platform on which to recalibrate our perspectives and build on the efforts to further empower People of African Descent. This is in keeping with the focus of its theme – *Recognition, Justice and Development*.

I am pleased that this evening we will showcase three short films that were among the winning entries at the 2016 KingstOOn Animation Conference, which was held in March. This year marked the second edition of KingstOOn, where it was coupled with an Afrodescendant Film Festival.

KingstOOn 2016 followed three core tracks: Learn, Earn and Display. Under the Learn Track, there were workshops, seminars, master classes and sessions to provide training and skills development. The Earn Track created opportunities for

participants to earn from their engagement in animation, including by having business matchmaking and business development processes. The exhibit and Film Festival fulfilled the Display Track, allowing the works and their creators to be promoted.

The event was a notable success, with over nine hundred entries from ninety-three countries and over two thousand attendees. Our expectation is that KingstOOon will catalyse the animation industry in Jamaica, transforming it into a thriving and sustainable economic sector that will create jobs, especially for youth, and increase economic growth.

Already, we have seen evidence of its impact, with the Caribbean's regional education and examination body, the Caribbean Examination Council, coming on board and developing a syllabus for Animation and Game Design. This is being offered as a pre-tertiary course in high schools having commenced in September 2016. It is our aim that Jamaica will become not only a global cultural powerhouse, but also the animation hub of the Caribbean.

The development of content that both reflects and promotes the experiences and perspectives of People of African Descent is another beneficial outcome. It affords us an opportunity to tell our own stories using our creative talent, while providing an avenue for cultural expression and economic activity. It also opens the door to greater collaboration between stakeholders across the region and globally. These are all positive elements in support of the aims of the International Decade.

I look forward to the screenings this evening and to the discussions we will have with our experienced and talented panellists.

I hope you will enjoy the event and leave here both fulfilled and inspired to explore further ways to continue to advance the positive realisation of the goals of the International Decade.

I thank you.