



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

STATEMENT BY

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TO THE

**47TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON
POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

ON

**AGENDA ITEM 4: ASSESSMENT OF THE STATUS OF
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

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Introduction

Mr. Chairman

Our delegation extends heartiest congratulations to you on your election to the chair of the 47th Session of the Commission and gives full support in facilitating successful outcomes as we assess the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action as well as consider how to integrate population dynamics into the post-2015 development agenda.

Jamaica's population and development programme over the past twenty (20) years has been modelled by principles, goals and objectives of the ICPD Programme of Action. Today, we are expressing our strong commitment and reaffirmation of these, as we move beyond 2014 to achieve sustainable development.

Jamaica has witnessed many achievements, but today's focus will be on population ageing, sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, maternal and child health, poverty eradication, international migration and development, gender equality and the empowerment of women, despite various challenges including limitations in human, material and financial resources..

Population Ageing

Jamaica's population is far advanced in its transition to low birth and death rates. The crude birth rate is currently below 20 per 1000 population and the crude death rate is around 6 per 1000 population. The age group 15 and under is declining while the working age 15-64 years and the 65 and over age groups are increasing. The elderly age group 60 years and over is about 12 per cent of the total population and is the fastest growing age group, a trend which will continue over the coming years. The dependency ratio is falling - Jamaica is experiencing a favourable demographic position for investment and development.

In light of these patterns, Jamaica is actively reforming its education and training systems in order to capitalize on the demographic bonus for development. Jamaica is also taking active steps towards labour market and social protection systems reforms.

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights

Mr Chairman,

Prior to Cairo, Jamaica had a fairly successful family planning, maternal and child health and sexually transmitted infection programme. The major problem was that these programmes were largely not integrated and not provided at all levels of the primary health care system. Today, Jamaica is pleased to report that we have established a

mechanism for integrating elements of the HIV/AIDS Programme into the National Family Planning Board as one of the responses to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health under a “one authority”. This one authority will be bolstered by its services into the maternal and child health programmes through the primary health care system in the Ministry of Health thereby realizing the objective of the ICPD Programme of Action.

In regard to adolescent health, we have made definitive steps to advocate, through policies and programmes for the administration of sexual and reproductive health service, treatment, counselling and care to minors. In addition, the Women’s Centre of Jamaica Foundation continues the education of the pregnant teen mom and teen dad under 16 years old. There is also a policy on compulsory re-admittance of the adolescent mother into the formal education system. In addition, there is the establishment of adolescent-friendly centres; multisectoral support of the National Strategic Plan for Pre-Adolescents and Adolescents; and the development of an Action Plan for standards of care. Just to note that Jamaica was the first country in the developing world to have implemented a programme for the provision of contraceptives and other reproductive health services to adolescents with disabilities.

Maternal and Child Health

Jamaica continues to improve the quality of the maternal and child health services in both hospitals and Primary Health Care Centres.

Life expectancy at birth for both sexes is well over 70 years, but maternal and infant mortality rates are lagging far behind the targets set in the Programme of Action and the MDGs, despite some improvements, but national efforts are being intensified to meet these targets. Jamaica has established centres of excellence across the country to fully integrate maternal and child health as well as family planning and services for sexually transmitted infections at the primary health care level. In addition, there are programmes to provide antiretrovirals to prevent mother to child transmission of HIV; and the implementation of health care services free of user fees in public hospitals and clinics. In spite of these efforts, however, Jamaica is not likely to achieve the targets by 2015.

Jamaica also has long made the transition from communicable to non-communicable diseases. The country has also developed a National Non-Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Strategic Plan (2012-2017); it has recently passed a Public Health Tobacco Regulation, which bans smoking in public spaces; and has drafted a National Infant and Young Child Feeding Policy.

Eradicating Poverty

Mr Chairman

Jamaica was among the first countries after Cairo and Copenhagen to develop a National Policy and Programme of Action on Poverty Eradication.

We have pursued a multi-pronged approach in addressing poverty at the national, community, household, and individual levels by adding components involving conditional and unconditional cash, benefit transfers and social and economic empowerment activities.

By 2007 with a poverty rate of 9.9 per cent, Jamaica had achieved the target for poverty set under the MDGs. This, however, was short-lived. The onset of the global economic and financial recession triggered an increase in poverty which now stands at over 19 per cent (Preliminary estimate for 2012). In light of this, Jamaica has been making concerted efforts to reverse the upward trend in poverty. We have developed a long-term national development plan for poverty reduction and a comprehensive social protection strategy. Notwithstanding, Jamaica is unlikely to achieve the target and aspirations as enunciated in Cairo and the Millennium Summit by 2014 or 2015.

International Migration and Development

Jamaica has a highly emigrant population. A significant percentage of Jamaicans live outside of the country. It is one of the nations with the highest level of tertiary level graduates living outside its borders.

Jamaica has adopted the policy position that international migration can benefit country of origin, country of destination and the migrants themselves. In light of this, we have developed a comprehensive and integrated national policy on international migration. This was done with technical and financial assistance from the Swiss Government, IOM, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP/Global Migration Group. Jamaica has also drafted a Diaspora Policy for tabling later in the year.

Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Jamaica has been rated internationally as the best country for the employment of professional women in the public service. Approximately 60% of jobs in the public service have been occupied by women. Jamaican women have been performing at much higher levels than men at all levels of the education system. At the tertiary level, for example, over 70% of the graduates each year are women. Women, however, are still a minority in the top decision-making positions in government and the private sector. Women and girls are also subjected to high levels of domestic violence, sexual abuse and rape.

In an attempt to address the disparities and related weaknesses, the government has recently adopted a National Policy on Gender Equality, and has renamed the Bureau of Women's Affairs as the Bureau of Gender Affairs, with a unit and programme specifically designed for addressing gender-related issues with multi-sectoral collaboration.

Priorities for the ICPD Agenda Beyond 2014

Mr Chairman

Although Jamaica has made significant progress in implementing the Programme of Action. The following are some of the critical areas on which Jamaica would place emphasis going forward:

- Stronger focus on sustainable development as the overriding framework for population policy and programme interventions pertinent to demographic dynamics and the Government of Jamaica's priority for Human Capital Development;
- Continuing focus on reduction in fertility among adolescents and youth as a strategy to break the inter-generational transmission of poverty;
- Concerted efforts in addressing infant, child and maternal mortality and HIV/AIDS and chronic non-communicable diseases;
- Ensuring the integration of population ageing in all development policies, plans and programmes;
- Greater efforts at incorporating population growth and distribution in urbanization and climate change policies and planning, in pursuit of achieving a healthy environment;
- Greater focus on the role of international migration and the diaspora in national development; and
- Ensuring that human rights and gender equality issues are integrated into all policies, plans, programmes and projects.

We anticipate through the sharing of experiences in this forum, and in the discussions and elaboration of a way forward beyond 2014, including the post-2015 development agenda, that the international community will identify the areas of prioritisation that will support national efforts to achieve targets and goals, and to ensure that development remains focussed on affecting people's lives positively to make Jamaica the place of choice to live, raise family and do business.

Thank you