



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

STATEMENT BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

ON

**AGENDA ITEM 26: AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT,
FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION**

**IN THE SECOND COMMITTEE
OF THE 73RD SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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FINAL TEXT

Mr. Chairman,

Jamaica aligns itself with the statements delivered by the Group of 77 & China, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

Mr. Chairman,

Jamaica has always placed great emphasis on agriculture development, food security and nutrition. In 2017, agriculture accounted for 7.3 percent of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP), compared to 6.6 percent in 2016. The improved performance of the sector is attributed to the intensification of farmer support programmes provided by the government and an increase in private investment. However, there remains a critical need for further development efforts that address the underlying causes of food insecurity and malnutrition, build resilient and sustainable livelihoods and support sustainable food systems. This can be achieved through inclusive policy processes and the establishment of effective partnerships to which the Government of Jamaica is committed.

Mr. Chairman,

As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) and a Net Food Importing Developing Country (NFIDC), Jamaica is unable to produce sufficient quantities of food to support the growing demands of its population. Various

factors have and continue to impact our agriculture development, food security and nutrition. These include, but are not limited to:

- Increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events resulting from climate change, such as droughts, hurricanes and floods;
- Small size of landholdings;
- Limited availability and use of appropriate technology;
- Reduced availability of agricultural lands, due to urbanization; and
- High cost of capital

These factors are compounded by the fact that, as in many developing countries, agricultural activity is the main source of income for persons living in rural areas. For these reasons, we believe that hunger and poverty must be addressed simultaneously, especially in rural areas, by raising productivity and incomes; securing smallholder's tenure rights over productive resources, especially for women and youth; creating decent employment; ensuring adequate social protection; and enhancing the functioning of markets.

Mr. Chairman,

Jamaica's high Food Import Bill leaves us particularly vulnerable to external economic shocks and climate change. We are mindful, therefore, of the need to enhance the resilience of our local food systems, so as to counter the effects of future shortages precipitated by external shocks.

For many SIDS, natural disasters severely disrupt trade and access to markets, with longer-term economic impacts and implications for achieving the SDGs. An effective response requires an understanding of the dynamic interactions of disasters and climate change on commodity production, particularly in the agricultural sector, as emphasised in this year's Secretary General's report. Jamaica welcomes the attention that has been given to these concerns, particularly in light of the fact that globally we are now seeing a reversal of the gains in fighting hunger.

Mr. Chairman,

New food consumption patterns have also meant a shift in consumer preferences towards nutritionally poor diets that have in turn led to the increasing prevalence of obesity, and nutritional related chronic non-communicable diseases (NCDs), such as diabetes, hypertension, stroke, heart disease and some forms of cancers. These diseases are costly to individuals and to economies, and presents a major national public health concern. Currently, some 1.3 billion people are classified as overweight and 600 million as obese - a figure that is expected to double by 2030.

While agriculture plays a direct role in eradicating hunger and extreme poverty, it is also central to achieving the SDGs and related targets, most notably those concerning health, water, biodiversity, and sustainable cities. Given this relationship, we are all required to better align national agriculture, nutrition, and NCD strategies and related policies to assure greater policy coherence.

Mr. Chairman,

In line with the foregoing, Jamaica is committed to ensuring that our citizens have access to a constant and nutritious supply of food. We will, therefore:

- Continue to encourage the production of local food through the “Eat What You Grow Campaign” and other such programmes;
- Promote investments in local agricultural production and agro-industries;
- Maximize the use of improved and scientifically validated technologies to increase the quantity, quality and value of small farmer production output; and
- Provide an enabling environment in support of food security, sustainable use of agricultural land and fisheries resources, as well as to facilitate local investment within the sector.

These actions will however, require increased investment, a well-functioning multilateral trade environment and effective domestic food commodity markets.

Thank you.