



STATEMENT BY

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TO THE

**51st SESSION OF THE UN COMMISSION ON
POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

ON

AGENDA ITEM 3:-
*GENERAL DEBATE ON NATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN POPULATION
MATTERS: "SUSTAINABLE CITIES, HUMAN MOBILITY AND
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION"*

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Chairman, our delegation extends congratulations to you and other members of your team on your election to the Bureau. We are confident that under your leadership, the work of the session will be successfully executed. Jamaica reaffirms its commitment to the principles and objectives of the ICPD and we endorse the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 & China delivered by Egypt.

The theme of the 51st session of the Commission on Population and Development – “Sustainable cities, human mobility and international migration” – is particularly relevant and timely for Jamaica. Jamaica is characterized mainly as an emigrant country. With population of approximately 2.7 million, national estimates show that on average 20,000 Jamaicans emigrate annually since the 1950s which equates to about 50.0 per cent of the number of Jamaicans living outside of Jamaica. Approximately 54.0 per cent of the population live in urban areas, and based on projections, this is expected to increase at a fast pace.

Over the years, internal migration and urbanization in Jamaica have been influenced by a range of factors, including the growth in tourism, manufacturing, mining and the services industries. The results have manifested in social, physical and environment impacts: proliferation of informal settlements, high levels of crime, burden on physical infrastructure; pollution of waterways; encroachment on environmentally sensitive areas; deforestation; deterioration of air quality; and increased vulnerability to natural and other hazards. As it regards disaster and climate change vulnerability, not only is Jamaica vulnerable by virtue of its status as a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) but by also virtue of the location of most of our cities/urban centres which are coastally oriented. Some of the potential climate change effects that cities face include sea level rise, potential for increased droughts; and more intense storms.

In response to these dynamics and in a bid to encourage the sustainable development of our cities/towns guided by Vision 2030 Jamaica – National Development Plan and the 2030

Agenda for Sustainable Development, efforts have been made towards strengthening national and regional development planning. Efforts include:

- passage of the Local Governance Act;
- improvement of citizen participation in decision making through full implementation of the Local Sustainable Development Planning (LSDP) Framework;
- development of a National Spatial Plan;
- review of the National Settlement Strategy.

Chair,

A notable practical move towards the development of sustainable cities has been the Emerging and Sustainable Cities Initiative (ESCI) which was launched in 2015 as an integrated strategy intended to improve sustainability of the city of Montego Bay with emphasis on five priority action areas — sanitation; urban development, planning and transportation; employment and training; public safety; and reduction of vulnerability to natural and manmade disasters. Another major priority of the government is the move towards the development of a third city, as a model sustainable city.

Recognizing the importance of data, Jamaica has begun to explore the integration of ICT into urban planning to generate data to improve the function of cities. This includes data relating to traffic, water use, crime prevention and policing – areas that currently pose a challenge in Jamaica. The notion of Open Data, shared publicly from a wide variety of sources both public and private on a single platform, enabled by the Draft Open Data Policy is designed to encourage innovation and facilitate citizen participation. The possibilities are endless with open data. Sustainable and smart cities cannot be created without data.

Chair,

I wish to shift my attention to another mega trend for Jamaica, international migration. Given the long history of international migration, Jamaica has adopted the policy position that international migration can benefit country of origin, country of destination, and the migrants themselves. This is reflected primarily in our comprehensive and integrated national Policy on International Migration and Development. The overall policy goal is to ensure that “international migration is adequately measured, monitored and streamlined to serve national development goals embodied in Vision 2030 Jamaica”, which supports the achievement of SDG 10.7. Special emphasis is being placed on implementation at the local level, and engaging non-traditional stakeholders. In partnership with several NGOs, the government implemented its reintegration and rehabilitation strategies for involuntary returned migrants, who return predominantly to urban areas.

As Jamaica undertakes the revision of its National Population Policy within the context of the SDGs, the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, the New Urban Agenda and our own Vision 2030 Jamaica, to maximize the demographic dividend, the focus of this theme will be at the forefront of the process. In this regard, there is greater room for the integration of issues relating to sustainable cities and international migration in policy formulation and planning. The lack of timely, adequate and appropriately disaggregated data on urbanization, internal migration, and international migration poses constraints on the ability to plan effectively and efficiently at the local levels.

Chair, as I conclude, we acknowledge that the task ahead will require a serious focus on policy integration and coherence to address the multidimensionality and complexity of the issues relating to sustainable cities, human mobility and international migration. Achievement of Vision 2030 Jamaica and the SDGs will require considerable resources, particularly to ensure that no one is left behind.