



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

**STATEMENT BY**  
**MISS TYESHA TURNER**  
**COUNSELLOR (SOCIAL, HUMANITARIAN & CULTURAL AFFAIRS)**

**ON**

***GENERAL DISCUSSION (AGENDA 3(A) AND 3(B)***

**56<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**  
**29<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY TO 7<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2018**

**NEW YORK**

***Mister Chairman,***

Jamaica congratulates you on your assumption as Chair of the 56<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission and is confident that, under your able stewardship, our work will yield a successful completion to this Session.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Honourable Minister of Egypt, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and remains seized of the need to persist in our efforts to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions for the sustainable development of all, bar none.

This we recall is the overarching objective of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and is one of the core objectives of the World Summit on **Social** Development. While we acknowledge that our efforts have borne some fruit, there is much left to be harvested through our collective commitment and drive for a better standard of living for ourselves and future generations.

We thank the Secretary-General for his reports to the Commission, including on this year's priority theme "*Strategies for eradicating poverty to achieve sustainable development for all*" and note the recommendations contained therein.

## **Human Capital Development**

The Government of Jamaica supports the view that greater investment in human capital leads to exponential returns for national development. In this regard, the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF) was established, in 1996, to mobilise and direct resources, with the assistance of international partners, to community-based socio-economic infrastructure and social services projects. The objective is to foster an empowered, healthy and productive society.

Jamaica has adopted an "*all hands on deck*" multi-stakeholder approach to the effective implementation of Vision 2030 Jamaica our National Development Plan – which is aligned to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The poverty reduction agenda of Vision 2030 Jamaica is crafted on the belief that each person has the opportunity, capability and support needed to enjoy a sustainable and good quality of life. To this end, the work of the JSIF has evolved towards aiming investments at "pro-poor" economic growth; developing a productive youth work force; job creation and stimulating increased earnings at the micro, small and medium enterprise levels. As a result of the JSIF's efforts, approximately 1.4 million Jamaicans have benefitted from the completion and delivery of over 1, 687 projects targeting rural and agricultural development; health; education; family; and an equipped workforce.

*Mister Chair,*

As we call for greater action at all levels – global, hemispheric, regional, sub-regional and national – we should do so with full recognition and consideration for the inequalities that exist between and within countries, with a view to supporting those most in need as a matter of priority.

### **National Social Protection Strategy**

Social Protection is undoubtedly a critical policy tool for transformation and national development, as it promotes human capital development, increases productivity, reduces poverty, exclusion, and inequality – while enhancing growth, inclusive development and social cohesion.

**The 2014 National Social Protection Strategy** outlines the guiding principles for the design and implementation of actions to support social assistance, social security, and labour market policies. The Strategy is aimed at ensuring inclusion in all aspects of national development by combating inequality, poverty and vulnerability in the society.

The Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH) is a key instrument in Jamaica's social protection framework, providing income support to poor families, with direct benefits provided to an estimated 70% of families living below the national poverty line.

### **National Policy on Poverty and National Poverty Reduction Programme**

The Government is updating the 1997 National Policy on Poverty and National Poverty Reduction Programme. The revised Policy, which was tabled in Parliament in September of last year, seeks as its major outcome to eradicate extreme poverty by the year 2022 and reduce the national prevalence of poverty to significantly less than 10% in 2030.

*Mister Chair,*

### **Disabilities**

As one of the first two countries to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Jamaica reiterates its commitment to inclusion, integration and empowerment for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) and their contribution to national development.

The Government enacted the Disabilities Act in 2014 and undertook a public education and sensitization campaign to ensure that all citizens, particularly persons with disabilities, were aware of their rights. As at June 2016, 30,142 persons have been entered into the new disabilities registry and the Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities has prepared Codes of **Practice** to ensure that there is no discrimination on the grounds of a person's disability.

An additional 340 persons with disabilities have also benefitted from skills training and employment opportunities provided under the PATH programme in the last financial year.

### **Ageing**

In line with the global trend, the number of older persons has been steadily increasing in Jamaica. The 1997 National Policy for Senior Citizens is currently being revised, with expected completion before the end of this year. The policy will seek to strengthen protection for the elderly, while underscoring the valuable contribution they make to national development efforts. A national registry of senior citizens will be developed to facilitate effective provision of social assistance and services and ensure that the elderly remain a visible and valuable segment of the Jamaican society as we promote intergenerational solidarity.

*Mister Chair,*

### **Family**

The government views the family as a fundamental institution and as the main vehicle for building a cohesive society. Jamaica recognizes the importance of breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty and, as such, has invested strategically in the health and education of poor households to move them from a state of welfare to a state of well being.

Given Jamaica's constrained fiscal space and high debt burden, the government, despite these gains, remains concerned with the limited ability to support the level and scope of our social protection system. It is in this vein that we reiterate the call for special attention to be given to the plight of Highly Indebted Middle Income Countries, which lack the fiscal space to preserve gains that have been made, particularly those of a social dimension.

In closing, Mister Chair, my delegation is mindful of the numerous challenges that lay ahead in achieving the social development targets, both domestic and international. Jamaica, however, remains hopeful that global will and collective action will result in the eradication of poverty and the attainment of sustainable development for all our citizens and reiterate our full support to the efforts of the Commission in this regard.

Thank you.