



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

STATEMENT BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

AT THE

**GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 60TH SESSION OF
THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW)**

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Mr. Chairman,

Jamaica aligns itself with the statements delivered earlier by the G77 and China, the CELAC and CARICOM.

This sixtieth session of the Commission is a historic moment. It marks not just the diamond anniversary of the CSW but also follows the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

After two decades of focused work on gender equality and the empowerment of women and striving for the full realisation of women's human rights, the Commission has recorded proven successes, especially in supporting UN Member States' efforts to achieve commitments made in Beijing. As we embark on the road to implement Agenda 2030, the Commission is poised to play a significant role in helping Member States to accelerate efforts to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women, and to maintain accountability for the overlapping commitments in the Beijing Platform for Action and the SDGs.

Mr. Chairman,

The Commission's priority theme is rendered even more poignant because of the full recognition contained in the new development agenda, that the empowerment of women is essential for the achievement of sustainable development. It is for this reason that it has been firmly mainstreamed across the 2030 Agenda as a cross-cutting issue. It is also noteworthy that the other key sustainable development outcomes from last year – the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Climate Agreement, and the Sendai DRR Framework – also give fulsome treatment to the centrality of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Jamaica views this as a matter of critical importance because despite significant progress both nationally and globally, much remains to be done. Consider the fact that no country has achieved the full realisation of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Far too many women continue to face discrimination, violence and the denial of their human rights. Engrained and systemic inequalities continue to push women to the fringes and exclude them from full and equal participation in all spheres of life, including in economic participation, education, political participation and leadership, and at the workplace.

Jamaica continues to devise strategies and implement policies and programmes to advance the empowerment of women and girls in an effort to build on our successes and address the remaining challenges. Our government, decades ago, pioneered legislation on equal work for equal pay and for paid maternity leave. In recognition of the equal status of women, Jamaica amended legislation to ensure that citizenship by descent can be acquired matrilineally in the same way that it is obtained through paternal lines.

As far as education is concerned, we find that girls continue to outperform boys both in school attendance and in educational outcomes. At the tertiary level, for example, women outnumber their male counterparts by a ratio of 80:20. According to the 2015 Global Gender Gap Report, Jamaica was ranked best in the world in this area.

In the labour market, women occupy 60% of managerial roles. A 2015 ILO study found that Jamaica employed the highest proportion of women managers in the world. However, there is a yawning gap in relation to women who occupy top managerial positions, where they remain significantly under-represented at the highest levels of management, including on corporate boards and at the CEO level. This is borne out by the ILO study, which found that whereas women managed and/or owned over 30 per cent of all businesses, these tended to be in micro and small enterprises.

Moreover, notwithstanding their noteworthy educational gains, the gender pay gap in Jamaica stands at an alarming 60%.

In the area of political leadership, Jamaica is registering slow but steady progress. Only last week, Jamaica's first woman Minister for Foreign Affairs assumed office. She is one of five women among the twenty-three individuals appointed as Ministers. We have had a woman elected as head of government on two occasions, while women currently serve Jamaica as the Chief Justice, the Attorney-General, the Solicitor-General, and as the Mayor of our capital city, Kingston.

During our recent national elections on February 25, twenty-five women were represented on the slate of candidates seeking to be elected to our sixty-three seat parliament, an increase of 32% over the previous election. While only eleven were successful, which is also an increase from the last occasion, they will be joined in the legislature by five out of twenty-one appointed Senators. Jamaica is committed to continuing our efforts to explore means of improving women's participation in political leadership.

We will also be continuing our partnerships with civil society, the private sector and all relevant stakeholders to strengthen women's empowerment in Jamaica, in keeping with the our National Policy for Gender Equality. We will also increase our efforts to combat violence against women as envisioned in our National Strategic Plan To Eliminate Gender-Based Violence, which is being finalised with support from UN Women.

Mr. Chairman,

When women and girls are empowered to achieve their full potential, society stands to benefit. When women and girls are able to contribute in equal measure as their male counterparts, the likelihood of achieving success in our development efforts is dramatically increased. Sustainable development, therefore, must fully involve women and girls, in design, in implementation, and in measurement. In sum, Jamaica is committed to ensuring that the link between women's empowerment and sustainable development does not remain a theoretical construct, but is put to practical effect through the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.