



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

STATEMENT BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 62ND SESSION OF
THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

15TH MARCH 2018

UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK

Thank you Madam Chair,

Jamaica aligns itself with statements delivered by Guyana on behalf of CARICOM and Egypt on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The Government of Jamaica remains committed to fulfilling our obligations under international and regional agreements and conventions on women's human rights and gender equality, which include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women.

As a signatory to the CEDAW and as a member of the Group of Champions for Women's Economic Empowerment, we reaffirm our commitment to eliminating all forms of discrimination against women and ensuring women's economic empowerment. In keeping with our obligations under Article 14 of the CEDAW, which focuses on rural women, steps are being taken to ensure that the economic, social, psychosocial and developmental needs of rural women are addressed. Much of the practical work to support rural women is being undertaken by the national gender machinery - the Bureau of Gender Affairs, with support from the Rural Agricultural Development Authority. (RADA).

According to the Statistical Institute of Jamaica, females represent twenty per cent of the agricultural work force, with seven per cent of them being skilled agricultural and fishery workers. The 2010 Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions shows that poverty is more prevalent in rural areas and that the rural poor accounts for about two thirds of the country's poor, most of whom still rely on agriculture. The largest households in terms of number of members, and the largest proportions of children were found in the poorest quintiles, most of which are rural female-headed households.

In this regard, the Government of Jamaica is committed to addressing the particular needs of rural women by providing access to services, training and employment opportunities and social equity schemes.

On gender mainstreaming, **Madam Chair**, several public sector policy-makers have been trained as Gender Focal Points (GFPs). Additionally, twenty-seven ministries, departments and agencies have received Gender Equality Certification. This signals their undertaking to fulfil the guiding principles of Jamaica's 2011 National Policy for Gender Equality. The Gender Focal Points highlight and assist in addressing gender-related quantitative and qualitative gaps, in order to facilitate gender-responsive agriculture policy design and strategy development in rural areas.

With focussed sensitization on relevant legislation such as the Domestic Violence Act, Child Care and Protection Act, Property (Rights of Spouses) Act, The Maintenance Act; and the Sexual Offences Act, rural women are more knowledgeable about their rights as well as the services and benefits provided to improve their socio-economic situation.

Sadly, violence against Women (VAW) and girls persists as one of the most egregious assaults on the human rights of women and girls. In response, the Bureau of Gender Affairs, with support from UN Women, crafted a 10 year comprehensive multi-sectoral National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender-based Violence which was approved in July 2017. Plans are also underway to establish a women's shelter in a rural area to create a safe space for women at risk of or who have been subjected to violence.

For this reason, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are at the heart of **Vision 2030 Jamaica**, our national development plan which is aligned to the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The positive impact of gender equality on conflict resolution and peace-building as well as sustainable development efforts cannot be over-emphasized.

The theme of this session on the empowerment of rural women and girls is indeed a priority. The Government of Jamaica remains committed to fostering those opportunities for gender equality and empowerment. My delegation looks forward to the adoption of the Agreed Conclusions reflecting the significant contributions of rural women and girls and elaborating concrete action to enhance their capacity for self-empowerment and nation-building.