



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

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**STATEMENT BY**

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MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND  
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**AT THE**

**THIRTIETH SESSION OF THE ECLAC COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

**New York**

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***PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY***

Ministers,  
Madame Executive Secretary,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to address this Regional Forum on the Post-2015 Development process. The confluence of processes focused on development, and sustainable development in particular, provides us with an opportunity to address the range of challenges faced by developing countries and to determine how best to harness the technological and other opportunities of the current globalised era to ensure our active participation and engagement in creating an effective development agenda. We must continue to engage effectively and strategically to ensure that the interests of the Latin American and Caribbean region receive the attention they deserve.

Allow me to recognise the important role played by ECLAC, and its sub-regional office in Port-of-Spain in supporting our efforts in this regard.

#### **Caribbean Development and Coordination Committee (CDCC)**

I have been asked to share some views in my capacity as chair of the Caribbean Development Coordination Committee (CDCC); a role Jamaica assumed in April 2014 and that we will continue carrying out until 2016. I consider it a privilege to share the perspective of the Caribbean SIDS of the sub-region, whose priorities and concerns are the focus of the work programme of the CDCC. I believe that addressing their issues through the CDCC is particularly important at this time as the international community endeavors to lay the groundwork for accelerated efforts to place our countries on a sustainable development trajectory in the post- 2015 period.

The CDCC last met in April 2014 in Kingston. Among the issues considered were the importance of integrating the priorities of SIDS into the international agenda; strategies to promote their sustainable growth and resilience; and preparations for the Third International Conference on SIDS.

The CDCC Meeting was preceded by the Third Caribbean Development Round-Table which included discussions on building resilience in Caribbean SIDS by promoting sustainable development, addressing risk and uncertainty, identifying a more integral role for the private sector, and capitalising on the creative industries as a strategic opportunity for promoting growth.

Since last April we have had opportunities to advance the conclusions from that CDCC Meeting in several fora, including the 35<sup>th</sup> Session of ECLAC in May 2014 in Lima and the Conference on International Development Cooperation "Trends and Emerging Opportunities" held in Istanbul in June 2014. On those occasions, we highlighted the unique and particular vulnerabilities faced by SIDS and underscored the importance of addressing our needs and concerns as an important item on the international development agenda.

In the context of a year when the international spotlight was focused on SIDS, with the commemoration of the International Year of SIDS and the Third International Conference on SIDS in Samoa, it was indeed timely to address the challenges and concerns of SIDS. Under my chairmanship of the CDCC, Jamaica will continue its efforts to ensure that the unique vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States are given due attention in the development and implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. It will be particularly necessary to ensure alignment between the implementation of the outcome document of the SIDS Conference in Samoa - the S.A.M.O.A. Pathway.,

and the mobilisation of resources that will enable us to effectively address our challenges. We look forward to working with you all to determine how best to ensure that the High Level Political Forum, under the auspices of the ECOSOC, becomes an effective Forum for the review and follow-up of commitments, including those made in the S.A.M.O.A. Pathway, and the soon to be concluded post-2015 development agenda.

SIDS share unique characteristics that make us economically, environmentally and socially vulnerable. We exercise little or no control over external events, natural and otherwise, and less so over their impact, and are limited in the adequacy of our response, which place us at a distinct disadvantage in comparison to larger countries.

It is for this and other reasons, that we welcomed the convening of the Third International Conference on SIDS, held in Samoa in September 2014, and its focus on vulnerability to external shocks, strengthening disaster risk reduction and risk assessment, mainstreaming climate change planning and addressing middle-income classification criteria, among the pressing issues of concern. It bears noting that the Conference was held under the theme "The Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States through Genuine and Durable Partnerships." We welcome the opportunity to develop deeper partnerships with the international community, as these are a *sine qua non* for successful pursuit of strategies for poverty alleviation and sustainable development. From our perspective, innovative partnerships are an effective mechanism to facilitate the scaling-up of best practices and implementing global commitments.

For the SIDS in the Caribbean sub-region, the most urgent sustainable development challenges arise partly from the small, open nature of local economies, as well as from exposure to natural hazards. Further, the limited natural and human resource base in the region has constrained economic growth, and along with increased frequency of natural disasters, has resulted in the macro-economic circumstances of persistent high public debt and large current account and fiscal deficits.

With respect to growth, for example, the Caribbean as a whole achieved only 1.8 per cent annually between 1991 and 2012, and has been on a downward growth trajectory since the early 1970s, when the region averaged growth rates of roughly 3.0 per cent, per annum. This slow growth has retarded our ability to withstand global economic and natural disaster shocks, so that in 2012 the region had a higher debt-to-GDP ratio relative to other SIDS, ranging between 22 per cent for Suriname and 147 per cent for Jamaica. Recently, Bloomberg Business reported that, as at 11<sup>th</sup> March 2015, Jamaica's debt to GDP ratio was estimated at 131.6 per cent, and is projected to fall to 120 per cent within two years. This is an improvement that we intend to sustain.

As it regards the impact of natural hazards on the economic fortunes of the sub-region, over the past decade, the Caribbean experienced an increase in the occurrence of natural events such as hurricanes, droughts and earthquakes. Their worsening impact is evident in the total damage which is assessed at US \$19.9 billion between 2000 and 2012.

Another major issue which confronts Caribbean SIDS is that of energy security, as all states except Trinidad and Tobago are net importers of energy. Moreover, all countries are primarily dependent on fossil fuel for energy, with very limited development of renewable energy resources. With the emergence of climate change as a major development challenge, the region's energy insecurity has been further exacerbated. The high proportion of our national budgets devoted to imported energy and rehabilitation measures in the wake of natural disasters has left little

fiscal space to address a number of social challenges in the Caribbean. These include poverty, health (such as HIV and AIDS and the growing prevalence of non-communicable diseases), and crime and violence.

These were among the issues which Caribbean SIDS brought to the fore during the Conference held in Samoa last year that we have sought to bring to the fore in the deliberations on the post-2015 development agenda. We will continue to do so and to work with our neighbors in the Latin America and Caribbean region and other Member States in the international community to identify effective means of addressing these interrelated challenges.

### **Post-2015 Development Agenda**

We are committed to the successful conclusion of a Post-2015 Development Agenda that promotes sustained economic growth, social protection and environmental sustainability. We believe that a successful outcome of the negotiations for an enduring post-2015 development framework will build upon commitments made at past major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and environmental fields. We will have to be particularly attuned to the missteps made in the implementation of the MDGs and endeavor to avoid similar pitfalls. The treatment of means of implementation is particularly instructive in this regard. We must ensure that the ambition and aspirations that are embodied in the breadth of the SDGs are matched by the mobilisation of the resources that will be necessary to ensure their full and effective implementation (MOI).

For the SIDS of the Caribbean region it is imperative that the matter of support for data collection and improved statistical capabilities be appropriately addressed in the context of our deliberations on MOI. In the absence of strengthened Statistical offices, and access to appropriate technology for use in data collection and analysis, we will be hard pressed to measure our progress in the implementation of the goals. Such measurement is useful not only in relation to national reporting on fulfillment of international commitments but also in the ongoing policy-making process at the national level. This is a matter that will have to be addressed also in the context of the outcome of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development insofar as it will be necessary to designate the strengthening of data collection and statistical capabilities as one of the main areas for which resources must be mobilized and directed. The relative absence of statistics on the Caribbean Member States of the region in the presentations this morning is indicative of the importance of this issue.

We will also continue to advocate for vulnerability to be factored into the eligibility criteria used to determine access to concessional resources from international financial institutions and official development assistance, to further strengthen resilience efforts of SIDS, many of whom have been seriously challenged in meeting some of the MDGs.

Caribbean SIDS recognise the inextricable linkages among the global intergovernmental processes taking place in the UN system. We will continue to do our part to ensure that the outcomes result in a new global compact for development that fully takes into account SIDS concerns.

The Post-2015 Development Agenda is crucial to achieving our developmental aspirations and we are committed to ensuring that this global process redounds to the benefit Latin America and the Caribbean as a whole.

I thank you.