



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

STATEMENT BY

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during the General Debate of the

**THIRD COMMITTEE FOR THE 75TH SESSION OF
THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
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New York

Madam Chair,

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the delegations of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and The Bahamas on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Madam Chair,

The Third Committee is meeting at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to reverse the hard-won progress achieved in critical areas under its purview. It has both revealed and exacerbated existing inequalities within and among countries, and threatens to throw off course Member States' efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs. The impact of this is already being felt, particularly by the most vulnerable in our societies.

Madam Chair,

Jamaica considers human rights to be at the core of the inherent dignity of persons; a dignity with which each of us is endowed by virtue of our humanity. We are disturbed, therefore, at the increasing reports of the widespread violation of human rights, manifested by racism, discrimination and individual and systemic acts of social exclusion. Such practices undermine our collective efforts to preserve lives and safeguard livelihoods during this period of crisis, when our commitment to "leave no one behind" is being severely tested. We, therefore, support the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights. As

such, we will continue to strengthen our legal, policy and administrative frameworks to ensure broader access by our citizens, particularly the most vulnerable, to quality health-care, education and social protection services.

Madam Chair,

The containment measures we have taken to slow the spread of the coronavirus has resulted in significantly reduced inflows of foreign exchange, a decline in fiscal revenues, a precipitous drop in overseas remittance flows and an increase in unemployment. In an effort to strengthen our social protection systems to ensure that the most vulnerable are not further disenfranchised, we launched the COVID-19 Allocation of Resources for Employees (CARE) Programme. The programme provided temporary cash transfers to cushion the economic impact that was being faced by individuals and businesses during the ongoing pandemic. The programme was recently extended to target persons with disabilities, through the provision of grants to those who are unemployed or not formally employed.

Madam Chair,

Our older citizens, particularly those with pre-existing conditions, have felt the brunt of this pandemic. To safeguard their health and well-being, Jamaica has implemented innovative ways to respond to their needs. These include: providing access to financial assistance under the CARE stimulus package; the

establishment of a Rona Helpline Senior Care Response; making access to food and other basic amenities easier through the establishment of mobile supermarkets, and providing readily available information about the pandemic, including measures to ensure their safety. We are also in the process of implementing a mental health initiative focused solely on the elderly.

Madam Chair,

Jamaica remains committed to ensuring the full realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and in particular SDG 5 (Gender Equality), as well as the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. We note with grave concern, therefore, that discrimination against women and girls has been exacerbated as a result of the pandemic. Persistent gaps remain in their participation in economic activity, decision-making and political leadership.

We are conscious that women carry an unequal burden of the crisis, as they are the majority of frontline workers. In fact, globally, around 70% of health sector workers are women. We are, moreover, alarmed at the emerging evidence that shows that violence against women has increased dramatically since the pandemic. The UN reports that globally 243 million women and girls aged 15 to 49 have been subjected to sexual and/or physical violence perpetrated by an intimate partner in the previous 12 months. Unfortunately, this number is set to

increase as a result of the confined living conditions precipitated by the pandemic.

Jamaica fully recognises the invaluable role played by women in national development and, in this regard, is proud that an increased number of women were elected to the House of Representatives at national elections held last month and now make up 28.5 per cent of its members. This is a testament to the strides we are making, whereby women are becoming more empowered by increasingly offering themselves for public office and national leadership posts.

We will continue to implement national policies and legislative reforms that foster a society that respects and celebrates the contributions of both men and women. At the same time, we are engaging men and boys as key partners in the ongoing programme to ensure gender equality and provide empowerment.

Madam Chair,

We must redouble efforts at local, national and global levels, to ensure that the current health crisis posed by the COVID19 pandemic does not become a *child rights crisis*, particularly in the area of education. For our part, Jamaica has pursued several measures to ensure that the educational needs of our students are safeguarded, including the establishment of an Education COVID-19 Management Task Force (E-COVID1. Jamaica has provided additional

budgetary support in the amount of \$1.4 billion (approximately US7 million) to support early childhood, primary and secondary schools.

We reaffirm our commitment to the principal objective of the *Global Partnership to End Violence against Children*. We will continue to strengthen our protection mechanisms and legislative framework to safeguard the lives of our children, and partner with international agencies to promote and uphold the rights of children.

Madam Chair,

The pandemic has adversely affected our ability to adequately address critical issues related to crime prevention and international drug control. We, therefore, look forward to the resumption of the 63rd Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in December 2020, as well as the forthcoming Fourteenth Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in Kyoto, to be held in March 2021. We will continue to support the ongoing work in the field of cybercrime and cyber security, which has become a space for the increased proliferation of misinformation and criminal activity with the onset of the pandemic.

Madame Chair,

In closing, we reaffirm our optimism that with coordinated action at all levels we will be able to address the challenges we face nationally internationally.

Towards this end, please be assured of Jamaica's continued support the work of this Committee.

Thank you.