



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

STATEMENT BY

SENATOR THE HONOURABLE KAMINA JOHNSON SMITH,

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE

AT THE

HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM (HLPF) ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

GENERAL DEBATE STATEMENT

**THEME: "BUILDING BACK BETTER FROM THE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID19)
WHILE ADVANCING THE FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA FOR
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT"**

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UNITED NATIONS

NEW YORK

Mr. President,

As we celebrate our 60th year of Independence under the theme “*Reigniting a Nation for Greatness*,” Jamaica is pleased to join the United Nations family in pursuit of the full implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In light of the many setbacks occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic and persistent geopolitical tensions and crises, this year's theme, “*Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*”, is most appropriate. While we have seen tremendous setbacks, Jamaica remains resolute in our commitment to the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and our National Development Plan, Vision 2030 Jamaica.

Mr. President,

The close alignment between our own national development plan, Vision 2030 Jamaica, and Agenda 2030 now registered at 98%, has enabled a strong and consistent sense of national ownership and commitment to the SDGs. The alignment between these two processes has also allowed for the utilization of synergies in creating a common, systematic and integrated framework for the monitoring and implementation of national development policies and programmes.

It is for this reason that Jamaica was pleased to present our second Voluntary National Review (VNR) at this year's HLPF. Building on our experiences from 2018, Jamaica's 2022 Voluntary National Review process has underscored major themes which are crucial to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. An important theme is the means of implementation and the role of domestic and international partnerships in supporting achievement of the goals.

As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), Jamaica is signatory to, and reliant on the outcomes of international development agreements, which seek to mitigate the impacts of climate change (Paris Agreement), reduce disaster risk (Sendai Framework) and promote financing (Addis Ababa Action Agenda as well as the SAMOA Pathway).

Mr. President,

Jamaica stands proud today, having completed through bi-partisan support, over 13 years of implementation of Vision 2030 Jamaica, and, with that, close to seven years of integration of the SDGs which commenced in September 2015 when the Government approved the first national Medium Term Framework (MTF) that showed the alignment with the SDGs. Since 2018, Jamaica has recorded measurable gains in social, economic and environmental indicators,

even within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and on-going recovery from the long-term effects of the 2008 global financial crisis.

During this period, the Government of Jamaica, through a transformative Economic Reform Programme, demonstrated commitment to fiscal discipline, results in entrenched macro-economic stability, reforms to the business environment, increased capital expenditure and social spending. These efforts have significantly improved the ease of doing business, laid the foundation for growth and competitiveness and reduced the prevalence of poverty, including extreme and child poverty. We continue our journey of going for the goals!

Mr. President,

Our efforts are constrained, however, as Jamaica continues to face challenges triggered by vulnerabilities aggravated by the negative effects of climate change and, high levels of indebtedness. These factors, among others, limit the extent to which we can implement policies geared towards achieving fast and sustained socio-economic progress, especially with limited fiscal space.

In this "Decade of Action to Deliver the SDGs", the core of recovery for all states will be equity and inclusion in creating and strengthening the frameworks and mechanisms for implementing the SDGs, and leveraging international cooperation to achieve the goals. Jamaica will draw on our experiences in

responding to crises, utilizing long-term development planning and economic and social reforms, to advocate for improved access to financing for SIDS and middle-income countries, as well as technology transfer and improving the terms of trade to strengthen global value chains.

The improvement of capacity for monitoring through the development of multi-dimensional vulnerability indices is also expected to strengthen response capability including in health, education and transport, while addressing cross-cutting issues related to gender and geography. These efforts will ensure we can indeed "build back better and recover stronger, while leaving no one behind".

Thank you.