

**MEETING AND INTERACTIVE DISCUSSION OF THE GROUPS OF FRIENDS ON
GENDER PARITY WITH H.E. ABDULLA SHAHID
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**INTERVENTION BY
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Mr. President, Excellencies, Friends on Gender Parity – good afternoon.

I wish to thank the Permanent Missions of the State of Qatar and the Republic of Rwanda for coordinating this engagement to allow for the sharing of experiences and perspectives on gender equality and equity and the fight against climate change. In particular, I wish to thank His Excellency Abdulla Shahid for his presentation on this topic in his capacity as President of the General Assembly and as a strong advocate for gender equality in his own right.

Gender equality and climate change continue to be priorities for Jamaica. As a Small Island Developing State, both issues have significant impacts on the lives and livelihoods of all men and women. However, we must take account of the fact that climate change affects men and women in different ways. As Jamaica seeks to bolster its own mitigation and adaptation strategies to adequately address gender inequalities and inequities, I am pleased to have this opportunity to join you in this very fruitful exchange.

Mr. President, Colleagues,

Jamaica has ratified international human rights instruments and supported international measures aimed at promoting and protecting the rights of women and gender equality such as the: Beijing Platform for Action, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

At the domestic level, we have been guided by the National Policy for Gender Equality (NPGE) implemented in 2011 which sets the framework for a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to fully integrate gender in every area of national life and is geared towards achieving equal treatment for women and men through equal visibility, equality of opportunity, equal access to all resources, and equal participation in all areas of the public and private sectors.

Gender Focal Points across Ministries, Agencies and Department (MDAs) were also established to promote the necessary institutional framework for gender mainstreaming in all government policies, programmes and projects.

We are pleased to report that Jamaica has since made good progress in some areas of focus to achieve gender equality and is now ranked 41st on the Global Gender Gap Index of 153 countries. Jamaica, along with 24 other member states, enjoy top ranking in our achievement of parity in education. Globally, we are ranked 24th for economic participation and opportunity. This ranking is as a result of the fact that both men and women are equally engaged in professional and technical professions, without

significant differences in senior roles. The number of women elected to the House of Representatives in our September 2020 national elections has also increased with women now making up 28.5 per cent of the members.

Notwithstanding these successes, we are cognizant of the fact that there are still limitations to the integration between the institutional and policy frameworks for tackling gender and climate change issues.

Mr. President, colleagues,

A study conducted in July 2020 by the World Food Programme on Shock-Responsive Social Protection in the Caribbean indicates that women in this region are more vulnerable to the impact of natural hazards, especially those living in rural communities, coastal zones and low-lying flood-prone areas. Furthermore, data suggests that female-headed households are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of hazards, since they are often slightly poorer than others, which limits their resources for managing shocks. Female-headed households also have a larger proportion of children. In the case of Jamaica, it was found that female-headed households were over-represented in every category of damage – whether minor, major or destroyed.

In an effort to advance the gender and climate change agenda, the Government of Jamaica launched a project to facilitate a gender responsive approach to climate change adaptation and mitigation in January of this year, with support received through the Green Climate Fund Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme. This project is aimed at

strengthening the nation's institutional coordination, promoting gender responsive climate action and ensuring that policies, programmes and projects address gender inequalities – making the approach to disaster risk reduction and development planning more strategic and effective.

In addition, this initiative will serve to develop functional multi-stakeholder mechanisms through the establishment of a gender thematic working group under Jamaica's 2030 national development plan to ensure that the Gender and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan is implemented in line with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Gender Action Plan.

We are confident that this approach will contribute to the nation's progress on the path to achieving climate resilience as we continue to work towards the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Indeed Jamaica, like most other members of this Group, remains challenged by the unprecedented social and economic circumstances presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, I am hopeful that today's discussions will provide the impetus required to continue the pursuit of ambitious actions by us all.

I thank you.