



Country Statement
Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, MP
High Level Meeting on
Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness & Response
Wednesday, September 20, 2023

Mr. President,

Jamaica aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), for mobilizing political will at the national, regional and international levels for pandemic prevention, preparedness and response.

Mr. President, it is accepted that as a global community, we failed in our response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, and this failure had significant socio-economic impacts for Small Island Developing States such as Jamaica. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed how fragile and vulnerable our global health systems and economies are and was particularly challenging for Jamaica. The public health system faced an unprecedented burden that resulted in a significant strain on the resources of the Country. These challenges were further exacerbated by the issues we faced with equitable access to lifesaving vaccines and other countermeasures.

Mr. President, we therefore welcome the Political Declaration's recognition that pandemics have disproportionate impact on developing countries, like Jamaica; underscoring the need to address inequities in access to countermeasures such as vaccines, mitigate against health workforce challenges particularly those resulting from migration, and the need to support developing countries in building expertise in developing local, national and regional research, innovation, manufacturing, production and regulatory capacities.

As we take note of the theme of the meeting, that is “*Making the world safer: Creating and maintaining political momentum and solidarity for Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response*”, we must underscore the need to learn from the experience, and ensure that we avoid the mistakes that were made in responding to the COVID19 Pandemic. Accordingly, we all must fulfill the commitments made in this declaration for effective Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response to ensure that we are better prepared and protected against the future pandemics that will come.

Mr. President, Jamaica reaffirms its commitment to the process of strengthening the Global Architecture for Health Emergency Preparedness, Response & Resilience through the targeted amendments of the International Health Regulations and the negotiations of the Pandemic Accord. We use this opportunity therefore to re-iterate our call for the need for adequate time for countries to actively participate, and, to encourage fellow member states to participate fully in these processes and to ensure that the instruments adhere to the principles of consensus, equity, solidarity, inclusivity, transparency and respect for national sovereignty and that these are enshrined in legally binding rules in order to effectively strengthen the global systems for pandemic preparedness and response.

Thank you.