



PERMANENT MISSION OF JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

REMARKS BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY E. COURTENAY RATTRAY
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

on the occasion of the High-level Thematic Debate of the General Assembly on “Urban Safety, Security and Good Governance: Making Crime Prevention a Priority for All”

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Mr President,

Jamaica views the reduction of crime as a national imperative. In fact, it is the most urgent priority, since long-term economic growth and sustainable development can only be achieved in a society in which citizens feel empowered and secure enough to pursue a high quality of life. Over the years, Jamaica has experienced its share of challenges, and has employed diverse strategies to address crime, with varied results.

Our national crime statistics, including a homicide rate of more than 46.5 per 100,000, are cause for serious and deep concern, since it impacts our ability to attain the goals set out in our National Development Plan and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Challenges related to a high homicide rate, organised crime, corruption and, increasingly, violence against women and children, undermine our efforts to ensure good governance and the rule of law. The COVID-19 pandemic further impacts our efforts by heightening the risk factors and vulnerabilities of some of our communities. The pandemic has resulted in higher levels of violence among family members, against the elderly children, as well as persons involved in intimate partner relationships. Nevertheless, we remain committed to fulfilling our goal of creating a society that is secure, cohesive and just.

Among the underlying risk factors that have created an enabling environment for crime, violence and insecurity has been the lack of access to public services and housing infrastructure in some communities and

urban centres. In this respect, we are pursuing a “whole of government” multi-faceted approach, which places as much emphasis on transformative social investment¹ and strengthened technological capabilities, as is placed on enhanced security measures.

In this respect, we have redoubled our efforts to fully implement ***Plan Secure Jamaica*** – a comprehensive and strategic security programme. The Plan focuses on ten (10) strategic focal areas, which are underpinned by six (6) strategic objectives. These include:

- I. Bolstering the national security architecture
- II. Strengthening the criminal justice system
- III. Enhancing youth and community development
- IV. Protecting and securing borders
- V. Improving national integrity systems; and,
- VI. Increasing and sustaining public support for law enforcement

Mr President,

Jamaica is seeking to augment these efforts through the enactment of sound legislation. We are finalising legislative work in the areas of criminal administration, immigration, and illicit firearms trafficking and control. We are also working with UNLiREC to incorporate a gender perspective in our laws, policies and programmes. This is especially relevant in the field of

¹ This includes provision of suitable housing, healthcare, education and more technical training opportunities to citizens in affected communities.

criminal investigation, since it involves understanding the human and social context of gender-based inequality, discrimination and violence.

Mr President,

Our efforts would be futile without the cooperation of the citizens for which these initiatives are being pursued. We see a need for closer collaboration between our various law enforcement agencies, and the communities they serve.

Jamaica recently launched the Citizen Security Plan, which will be coordinated by the newly established Citizen Security Secretariat. The Secretariat was launched with the support of our development partners - the European Union, and the Inter-American Development Bank.

Mr President,

Jamaica believes there is need to galvanise the efforts of the international community to build our collective capacities to promote urban safety, security and good governance. The objective and outcomes of the UNODC's Urban Safety Governance Initiative, which commenced in 2019, is aligned to our national policy initiatives and strategies. In this respect, we welcome the focus on ensuring that interventions are context-specific, evidence-based and involve broad stakeholder participation. Such efforts by UNODC should be augmented by Member States' full implementation of their international commitments under the relevant international instruments aimed at the prevention of crime and related activities.

Thank you.