

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



STATEMENT

BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

DURING THE

**HIGH-LEVEL MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON
THE APPRAISAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL PLAN
OF ACTION TO COMBAT TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS**

**UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK
THURSDAY, 28TH SEPTEMBER 2017**

Mr. President,

Jamaica welcomes the convening of this High-level meeting, which is consistent with the focus of this year's General Assembly on people and the quest for a decent life for all. Indeed, we recognise the mutually reinforcing relationship between the efforts we are making to implement the SDGs and the Global Plan of Action. Seven years ago, the international community launched the Global Plan of Action to tackle the scourge of human trafficking through the adoption of a coordinated and comprehensive approach. As we applaud the strides made since that time, on a global level, the silent cries of victims ensnared in the grip of human trafficking must be given a voice – a resounding voice in every corner of this globe.

Mr. President,

The Government of Jamaica accords the highest level of political commitment to the fight against human trafficking and unequivocally denounces the heinous crime of Trafficking in Persons. We reaffirm our determination to **prevent** and combat trafficking in persons, **protect** and assist victims, **prosecute** crimes of trafficking in persons, and strengthen local, regional and international **partnerships**, through sound **policies** and continued **political will**.

In keeping with the Global Plan of Action, Jamaica continues to develop and strengthen its domestic legislative and institutional framework.

The overarching domestic legislation, the *Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Suppression and Punishment) Act, 2007 as amended in 2013*, will be bolstered by proposed further amendments that provide for trial by Judge only in human trafficking cases. This proposal has been approved by the Cabinet and is currently being drafted.

The Government of Jamaica is a State Party to relevant international instruments related to this matter, including the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children; The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime; ILO Conventions on Forced Labour and the Worst Forms of Child Labour; the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols; and more broadly the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Mr. President,

Jamaica has afforded the highest level of institutional support to tackling human trafficking. We are doing so through the establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Sub-Committee of Cabinet to monitor and make recommendations on our efforts to fight trafficking in persons, and appointed, in 2015, a National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons – the first such appointment to have been made in the Caribbean.

Furthermore, our National Task Force against Trafficking in Persons (NATFATIP) has responsibility for coordinating our national response. The composition of the Taskforce demonstrates the level of importance that Jamaica attaches to this issue and reflects the holistic approach we have adopted. The Taskforce is multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder in nature and

spans a gamut of Ministries, agencies, and non-governmental organizations that coordinate their efforts in fighting human trafficking.

Notwithstanding our resource constraints, Jamaica has made significant strides in addressing this issue. Our National Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons incorporates the guiding principles of the Global Plan of Action, and its implementation is undertaken by a dedicated Secretariat established for this purpose. We are currently developing a National Anti-Trafficking in Persons Policy to complement our on-going efforts to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of our response to trafficking in persons.

Since 2010, seventy-six (76) victims have been rescued; four (4) human traffickers have been convicted, with sentences ranging between 16-18 years in prison. In addition, millions in court fines and restitution costs have been paid to the Court and victims of human trafficking. The Jamaican Government continues to operate Shelters that provide on-going care to victims and survivors of this horrendous crime.

Mr. President,

National efforts must be adequately supported by those at the international level, as no country or region has remained untouched by this gross assault on human life and dignity. We are grateful, therefore, to our bilateral partners and are appreciative of the on-going partnership we enjoy with the United Nations system, which assists in the strengthening of our capacity to combat this global scourge.

Mr. President,

Jamaica is resolute in its commitment to promoting and protecting the dignity and rights of all Jamaicans. We reaffirm our determination to do our part to rid the world of this heinous crime, by taking bold, coordinated and intensified action.

I thank you.