



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

**INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY**

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

***SIDE EVENT ON IMPLEMENTING THE OUTCOME OF THE 2018  
HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES (NCDs):  
FOCUS ON WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND WELL-BEING***

**THURSDAY, 8<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2018  
UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK**

Good afternoon colleagues.

I wish to begin by thanking Dr. Elizabeth Carll and her organisation for their continued partnership with Member States on this priority issue for Jamaica and Caribbean countries.

As we are well aware, coming on the heels of the 3rd high level meeting on non-communicable diseases (NCDs), the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) affects countries worldwide but with a growing trend in developing countries. As a small island developing state, Jamaica has been especially hard hit, with cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes and chronic respiratory disease posing significant public health threats to the island's development.

The prevalence of NCDs is high among the population. Currently, 1 in 3 Jamaicans has hypertension and 1 in 8 has diabetes. In 2016, NCDs accounted for 12,577 or 68.4 per cent of all deaths five years and older. Between 2010 and 2016, the number of deaths due to NCDs increased by 21.6% (from 10,344 in 2010 to 12,577 in 2016).

1 in 2 Jamaicans is currently overweight or obese, and alarmingly, obesity in students 13-15 years old increased by 68.3% (from 6% in 2010 to 10.1% in 2017). We contend with this growing trend in risk factors for NCDs as we grapple with other common risk factors such as physical inactivity, smoking and alcohol consumption to scale.

The projected economic impact is significant. Losses associated with NCDs and mental health conditions are projected at US\$18.45 billion between 2015 and 2030.

For these reasons, it was of utmost importance to the Jamaican Government that the 3rd outcome document builds/built on the commitment of the previous meetings of 2011 and 2014 while advancing the efforts to address the surmountable challenges that persist. To this end, it was a signal honour for Jamaica to negotiate on behalf of the Group of 77 and China in the consultations to craft the outcome document, highlighting that this remains a development issue and a major concern for developing countries.

Having adopted the outcome document, where do we go from here? First, implementation requires renewed political will and commitment in order to ensure that we deliver. We should move expeditiously towards policies and programmes with partnership at all levels.

In this regard, I wish to outline efforts by the Jamaican Government to prevent and control NCDs, including recent developments guided by the commitments of the outcome document of the 3rd high level meeting.

Jamaica has set national targets for the NCD response and undertaken research to direct policy and programmes. We have also approved the *National Strategic and Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs in Jamaica 2013 – 2018*, with mental health, sickle cell disease, and violence and injuries included as issues to be addressed in the plan.

The Public Health Act (Tobacco Control Regulations 2013) took effect in July 2013, providing for a ban on smoking in public places and graphic health warnings on tobacco packages. A national communication campaign was undertaken simultaneously with steps to enhance enforcement of existing regulations. Jamaica also approved the development of a Comprehensive Tobacco Control Bill, in compliance with our obligations under the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

A National Food Industry Taskforce was launched to address product reformulation, food labelling and marketing, and communication and advocacy – all in support of Jamaica's obesity prevention efforts. In addition, the *National Food-based Dietary Guidelines*, *Physical Activity Guide and Toolkit for the Workplace Guidelines*, and *Physical Activity Guide for Healthcare Workers* have been introduced.

In 2017, the *Jamaica Moves* campaign was launched, with a focus on prevention through the promotion of physical activity, healthy eating and age-appropriate health checks. The programme is now being implemented in schools, workplaces and community settings. On 27 September 2018 at the UN Headquarters, the Heads of Government of CARICOM launched a Caribbean wide initiative dubbed “Caribbean Moves”, based on the success of the national programme, to redouble and expand the scope of activities in the region for the prevention and control of NCDs.

The Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education, Youth and Information are collaborating on the development and implementation of a National School Nutrition Policy, as well as a plan to promote healthy lifestyle and increase physical activity in schools through the *Jamaica Moves in Schools* campaign.

In partnership with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information and through multi-stakeholder engagement, including discussions with manufacturing and marketing companies, sugar-sweetened beverages will be restricted in schools as at January 2019.

The Government is also collaborating with Vital Strategies and the Heart Foundation of Jamaica on the implementation of the Bloomberg Global Obesity Prevention Project, including the media campaign on “Sugar-Sweetened Beverages and Obesity”.

Strengthening health systems was a key point in the 3rd outcome document and the Jamaican Government has invested in the resilience of our health systems to address NCDs through improved screening programmes in primary care and removing barriers to access in health-care facilities. Jamaica has also introduced the HPV vaccine for girls entering high school, and opened two National Cancer Treatment Centres at the Cornwall Regional and St. Joseph's hospitals.

Another key point in the outcome document was the increased focus on mental health as an NCD and exacerbating factor for the four major NCDs. To this end, a Mental Health and Homelessness Taskforce was established to recommend policies and programmes that will promote the mental health, social well-being and productivity of the Jamaican people, with a view for early implementation of these recommendations.

Although we still have some way to go, we are energised by the spirit of collaboration and collective commitment from our partners in the international community, including civil society, and look forward to continued engagement in this regard.

Thank You.