



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

**STATEMENT BY**

**H.E. MR. E. COURTENAY RATTRAY  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAMAICA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF LATIN AMERICAN  
AND CARIBBEAN STATES (GRULAC)**

**AT**

**THE PLENARY MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL  
DISCRIMINATION**

**UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK  
20<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2015**

Mr. Vice-President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC).

The Latin American and the Caribbean States reaffirm our steadfast commitment to eliminate the scourge of racial discrimination in keeping with the Durban Declaration and Programme for Action. Racism has no place in our world and its negative consequences as embodied in the discrimination and dehumanisation that are faced by too many of the world's citizens must be addressed with greater urgency and effectiveness.

The theme selected for this year's commemoration – "Learning from historical tragedies to combat racial discrimination today" - is most fitting. Taking a look at the historical tragedies that have racial discrimination as their root cause, among them Slavery, the Holocaust, Apartheid, genocide and segregation, provides the impetus for us to ensure that horrors such as these never recur. We have made significant efforts in the past to do so, among them the passage of the landmark Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. We must, however, move beyond rhetoric to achieve tangible progress in defeating the monster of racial discrimination as many challenges remain in the social, economic and political spheres.

indeed Mr. President, the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015 to 2024), with its extensive Programme of Activities adopted during this very session, seeks to address many of the lingering legacies of one of the greatest forms of racial discrimination the world has seen and continues to grapple with. This International Decade will complement the International Decade for Latin American and Caribbean People of African Descent, which began in January 2014 as proclaimed by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States in September 2013. On that occasion CELAC also decided to advocate in favour of the adoption of the International Decade for People of African Descent. Both decades provide the framework to take concrete measures to address the wide-ranging effects of racism on people of African descent today.

Recently, in the CELAC Action Plan for 2015, adopted at the Third CELAC Summit held in Belen, Costa Rica on 29 January this year, our Community decided to implement the Latin American and Caribbean People of African Descent Action Plan which resulted from the CELAC Working Group Meeting on People of African Descent, held in Brasilia on 4 and 5 September 2014. CELAC also decided to develop a regional agenda that promotes social inclusion policies for populations of people of African descent.

Mr. Vice-President,

The Member States in our region comprise multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-lingual populations. Our societies stand to benefit from the richness of the diversity of our peoples. We recognise that encouraging the full participation and contribution of all our peoples is a significant route to fulfilling our own developmental goals. In this respect, countries of our region firmly believe that sustainable development cannot be achieved except where it is achieved for all people, regardless of racial distinction.

In this pivotal year, 2015, the Latin American and Caribbean States reaffirm our determination to promote the full inclusion of all persons in our societies, regardless of their race or ethnic background, and to achieving a region and world free of racial discrimination.