



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

STATEMENT BY

**SENATOR THE HONOURABLE MRS. KAMINA JOHNSON SMITH
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND
FOREIGN TRADE OF JAMAICA**

AT THE

**HIGH-LEVEL THEMATIC DEBATE ON ACHIEVING
THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

AT THE UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK

ON

THURSDAY, 21ST APRIL 2016

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Mr. President
Secretary-General
Excellencies

Last September, Heads of State and Government gathered here in New York and adopted the new and transformational 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reflect our shared commitment to tackle the full range of global challenges through action at all levels. If effectively implemented, the 2030 Agenda will be a game changer; a transformative force for shared prosperity.

We must, therefore, rise to the occasion and meet these ambitious Goals with a seriousness of purpose and commitment to implementation that will propel them from the realm of aspiration to the solid ground of achievement.

Mr. President,

Jamaica's national development plan, Vision 2030, is aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development insofar as it shares the overarching goal of engendering sustainable development.

Our next steps in the implementation process involve a focused effort to go beyond alignment towards the integration of the SDGs into Jamaica's policies, plans and programmes for the next fourteen years, with the involvement of stakeholders at all levels.

We are already engaged in initiatives that could serve to accelerate implementation of the SDGs, including the promotion of economic growth and job creation through sustainable growth inducement strategies.

Mr. President,

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) like Jamaica are particularly susceptible to exogenous shocks. We have had to cope with the increased frequency of natural hazards, which have caused loss of lives and livelihoods, and damage to the natural environment. The financial burden imposed by such events exacerbates an already precarious fiscal situation, which itself is adversely affected by our designation as an Upper Middle Income Country and the policy prescriptions, which flow from that designation.

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that we consider ambitious action to combat climate change, to be indispensable for the attainment of the SDGs. We welcome the signing of the Paris Agreement tomorrow as a positive inflection point in our efforts to address climate change.

Mr. President,

Statistical capacity is a major concern of SIDS. It will be difficult for progress to be measured accurately, without the appropriate statistical capabilities to do so. Indeed, there is a risk that talk of 'big data' will remain just talk for SIDS, as long as they lack the capacity to collect even the most basic disaggregated data.

In addressing this problem, we should not create a situation in which developing countries become overly dependent on the statistical capabilities of UN technical agencies. Over-reliance on these agencies to plug these gaps would retard the long-term development of local statistical agencies. The only sustainable solution is to strengthen their institutional capacity for data collection and analysis.

The SDGs embody our shared vision for a better future for People and Planet - a future characterised by shared prosperity in which no one is left behind. Success will require the development of partnerships that are inclusive, and that involve, inter alia, the private sector and academia, international organisations and a wide cross-section of countries.

Beyond such partnerships, we must take additional steps to make our commitment to revitalise the Global Partnership for Development a reality. To this end we must work together to ensure that there is steady and consistent progress in the implementation of SDG17 (Means of Implementation), upon which the attainment of all the other goals depends.

Mr. President,

Allow me to convey my thanks, and that of my delegation, to you and your team for having organised this important High-level Thematic Debate.

This is the beginning of a journey. We must forge ahead, together, in this global endeavour to move ever closer to achieving sustainable development.

Thank you.