



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

STATEMENT BY

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ON

Social Development (Agenda item 28)

**THIRD COMMITTEE FOR 73RD SESSION
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Mister Chairman,

Jamaica congratulates you and the Bureau on your election and is confident that, under your able stewardship, we will have a successful session.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the delegations of St. Lucia on behalf of CARICOM; El Salvador on behalf of CELAC; and Egypt, on behalf of the G77 and China and wishes to share some elements from the national perspective.

Jamaica thanks the Secretary General for the reports under this agenda item and notes the recommendations contained therein.

Human Capital Development

Mr. Chair, greater investment in human capital leads to exponential returns for national development. In this regard, the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF) directs investments towards “pro-poor” economic growth; developing a productive youth work force; job creation, and stimulating increased earnings at the micro, small and medium-sized enterprise levels. As a result of this thrust, approximately 1.4 million Jamaicans have benefitted from the completion and delivery of over 1, 687 projects targeting rural and agricultural development; health; education; family development; and an equipped workforce.

Mister Chair,

National Social Protection Strategy

Social Protection is undoubtedly a critical policy tool for transformation and national development. **Jamaica’s 2014 National Social Protection Strategy** is aimed at ensuring inclusion in all aspects of national development by combating inequality, poverty and vulnerability in the society.

National Policy on Poverty and National Poverty Reduction Programme

The poverty reduction agenda of Vision 2030 Jamaica - *our National Development Plan that is aligned to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* - is crafted on the belief

that each person should be provided with the opportunity, capability and support needed to enjoy a sustainable and good quality of life.

Jamaica is currently updating its 1997 National Policy on Poverty and National Poverty Reduction Programme. The revised Policy, which was tabled in Parliament in September 2017, seeks as its major outcome to eradicate extreme poverty by 2022 and reduce the national prevalence of poverty to significantly less than 10% in 2030.

Mister Chair,

Disabilities

As one of the first two countries to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Jamaica reiterates its commitment to inclusion, integration and empowerment for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) and their contribution to national development.

The Government enacted the Disabilities Act in 2014 and launched a national awareness campaign in November 2017 to sensitise citizens to the provisions of the Disabilities Act. The Disabilities Act places emphasis on the provision of equal opportunities and aims to promote greater inclusion of persons with disabilities within families and society in general. The national awareness campaign was spearheaded by the Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities, the organisation created in 1973 to protect the rights of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) and promote their independence and inclusion in every aspect of national life.

Most recently, action has been taken via the 2018 Building Act to improve accessibility to buildings for persons with disabilities; a "Ramps for Schools and Hospitals" project was launched this May to improve levels of access in schools for persons who are physically challenged, with J\$50 million earmarked by the Ministry of Education to equip schools with wheelchair ramps; and codes of practice are being developed to provide practical guidance on enhancing the level of participation of persons with disabilities. The Codes of Practice on Education and Training and on Employment are slated for finalisation at the end of this year.

Jamaica looks forward to the 2018 flagship report on disability and development.

Ageing

In line with the global trend, the number of older persons has been steadily increasing in Jamaica, with the Caribbean having one of the fastest-growing older populations globally. The government is now in the public consultation phase for a revision to the 1997 National Policy for Senior Citizens, with expected completion before the end of this year. The policy will seek to strengthen protection for the elderly, while underscoring the valuable contribution they make to national development efforts. A national registry of senior citizens will be developed to facilitate effective provision of social assistance and services and ensure that the elderly remain a visible and valuable segment of the Jamaican society as we promote intergenerational solidarity.

Family

Jamaica views the family as a fundamental institution and as the main vehicle for building a cohesive society. We recognize the importance of breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty and, as such, have invested strategically in the health and education of poor households, to move them from a state of welfare to a state of well being.

The Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH) is a key instrument in Jamaica's social protection framework, providing income support to poor families, with direct benefits provided to an estimated 70% of families living below the national poverty line.

Conclusion

Despite the gains made in this area, Jamaica remains concerned with its limited ability to provide optimal levels of budgetary support for our social protection system. This results from our constrained fiscal space and associated high debt burden. It is in this context that we reiterate the call for special attention to be given to the plight of Highly Indebted Middle Income Countries, which lack the fiscal space to preserve the hard won developmental gains that have been achieved, particularly those of a social dimension.

In closing, Mr. Chair, my delegation is mindful of the numerous challenges that lay ahead in achieving our social development targets, both domestic and international. Jamaica remains hopeful however, that collective will at the global level, coupled with determined

national action, will result in the eradication of poverty and the attainment of sustainable development for all our citizens.

Thank you.