



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

**Remarks by
His Excellency E. Courtenay Rattray
Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the United Nations**

**at the
Sports 4 Development Summit
on the occasion of the
International Day of Sport for Development and Peace
6 April 2016**

Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to join you for this second annual summit on *Sport 4 Development*, especially as today, April 6, we celebrate the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace. Jamaica was an enthusiastic supporter and co-sponsor of General Assembly resolution 67/296 which proclaimed April 6 as the International Day. Let me specially congratulate the Permanent Mission of Grenada and the Jack Brewer Foundation for organizing this event, which fully supports one of the goals of the International Day, to promote and educate about the use of sport as a tool to foster development and to support peace.

In Jamaica, sport has had a long tradition of being a unifying force. Along with music, it is one of those aspects of our vibrant culture which cuts across political, religious, class, racial and gender barriers. When one's team triumphs, the jubilation is often immeasurable. True sport fans also acknowledge and applaud outstanding performances, even grudgingly, even when that performance may doom their own team to a devastating loss. The intensity, the beauty, the science and the art of sport ignite our emotions and rekindle in us a belief in the greatness of human potential.

To watch Usain Bolt flash down the track almost faster than I can finish this sentence is astounding; to think of the audacity of the bobsleigh team from our tropical shores that qualified for and competed in the 1988 Winter Olympics, against all odds, is inspiring; to witness history as the West Indies men and women teams, through passion, commitment and hard work comprehensively overcame their English and Australian counterparts, respectively, to become ICC T20 cricket champions this past weekend is simply enthralling. These are but a few feats that our sportsmen and women demonstrate consistently. However, sport should rightly be seen as more than mere entertainment.

For Jamaica, sport is also a natural and intrinsic asset that can be harnessed productively to create jobs, grow our GDP and enhance Jamaica's business image internationally. Sport can and should be recognized as a major contributor to national development. In our Vision 2030 National Development Plan, we have set a target to *Strengthen the Role of Sport in All Aspects of National Development*. We are working to increase the growth of sport as a business and commercial activity with potential to contribute to Jamaica's economic development, and to maximize the role of sport as a source of wealth for a wide range of professions, including athletes, coaches, trainers, managers, promoters and entrepreneurs.

Our National Sport Policy (2013) acknowledges that sport will “help to achieve a wide range of socio-economic objectives at the national, regional and international levels”. It recognizes that sport is a “powerful unifying force that serves to promote healthy competition, goodwill, tolerance, good physical, intellectual and moral qualities and further strengthens the discipline of our people”. We are therefore emphasizing sport as a vehicle for peace, a tool for education and health, as well as a contributor to economic growth and development.

In Jamaica, sport has been used as a tool to address social problems such as crime and violence, political tribalism and community degeneration. We have been able to use it to unite divisive factions within and between volatile communities, to facilitate dispute resolution and to encourage behavior change, through promoting the values of teamwork, sportsmanship, self-discipline and honour, in order to help overcome the challenges that lead to disunity, distrust and division.

We welcome collaboration with outstanding organisations and partners like the Jack Brewer Foundation, as well as supportive governments and private sector players that seek to capitalize on the opportunity to engender social development through sport. Investment opportunities in the sport industry in Jamaica are ripe; there is opportunity for infrastructure development, for retail, for manufacturing and for distribution services.

Avenues are open in the area of sport education and the training of coaches and other professionals; there is scope for media partnerships; there are opportunities to link with tourism, leisure and entertainment. And yes, as the sprint capital of the world, we are turning out future stars who you may wish to start watching for an early endorsement deal. Imagine we had a 16-year old at our national high school athletics championship in March clocking 20.80 in a semi-final of a 200m race; when Bolt ran that same race in 2001 as a high-schooler, his time was 22.04.

So I invite you to come to Jamaica, the future of sport is bright!

Let me close by once again thanking the JBF and the Permanent Mission of Grenada for putting on this event. I also extend congratulations to all the awardees and encourage us all to remain fervent in our efforts to ensure that we maximize the potential of sport as an important vehicle for development and peace.

I thank you.