



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

STATEMENT BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY BRIAN WALLACE
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAMAICA**

**DURING THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF
THE GROUP OF FRIENDS OF SPORT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

THURSDAY, 2nd DECEMBER 2021, 8:30-9:30AM

NEW YORK

Her Excellency Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani, Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations

Her Excellency Isabelle Picco, Permanent Representative of the Principality of Monaco to the United Nations

His Excellency Thomas Bach, President of the International Olympic Committee

Fellow members of the Group of Friends of Sport for Sustainable Development

Good morning.

I am pleased to join in these discussions on a matter that is very near and dear to the hearts of the people of Jamaica – sport and the development of sport for the future.

I welcome the statements by His Excellency Thomas Bach, President of the International Olympic Committee, and commend the efforts of the Committee in the promotion of human rights, human development and the maintenance of peace.

The statement by His Excellency Zhang Jun, Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China, is also well received as penholder of this year's Olympic Truce Resolution and host of the 2022 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games.

At the outset, I wish to express Jamaica's support for the work undertaken thus far to ensure that the necessary measures are in place for a safe season of games in Beijing.

Excellencies,

Since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, our countries have engaged in dialogue on what it means to achieve global economic recovery. Terms such as “resilience” and “sustainability” have become the catch phrases of the day. We have come to recognize that economic recovery, resilience and sustainability are multifaceted, taking into consideration issues of security, health, education, technology and innovation, and therefore require a multisectoral approach.

Indeed, these sectors have been adversely affected by the pandemic but it is important to recognize that sport has been disproportionately so as it relies extensively on human contact.

In the case of Jamaica, sport is used as a tool for social inclusion and economic empowerment, to promote human rights and youth development, to alleviate poverty and to combat the scourge of violent crimes in our most volatile communities. In addition, sport is a key element in the national strategy to address the prevalence of non-communicable diseases.

It has therefore been imperative for the Government of Jamaica to re-think the role of sport in its strategy for post-COVID economic recovery and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. This has also translated to the need for greater investment in the sector.

In this regard, even in the midst of the pandemic, the Government continues to invest in the country's sport infrastructure, including in the renovation of the National Aquatic Centre, the resurfacing of the running track at the National Stadium and the installation of an outdoor basketball court. In addition, the Government has invested the sum of \$117 million over the last financial year at the grassroots level – through the Sports Development Foundation of Jamaica – to upgrade sports facilities in 20 schools and communities.

The stories of our athletes tell the stories of Jamaicans from all walks of life and, more importantly, the possibilities for the future of our youth. For this reason, the Government continues to encourage the vaccination of athletes and the implementation of stringent COVID-19 protocols to ensure the safe re-opening of the sport sector.

Excellencies,

Despite the challenges that had befallen our sportsmen and women due to the postponement and cancellation of some sporting activities, our athletes continue to represent Jamaica exceptionally well, as most recently seen in the Tokyo Games. In fact, just yesterday, our five-time Olympic champion and Fastest Woman Alive, Elaine Thompson-Herah, received the title of "World Athlete of the Year for 2021".

I take this opportunity to also highlight the kindness offered by the young Japanese volunteer, Ms. Tijana Stojkovic, that allowed our 110-meter hurdler Hansle Parchment to take home the gold in the

Tokyo Olympic Games. This gesture, though seemingly small, was a critical contribution to what makes Jamaica “The World’s Best” and will never be forgotten by the Jamaican people.

This, Excellencies, is what sport is all about – bringing people together in the spirit of peace and understanding. And it is in this vein that Jamaica continues to support and co-sponsor the draft resolution on **“Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal”**, which will be considered for adoption by the General Assembly during this morning’s plenary session.

In closing, Jamaica looks forward to increased engagement on the issue of sport and sustainable development, and welcomes the exchange of experiences and best practices in the field of sport for the post-COVID era and beyond. In addition, we wish the Government of the People’s Republic of China every success in the hosting of the 24th Olympic Winter Games and the 13th Paralympic Winter Games in the coming months. Jamaica

I thank you.