



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE

STATEMENT BY

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DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAMAICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

AT

**HIGH LEVEL DONORS CONFERENCE: BUILDING COMMUNITIES MORE RESILIENT
TO CLIMATE CHANGE**

**UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK
21ST NOVEMBER 2017**

Madame Chair,

Let me start by expressing, on behalf of the Government and People of Jamaica, deepest sympathy and solidarity with the Governments and peoples of the Caribbean islands for whom this Conference was organized.

We gratefully acknowledge the efforts of the CARICOM Secretariat and the UNDP to bring this important conference to a reality and thank them for leading the charge to build climate resilience in the Caribbean region.

Allow me, further, to express appreciation for all pledges of support and to acknowledge the spirit of active engagement and collaboration which has defined this process.

Excellencies,

It is universally recognized that the Caribbean region is highly vulnerable - economically, socially and environmentally – often as a function of our low lying coastal areas and the small size of land masses. The catastrophe and fury unleashed on parts of the Caribbean underscores that climate change remains an existential threat for the peoples of the Caribbean and other Small Island States. In this regard, Jamaica is in full support of calls for the development of a climate change vulnerability index to provide a standardised method for characterising vulnerability to the adverse effects of climate change. This would enable international financial institutions and bilateral donors to better channel financial and technical resources towards countries most susceptible to loss and damage from climate change.

As a way forward, Jamaica welcomes the recent and most timely proposal of the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund to convene an event with all major public and private stakeholders to explore options for building resilience in the Caribbean, including in risk mitigation, debt management strategies, and use of catastrophe bonds. We look forward to working in close collaboration with the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Caribbean Development Bank, and other development partners on creating long term, practical solutions for events that are bound to reoccur.

Excellencies, we further underscore the need and reiterate the call to revisit the issue of criteria for graduation. Highly Indebted Middle Income Countries, (HIMICs) like Jamaica and our other Caribbean partners are poised for economic transition, with relatively high levels of health and education attainment. Our potential, however, is gravely threatened by having to choose between high debt repayments and catalytic growth spending.

There is undoubtedly need to commit to an approach which champions innovation and cooperation.

It is our hope that this Conference will give new impetus to further efforts to bolster resources for enhanced disaster risk reduction mechanisms in the region. It is imperative that our deliberations today give rise to a renewed will for cooperation.

Excellencies,

To bring relief to the islands of The Bahamas, Belize, Haiti and the Turks and Caicos Islands, Jamaica has spearheaded the Regional Response Mechanism (RRM), on behalf of CARICOM, in its capacity as Focal Point for the North-Western Sub-Regional Coordination Centre (SRCC) under the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA).

Jamaica, in cooperation with the CDEMA Coordinating Unit, participating countries, regional agencies and partners, was able to deliver a quick response in the form of infrastructural and vehicular damage assessment; procurement and delivery of relief in excess of US\$35,000. We were also able to assist in the movement of Rapid Needs Assessment Teams (RNATs) led by our national Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM).

Accordingly, in the aftermath of Maria, the Jamaica Defence Force deployed 3 contingents to the Commonwealth of Dominica including 42 by Chartered Aircraft, 25 with the assistance of Caribbean Airlines Limited and 53 with the assistance of the Canadian Air Force.

Through additional arrangements with Caribbean Airlines Limited three airlifts of relief supplies at a cost of approximately \$5,000,000 were made on 27th, 28th and 29th September 2017.

Jamaica further committed USD\$100,000 to the Commonwealth of Dominica and has established and operated a Relief Supplies Collection Point at the ODPEM local offices. In respect of Antigua and Barbuda, Jamaica donated USD \$100,000 on 26th September 2017. But, this is merely a drop in the bucket in comparison to the level of devastation experienced in Barbuda, which has annihilated its entire economy.

In recognition of the value of involvement of the private sector, initiatives have been launched in collaboration with the Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica.

The Government of Jamaica is pleased to announce that its representative has been appointed coordinator of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) Disaster Recovery

Working Group, which was formed to meet the needs of Member States that have been recently affected by powerful natural disasters, such as hurricanes, tropical storms and earthquakes.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, we have much work to do together and you have my assurance that Jamaica stands ready to play its part.

I thank you.