



**STATEMENT BY**

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Mr. Chair,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great honor and pleasure for me to make this statement on behalf of the Government of Jamaica at this the 13th Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests. We are deeply appreciative of the opportunity afforded to us Mr. Chair to expound on the four Voluntary National Contributions developed by the country and thank you for the invitation to speak.

Jamaica has identified four actions all of which are linked to the Global Forest Goals and support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development targets. A couple of the actions also have significant contributions to achieving a number of the Aichi Biodiversity targets. In the last year we have been able to finalise a National Forest Policy and completed the National Action Plan, known as the National Forest Management and Conservation Plan, with assistance from the UNFF secretariat. The Plan which was approved by Parliament in February 2018, has provided the necessary foundation for the commitments to be highlighted in this presentation.

Jamaica as a small island developing state, with approximately 439,000 hectares of forest cover - 40% of the total land mass, in its drive to among other things adapt to the effects of climate change, undertakes in the first instance to improve its watershed management planning through interventions in specific forest estates. The country commits to verifying at least 10,000 hectares of forest land to support national level efforts to sustainably manage our forest cover. Additionally, reforestation activity will result in 300 hectares of denuded land being reforested and the maintenance of 1000 hectares of previously established plantations. Of significance to the country are our mangrove forests which have been significantly depleted over time and require specific interventions to stymie the rate of loss. In support of this Jamaica undertakes the transfer of management responsibility for 7000 hectares of state-owned mangroves to the Forestry Department.

These actions will aid in the protection of these areas and their vital resources, thereby reducing the likelihood of forest cover loss, whilst simultaneously increasing these levels through reforestation initiatives. All of these targets will be met by the year 2022. They support Global Forest Goal 1: Target 1.1.

The country recognises the importance of enhancing the social, economic and environmental benefits that forests provide and commits to improving the livelihood options of communities that depend on the island's forest resources. In that vein we undertake by 2022 to secure at a minimum USD two point four million dollars to support alternative livelihood options for community members who live in close proximity to our forest areas. Two million Euro has been identified under the EU Budgetary Support Programme for Jamaica's Forest Sector over the next four years. It is anticipated that the benefits from this intervention will result in multiple opportunities for not just the direct beneficiaries of the programme, but the country at large. This will serve to highlight the role that forests play in supporting social, economic and environmental development (Global Forest Goal 2: Target 2.4).

The third Voluntary Contribution relates to the development of a framework to increase the areas of mangrove forest under protection, through the development of a Mangrove Management Plan. The Target stipulates that by 2030 the country will have at least a ten percent increase in the number of hectares legally protected, that also have management plans geared towards protecting and conserving the forest resources. This is in support of Global Forest Goal 3 (Targets 3.1 and 3.2) which seek to increase the area of protected forests operating under the auspices of long-term management plans. This is also in support of the achievement of Aichi Biodiversity Target 11.

The final Voluntary National Contribution relates to the strengthening of the legislative framework for Jamaica's forest sector. The target is by 2022 to revise the Forest Act (1996) and the Forest Regulations (2001) to facilitate improved governance and protection of the island's forest areas. The alignment of the existing relatively dated legislation with the newly promulgated Forest Policy, will support the implementation of sustainable forest management practices, by bolstering the forest law enforcement and governance framework regulating the forest sector. This VNC supports Goal 5: Target 5.2.

It is anticipated Mr. Chair that the implementation of these four actions and by extension six targets will go a long way in improving the management of Jamaica's forests.

Thank you for your attention.