

Interventions- MHPM - AOSIS Leaders Summit

Dialogue 1 - The challenges and priorities of SIDs in the post COVID era

My colleague Prime Minister, the Honourable Gaston Browne, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda and Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. Today, I am pleased to be participating in this very important Leaders' Summit. I congratulate you Prime Minister Browne for convening such a necessary event at a time when Small Island Developing States have been disproportionately impacted by the ongoing health crisis.
2. I also welcome the opportunity to contribute to these discussions which seek to identify solutions for SIDS-centered response to the current challenges, as well as those which are likely in the post COVID-19 era.
3. Like many of our countries, Jamaica is experiencing a contraction in economic activity, coupled with increasing social and health-related expenditures that have adversely impacted our fiscal position.
4. Nevertheless, in our response to the pandemic, we launched the COVID-19 Allocation of Resources for Employees (CARE) Programme in April 2020 to provide temporary cash transfers to cushion the economic impact on individuals and business.

5. In building forward stronger, one area in which Jamaica has placed significant emphasis is building resilient digital infrastructure. This we believe will serve as a force multiplier in narrowing the gaps that result in inequitable developmental outcomes across all sectors.
6. Jamaica will continue to support the proposal of AOSIS to establish a SIDS Compact to deliver debt relief and increase resilience financing. This we also believe is one way to address our debt sustainability.
7. It is imperative that, as SIDs, we are also able to invest in the resilience of our economies to climate change and other external shocks. Consequently, the COP 26 discussions must be action-oriented and serve to focus our attention on fiscal space and debt sustainability in SIDS, alongside climate finance commitments.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

8. In addressing our challenges and implementing our priorities, we recognize the need to deepen multilateral functional cooperation. Jamaica therefore continues to place high priority on the ongoing work under the Financing for Development Initiative in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond, for which I am one of the co-convenors. We are confident that the policy options which are being actioned under this initiative, will greatly assist the international community to take the decisive action needed to shape the required COVID-19 response and recovery, in particular for the most vulnerable.
9. The Leaders Declaration which we will adopt today serves as a manifesto which appropriately advances the priorities of SIDS and signals to the international community actions needed to provide effective, targeted and scalable responses that can lead to more resilient and even recovery for our countries.
10. I thank you.