



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

**STATEMENT BY
THE HONOURABLE ROBERT PICKERSGILL
MINISTER OF WATER, LAND, ENVIRONMENT
AND CLIMATE CHANGE OF JAMAICA**

**AT THE
HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE
ELEVENTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS**

New York

Wednesday, 13th May, 2015

PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Chairman of the Eleventh Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, Colleague Ministers,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Congratulations from the Government and people of Jamaica to you and the other members of the Bureau on your election. I also wish to commend the Secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests on the excellent approach adopted in coordinating this crucial meeting convened under the theme "Forests: progress, challenges and the way forward on the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF)."

Jamaica recognises that a sound overarching global policy framework that guides the management, conservation and sustainable utilisation of the world's forests is key to ensuring their sustainable management. We further recognise that the effective implementation of such a global framework will depend on action taken at the national level. In keeping with that observation Jamaica is in the process of updating its national Forest Policy as well as reviewing and updating the National Forest Management and Conservation Plan, which govern the forestry sector. It is envisaged that the National Forest Management and Conservation Plan will facilitate a more coordinated and strategic approach to the management of the island's forest areas.

Chairman,

Jamaica, which derives its name from Xaymaca, the Taino term meaning "Land of wood and water", has a diverse array of forests types which provide the country with numerous direct and indirect benefits in the form of timber and non-timber products and ecosystem services. The Government of Jamaica is committed to instituting policies geared towards maintaining the positive trend observed over the last sixteen years of 0.41 % (annual) increase in forest cover. The Government has taken active measures to increase the total number of hectares under protection by declaring just under 5000 hectares of public and privately owned lands as forest reserves and forest management areas.

Chairman,

The Government of Jamaica recognises the crucial role played by our forests in the protection of the nation's watershed areas, the stabilization of the soil on the mountainous ridges forming the spine of the island, and the aesthetic value derived by the tourism sector from having lush vegetation on the hills overlooking and protecting our coastline. As a small island developing state, Jamaica faces innumerable challenges in relation to the sustainable management of its natural resources. The impact of man-made and natural disasters on these resources is exacerbated by the growing vulnerabilities resulting from climate change. The sustainable management of the existing forests and increased reforestation initiatives will contribute significantly to the mitigation of these effects.

Chairman, Colleague Ministers, Excellencies,

We now find ourselves at a crossroads. This is a grand opportunity for the contribution of the world's forests to the overarching global effort to achieve sustainable development to be recognised. Jamaica is encouraged by the attempts at the regional and international levels to adopt a more wholistic approach to sustainable forest management and recognises that as we determine the future of the UNFF and the IAF post 2015, that a common consensus from all of the countries gathered here will make for a more coordinated and united front going forward.

Thank you.