

**STATEMENT**

**BY**

**SENATOR THE HONOURABLE KAMINA JOHNSON SMITH**

**ON**

**THE OCCASION OF THE HIGH LEVEL MEETING ON HURRICANE IRMA**

**ORGANISED BY THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY GENERAL AND PRESIDENT OF THE 72ND REGULAR SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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Thank you Mr. President.

As a small island developing state in the Caribbean with a high vulnerability to the devastating impact of natural disasters, Jamaica welcomes this opportunity to stand with other delegations in solidarity with our Caribbean family affected by Hurricane Irma.

With over 23 deaths recorded and widespread damage across the Caribbean rendering some territories inhabitable, the passage of Hurricane Irma is a too painful reminder that Mother Nature remains a force unmatched by our small size and shrinking resources.

An important perspective not to be missed, while maintaining focus on the loss of life, physical damage and complexity of reconstruction efforts, is that of the human and economic impact of displacement caused by natural disasters, as currently being experienced.

Jamaica participated in all coordination meetings of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (**CDEMA**) Regional Response Mechanism and deployed rapid needs assessment teams on 11th and 13th September 2017, particularly in our role as the sub-regional focal point for Bahamas, Belize, Haiti and Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI).

We urge fellow Member States to maintain the support and strong cooperation with the region in the relief, recovery and reconstruction process and thank the United Nations Secretary-General and the President of the 72nd regular session of the United Nations General Assembly for organising this timely meeting.

Thank you.