



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

**INTERVENTION BY**

**H.E. RAYMOND O. WOLFE  
AMBASSADOR/PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE**

**DURING THE**

**THIRD SESSION OF CONFERENCE OF STATE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION  
ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES  
2<sup>nd</sup> SEPTEMBER 2010**

Thank you, Mr Chairman,

Let me express my delegation's appreciation to the distinguished members of both panels for their comprehensive presentations on inclusion and living in the community – an issue of tremendous relevance to the disabled community. My delegation was particularly moved by the presentation made by the last speaker, Ms Senada Halilcevic on her experience living in an institution for disabled persons.

Mr. Chairman, we are gathered here once again to participate in a major conference that will impact the lives of over 650 million citizens of the world - a group of citizens that have been marginalized and heavily discriminated against due to circumstances of which they have no control.

It may be recalled, Mr. Chairman, that in 2007, Jamaica was the first country in the world to simultaneously sign and ratify the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. We did so, because we have a fundamental belief that persons with disabilities should be provided the opportunities that will allow them to maximize their full potential.

Prior to signing and ratifying the Convention, my country participated vigorously in the discussions which led to the creation of the first international convention for the new

millennium. We were proud to be a part of that august body of committed and focused individuals who stood steadfastly in the crafting of this Convention.

Mr Chairman, as we consider the theme of today's session, I would like to update the Conference on two new developments in Jamaica that are relevant. Jamaica has been working on national legislation to protect the rights of persons with disabilities, and I am pleased to report that we have finally amended regulations that were on the statutes for over 50 years, preventing the deaf from driving on Jamaican roads. Today, all deaf persons in Jamaica are eligible for a driver's license.

One of our major universities, namely, the University of the West Indies, has established a Centre for Disability Studies and is focusing on research that will significantly impact the quality of life of persons with disabilities in Jamaica and the wider Caribbean. A major initiative coming out of this university is the development of a model for a Global Disability Index, which is being designed to track and measure the progress of Member States with implementation of the Convention. This landmark global index will rank Member States in a similar fashion to the Human Development Index. We believe that this disability index will be a significant contribution not only to our region but will also benefit the global community. My delegation would appreciate the views of the panel on this initiative.

I also have a question concerning the provision of international development assistance. My delegation is interested in the panel's views on whether there are any efforts to link such assistance to mainstreaming institutional support for persons with disabilities, such as the educational institutions which the panel referred to earlier.

Finally, Mr Chairman, Jamaica is committed to the advancement and implementation of the provisions of the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. We are committed to improving the quality of life of these vulnerable but talented individuals. We wish for this Conference all the success and urge Member States who have not yet signed and ratified the Convention, to do so urgently.

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