



PERMANENT MISSION OF
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Statement by

**the Honourable Dr. Kenneth Baugh, Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica**

during the

High-level Meeting on Africa's Development Needs,

United Nations Headquarters, 22 September 2008

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Mr. Chairman,

- Jamaica aligns itself with the Statement delivered by Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. It is an honour for my country to participate in this High-level event dedicated to Africa's development needs, which we hope will serve to renew our collective focus and political will to effectively address the plight of the Continent.
- Jamaica shares a special relationship with the continent of Africa given our strong historical ties and the strong bonds of friendship shared with the African people. We therefore have a genuine interest in the progress and welfare of our sisters and brothers on the continent.
- Within this context, we view the initiative of the AU/Diaspora Summit, aimed at fostering a closer alliance with the African Diaspora worldwide, of which Jamaica is a part, as a significant step towards responding to the needs of the Continent. This mechanism would positively complement other activities taking place in the UN and elsewhere.
- I thank the Secretary-General for his very comprehensive report on Africa's development needs which forms the basis for our discussions today. As noted in the report, Africa faces peculiar challenges including alarming rates of poverty, the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases, persistence of violent conflicts, loss of human capital and enormous resource outflows, all of which have been exacerbated by other compelling global developments including inter alia the food crisis, soaring energy prices and climate change.
- Needless to say, this is already having a significant bearing on the ability of African countries to achieve the internationally agreed development goals including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As we are poised to enter the second phase of the race to the 2015 goalpost to the achievement of the MDGs, it is quite unfortunate to note that while some countries are on target to achieve some of the goals, NO country on the continent is on track to achieve all the goals.
- Jamaica commends the Governments and Peoples of Africa for their individual and collective efforts to advance their own development. Within the framework of NEPAD which is centred on the principle of national ownership, many African countries have taken several bold and positive steps to foster economic growth and enhance stability in their quest for sustainable development.
- Notwithstanding their sterling efforts, Mr. Chairman, the scale and magnanimity of the challenges confronting Africa, far outweighs their capacity to effectively address them.

- Countries emerging from conflict require special attention and assistance given the enormous challenges which they face in the areas of peace, stability and socio-economic development.
- We acknowledge the efforts of the international community to support the development agenda in Africa. It is acknowledged that the UN and the AU have forged a productive partnership over the years, strengthened with the launch of the MDG Africa Steering Group exactly one year ago. The Secretary-General must be commended for this bold initiative. It is our sincere hope that the recommendations/action plan of the Steering Group will be fully implemented, and that the Steering Group will assist in streamlining and coordinating the activities of the United Nations in Africa. Member States could benefit from a report in the future on the work of the Steering Group.
- While also acknowledging the efforts of other development partners in supporting Africa's development, we continue to lament the persistent implementation deficit as it relates to the myriad commitments made to Africa.
- We are heartened by the fact that a number of commitments relating to external debt relief have been honoured and encourage these developments, while reaffirming that debt relief should not detract from conventional official development assistance (ODA).
- We are however concerned that very limited progress has been attained in other areas of financing for development including the promised increase in ODA. It is clear from the Secretary-General's report that without a massive increase in the current resources being allocated to Africa, it is difficult to envisage the continent fully extricating itself from the deepening quagmire of poverty.

Mr. Chairman,

- This High-level event is not a chance encounter. It is an opportune time to undertake stocktaking as we chart a way forward. I can assure you, we already have an abundance of commitments and promises. The missing elements are the resources and concrete actions to truly advance the process. The time for rhetoric is over. Let us use these commitments as a springboard to a brighter future for the People of Africa.
- I thank you Mr. Chairman.