



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

STATEMENT BY

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TO THE

**48TH SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

UNDER AGENDA ITEM 4

**“General Debate on National Experience in Population Matters: Realizing the Future We Want
– Integrating Population Issues into Sustainable Development, Including the Post-2015
Development Agenda”**

**13th – 17th April 2015
United Nations, New York**

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Madam Chair,

Our delegation extends heartiest congratulations to you and your Bureau on your election to the chair of the 48th Session of the Commission. We are aware of the difficult task that you have especially in light of the theme of this session but we are assured that under your excellent chairmanship we will achieve all the objectives that we have set.

We are meeting at a particularly pivotal moment in the history of multilateral efforts to address the development aspirations of our citizens. The process of elaborating the post-2015 development agenda is well advanced and will have far-reaching implications for the mainstreaming of population issues at the global, regional and national levels. We are also engaged in the preparatory process for the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD), through which we will determine the best means of mobilising resources for development. Both of these processes will be quite consequential for the advancement of the population agenda and it is therefore entirely timely and appropriate that we have chosen the theme "Realising the future we want - integrating population issues into sustainable development, including the post-2015 development agenda". Addressing the range of population issues that we have dealt with in the Commission throughout its decades-long existence, including the rights of women and girls, migration and the demographic transition, will be fundamental to our efforts to achieve sustainable development.

Madam Chair,

Jamaica has made significant progress in most of the areas of the ICPD Programme of Action, the Millennium Development Goals and other major development agreements. In more recent times, we have developed a comprehensive social protection strategy and formulated a National Policy on International Migration and Development, as well as a National Diaspora Policy. We have put in place legislative and institutional measures to strengthen the protection of children and women, as well as persons with disabilities. Our National Youth Policy has also been drafted and is now being considered by the Cabinet.

Despite such progress, the country still faces many challenges in achieving the targets and objectives in many critical aspects. Some of these include: continuing high levels of infant, under-five and maternal mortality; unacceptably high rates of adolescent pregnancy/fertility and its linkage with the inter-generational transmission of poverty; high levels of sexual and domestic violence and abuse; increasing levels of non-communicable diseases; high rates of gun and gang related homicides and deaths and morbidities resulting from motor vehicle accidents; and increasing rates of poverty due to the global financial and economic crisis of 2008 coupled with intermittent shocks from weather events and other externalities; as well as the continuing constraints imposed by a high debt burden as reflected in our relatively high debt to GDP ratio.

Jamaica is fully committed to continuing to address these challenges, in partnership with the private sector, civil society and our international development partners. We have, for example, established centres of Excellence across the country to address maternal and child health. We call on the Commission to ensure that these issues gain adequate attention in our deliberations.

Jamaica's population has made significant transitions since the Cairo Conference in 1994. The total fertility rate is currently around 2.3 children per woman down from 3 children per woman in 1994. Death rates, as measured by the crude death rate, have reached its lowest levels at around 6 deaths per 1000 population. High levels of external

migration have resulted in a relatively low annual population growth rate of under 0.5 per cent over the past fifteen (15) years. The combined effects of the declining fertility and mortality rates have resulted in a rapidly ageing population. The child, adolescent and youth populations have all started to decline while the working age population 15-64 years and the elderly are expanding rapidly. These dynamics are placing undue stress for reforms in education and training, health, social protection and labour market systems and service provisions.

Madam Chair,

With a view to having a clear sense of Jamaica's progress in the achievement of international commitments in the area of Development, the Government has completed a national report on the twenty (20) year review of the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. In addition, we have also completed a Comprehensive Assessment of the Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals after 15 years. The findings set out in these reports allowed us to provide guidance to colleagues who participated in the deliberations of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.

In this regard, the Planning Institute of Jamaica in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade established a multi-ministerial Working Group. The Working Group was tasked with providing input to the negotiating team at the UN to ensure that the proposed goals and targets fully reflected the priorities of Jamaica going forward. We are pleased to report that at this stage the majority of those priorities is reflected in the agenda.

For us, it was imperative that population dynamics, international migration and gender equality be treated as cross-cutting themes that must be fully integrated in the Post 2015 Development Agenda. Our task ahead is to ensure that these cross-cutting themes, including reproductive health and reproductive rights are fully reflected in all relevant indicators including those developed for use at the global, regional and national levels.

Madam Chair,

I am pleased to report that our Inter-ministerial Working Group has been reconstituted to commence the task of developing national indicators for the monitoring the implementation of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and, more broadly, of the Post 2015 Development Agenda. In this regard, we will continue to feed our priorities into the global framework and also to craft indicators that are specific to our country realities. We will ensure that indicators reflecting population dynamics, international migration, gender equality and reproductive health and reproductive rights, among rights in general, are fully integrated at all levels but in particular at the national level.

Madam Chair,

I should also note that we have already commenced the work of integrating the proposed SDGs into the goals and targets of our National Long-Term Development Plan, Vision 2030. This is a work in progress.

Jamaica will continue to advance the effort to secure the future we want through its ongoing efforts to contribute to the development of the post-2015 development agenda, and the advancement of efforts to fulfil the commitments in the ICPD, including through the effective alignment of national plans with the international development agenda.

Thank you.