



PERMANENT MISSION OF JAMAICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT BY

MRS. TONI-SHAE FRECKLETON
MANAGER, POPULATION AND HEALTH UNIT
SOCIAL POLICY, PLANNING AND RESEARCH DIVISION
PLANNING INSTITUTE OF JAMAICA

TO THE

49TH SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

UNDER AGENDA ITEM 4

*“General Debate on National Experience in Population
Matters: Strengthening the Demographic Evidence Base for the
Post-2015 Development Agenda”*

TUESDAY, 12TH APRIL 2016

AT THE UNITED NATIONS

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Introduction

Chairperson

The Jamaican delegation extends heartiest congratulations on your election as Chairman of the 49th Session of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD). We also extend commendations to the other members of the Bureau. Under your leadership, we anticipate that the Session will achieve all its objectives and lay the foundation for the full implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and the effective integration of population variables into the 2030 Agenda. Chair, Jamaica fully recognizes and endorses the synergies between the ICPD PoA and the SDGs. Further, we align our statement with that made by the Group of 77 and China in reaffirming the Group's commitment to the PoA.

Chair, Jamaica's population and development programme over the past twenty (20) years has been modelled by the principles, goals and objectives of the ICPD Programme of Action. Today, we are expressing our strong commitment and reaffirmation of these, as we move to achieve sustainable development within the context of the post-2015 development agenda. We further acknowledge that the 2030 Agenda should be centrally and fully integrated into the work programme and monitoring and review mechanism of the CPD.

Jamaica has made notable achievements in its population and development programme since 1994. These include: substantial reductions in fertility and

mortality rates, increases in life expectancy, reduction in average household size and integration of population factors into national and sectoral policies, plans and programmes. Consistent with the changing demographics, social and environmental conditions of the country, Jamaica has scheduled for the next 2 years, the revision and formulation of several critical policies and strategies including:

- Revision of the National Population Policy, the Youth Policy, the Policy for Senior Citizens, Policy on Poverty;
- Finalization of the draft National Policy on International Migration and Development and the draft Diaspora Policy;
- Formulation of a National Policy on Sexual and Reproductive Health;
- Costing and implementation of a Social Protection Floor under the National Social Protection Strategy.

All these policies will be revised and formulated within the context of the ICPD Beyond 2014, the Montevideo Consensus, the 2030 Agenda and Vision 2030 Jamaica – National Development Plan.

In spite of these achievements, however, several challenges remain and are primarily triggered by the particular vulnerabilities and external economic shocks that Jamaica and other countries of the Caribbean sub-region face as small island developing states. These vulnerabilities including the impact of natural disasters, the negative effects of climate change, and unsustainable levels of indebtedness, have constrained our efforts towards sustainable development.

Chairperson

The issues that have been central to the implementation of the ICPD PoA remain at the forefront of the 2030 Agenda. This signals the gravity of population and development issues within the framework of “leaving no one behind”. Bearing this in mind, the theme of this years’ session is timely as we seek to strengthen the foundation on which programmes to achieve these goals are developed and also how they will be measured and monitored.

Population dynamics presents both challenges and opportunities to further the 2030 Agenda. We are cognizant of the fact that the strategies to achieve the SDGs and full implementation of the ICPD PoA must be sensitive to the demographics and will require bold steps towards building capacities, introducing innovative technologies and a reconfiguration of national statistics systems to ensure effective implementation. In this regard, the demographic evidence to support the backbone of the 2030 Agenda has to be sound and robust. Inaccurate data leads to inaccurate bases for policy formulation, programme development and monitoring and evaluation.

Chairperson

I am pleased to state that in aligning the SDGs with our own Vision 2030 Jamaica, population was treated as a cross-cutting theme to ensure its full integration. I also wish to underscore that Jamaica has made several efforts to improve the quality and reliability of data produced by the national statistics system. Through our multi-agency Vital Statistics Commission, several

initiatives have been implemented under a programme for the modernization of civil registration and vital statistics system relating to institutional linkages and policies; data collection and management; and strengthening human resources. The implementation of bedside registration and offering a free birth certificate once the child has been named at birth has improved birth registration to approximately 98.0 per cent. While improvements have been made with birth registration, significant challenges remain with death registration. A recently completed study on *Quality and Completeness of Death Registration* in Jamaica identified several concerns with registration delays and non-reporting by the police, particularly for sudden deaths due to natural causes, accidents and violence. In light of this, the government has taken steps to address the recommendations through several legislative and administrative changes within our police force, the court system and the civil registration entity.

The Government of Jamaica is fully aware of the need to continue to strengthen its national statistical capacity in order to meet the ever increasing demand for more and better statistics. Significant strides have been made in the areas of data collection, analysis and reporting. These include:

- the procurement of a four-year Enterprise License Agreement (ELA) with the ESRI and a private sector company in Jamaica to provide access to updated high resolution satellite imagery, topographic maps and a variety of base content which are being used to update the national poverty maps;
- procurement of an Open Data Portal;

- Use of EDACs in data collection of national household surveys.

Greater emphasis on a coordinated approach to the production of 'national statistics' to guarantee consistency, efficiency, transparency and compatibility with international standards and among national data producing agencies is at the forefront of our national agenda. In this regard, work has commenced on the establishment of an integrated National Statistics Commission.

Chairperson

The SDGs can be considered as game-changers for the graduation of Jamaica and other countries caught in a middle income trap to developed country status. The response for this graduation will require a multifaceted, multi stakeholder and inclusive approach to counter the effects of these realities. Key to Jamaica's development is the implementation of strategies for sustained economic growth; strengthened human capital; while ensuring environmental sustainability and climate change resilience.

Significant investments and resources will be required to unlock, leverage and catalyse resources; and fashion policies, plans and programmes to meet the objectives of the ICPD PoA and the 2030 Agenda. The need for this investment is running parallel to substantial reductions in resources against the backdrop of our vulnerabilities to external economic shocks and hydro-meteorological events. Based on forecasts for several areas in population and development programmes, we run the risk of eroding gains made if the wide scale and drastic removal of critical development assistance continues. Within the

context of the objectives of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, Jamaica reiterates the call for additional resources to countries caught within the middle income trap.

In order to bolster the success of the ICPD PoA in the Caribbean and certainly in Jamaica, we wish emphasis to be placed by the global community on the need for continued technical and financial support to population and development programmes at the regional and national levels. Jamaica wishes to place on record, our appreciation for the work being done by the UNFPA Sub-regional Office and other IDPs and strongly urge that continued and increased resources be channelled through these agencies to ensure effective programme implementation and sustainability in Jamaica and the Caribbean sub-region in general.

Thank you