



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

STATEMENT BY

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**ON THE OCCASION OF THE
58TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND
DEVELOPMENT**

ON

**AGENDA ITEM 3 (B): ENSURING HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTING
WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES**

UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK

7th – 11th APRIL 2025

Madam Chair

Jamaica joins with other distinguished delegates in conveying its congratulations to you on the assumption of your Chairmanship of the 58th Session of the Commission on Population and Development. Please be assured of Jamaica's support for the successful outcome of this year's Commission.

This session has clearly reaffirmed the importance of achieving sustainable development through ensuring the health and well-being of all at all ages, as outlined in Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG 3). Ensuring healthy lives for all requires a strong commitment to prioritizing equitable access to quality healthcare, promoting preventive measures, addressing health disparities, strengthening health systems and promoting global health collaboration.

Madam Chair

Jamaica's population and development agenda is guided by our first long-term National Development Plan, **Vision 2030 Jamaica**. One of the National Outcomes of Vision 2030 Jamaica speaks to a Healthy and Stable Population, which is achieved by addressing population and development concerns through a life-cycle approach. This outcome is premised upon the principles of inclusion and sustainability.

Madam Chair

Jamaica's population is ageing rapidly with an increasing elderly cohort, a growing working-age cohort, and a shrinking child population. This dynamic is driven by factors including:

- The reduction in the fertility rate, which now stands below the replacement level at 1.9 births per woman in 2021

- Educational empowerment and increased female labour force participation
- High external migration of critical human resources, particularly members of our post-secondary and tertiary educated population.

These existing demographic features place Jamaica at the advanced stage of the demographic transition. This **Madam Chair** presents both challenges and opportunities for our economy and the health sector. The demographic changes, when considered with the increase in chronic non-communicable diseases, indicate the need for consideration of healthcare services targeting the needs of older persons including increased prevention programmes, continuous medical management, long term care and caregiver support. We recognize that to adapt to these demographic changes, further strategic planning must be undertaken to strengthen our capacity to withstand these challenges which may undermine our efforts towards sustainable development.

To this end, the Government of Jamaica has undertaken several policy and programmatic reform initiatives in the areas of gender equality and women's empowerment; the rights of children and persons with disabilities; human capital investment; and data systems. Emphasis was also placed on improving and strengthening our social protection system; improving reproductive health care services; and strengthening our health system through the implementation a Health Systems Strengthening Programme.

Madam Chair,

Jamaica has recognized that changes in population size, age structure, and distribution influence the needs and demands on health systems, requiring planning and requisite resource allocation. The Health Systems Strengthening programme aims to increase the capacity of the health sector to provide comprehensive health promotion, disease prevention and treatment to meet the specific needs of individuals through tailored infrastructure upgrades to facilities, linked information systems and standardized levels of care; resulting in a health system that is sustainable and resilient against future health challenges.

Madam Chair

The implementation of these actions has led to several health-related gains including reductions in infant and under-five mortality, and mother to child transmission of HIV and syphilis. With the integration of elimination of mother-to-child transmission services into maternal and child health programmes, Jamaica was able to achieve certification from the WHO for the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis in May 2024. Continuous improvements have been made in life expectancy, civil registration and vital statistics, vaccination coverage and the prevalence of some communicable diseases.

Madam Chair

While these areas have been highlighted as strategic priorities for advancing care, there is still need for considerable focus on ensuring that our health systems respond effectively to changes taking place in the population by:

- intensifying activities within the primary health care framework,
- addressing the social determinants of health,
- improving the capacity of the health workforce,

- ensuring sustainable financing for healthcare, and
- enhancing continued multisectoral collaboration.

Health initiatives must not lag behind changing population needs; the analysis and interpretation of population structure and dynamics should be an intrinsic part of the planning and delivery of health services. Health and well-being are crucial for sustainable development, and progress in this area is essential for overall societal advancement.

I thank you.