



GOVERNMENT OF JAMAICA

STATEMENT BY

**SENATOR THE HONOURABLE MATTHEW SAMUDA
MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO IN THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC
GROWTH AND JOB CREATION**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE MIDTERM COMPREHENSIVE
REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE
INTERNATIONAL DECADE OF ACTION, "WATER FOR SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT" 2018-2028**

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NEW YORK

As advised

Mr. President,

The Government of Jamaica is happy that SDG6 is now being given the attention that it so desperately needs. Human health and dignity are the foundations for every society and require access to clean drinking water and sanitation. Indeed, without this access, our collective ability to achieve the 2030 Agenda is undermined.

I take this opportunity to highlight, in my capacity as Co-Chair of the Group of Friends of Children and the SDGs, the direct impact of the water, sanitation and hygiene crisis on children's rights, lives and well-being. Access to safe drinking water and sanitation is not a privilege but a basic human right enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. As governments, it is our duty to uphold this right.

Sixty-Nine (69) members of the Group of Friends of Children and the SDGs therefore call on Member States to use the occasion of the UN Water Conference to act now to achieve SDG 6 and ensure a better future for every child. In the furtherance of our advocacy in this regard, the complete statement of the Group of Friends will be issued to the UN membership.

The Government of Jamaica's vision for the management of the island's water resources is guided by "Vision 2030 Jamaica", our National Development Plan. We are further guided by the National Water Sector Policy and Implementation Plan, of 2019.

The Policy aims to ensure that the country's water resources are managed in a sustainable and integrated manner to facilitate the population having universal access to potable water and adequate sanitation by 2030. Additionally, the goal of the Policy is to ensure that Jamaica's water resources are effectively managed to provide for our nation's social, economic, and environmental well-being, now and in the future.

The Policy outlines in detail the measures that are being implemented by the GOJ to manage and protect the island's water resources to ensure universal access to potable water and adequate sanitation by 2030.

Climate Change Adaptation & Mitigation

Mr. President

The latest IPCC report, should function as a sobering reminder of our commitments. The water crisis is exacerbated by the Climate Crisis. Jamaica is calling on all Developed countries to honour their commitments made under the Paris Agreement and subsequently.

Even if honoured, there is an urgent need for significant increases in funding for Adaption. It is Jamaica's belief that much of this should be directed toward water resilience. We have repeatedly called for the process of accessing finance to be simplified and harmonized across Funding Agencies. The Climate Crisis which is driving the Water crisis will not abate because we want it to. It will abate because we make the tough political decisions and appropriate investments in

Adaptation and Water resilience. Jamaica has been moving aggressively to mainstream its Climate action and has now completed its new Climate Change, and Emissions Policies.

Jamaica's surface water sources, which are responsible for more than 70% of the potable water supply in the island, are impacted by climate change. The change in rainfall level and patterns have resulted in longer dry periods/increased drought conditions, resulting in low water availability. Changes in weather patterns have also resulted in less rain to supply the watersheds and reservoirs.

The impacts of climate change on water availability and water quality affect ALL sectors. The watersheds are important features for supplying drinking water and replenishing streams, as well as for supplying areas for agriculture and natural forests. Jamaica has taken steps to protect its watersheds and through increasing its Protected Areas while pursuing significant restoration efforts through its "Three Million Trees in Three Years Initiative" in excess of 2.5 Million trees have already been planted. Jamaica is also nearing completion on a new Watersheds Policy.

Mr. President,

ALL our energies would be in vain if our water resources are not effectively managed, and that is why Jamaica will honour its commitments made at the COP 15. Jamaica is proud to announce that it will complete the protection of 30% of its landmass by 2025, a full five years ahead of the global target.

Jamaica is also proud to announce today that it will join SIDS Coalition for Nature. Jamaica has adopted an **Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM)** approach to managing land, watersheds, and water resources, through the establishment of a Management Council (IWRMC).

It is a multidisciplinary and multi-sectoral body, led by the Ministry with responsibility for Water that facilitates consultation/discussion among key stakeholders in the water and water-related sectors and support/expedite decision making for the management of the island's water and water related resources.

The focus of the Council has included the adherence to water quality standards by service providers, improvements in water supply infrastructure, and the use of GIS technology in the water sector.

Improved Water Supply and Sanitation

Mr. President,

Chronic under-investment in water infrastructure for almost 50 years has made the goals of SDG6 challenging. However, Jamaica has significantly increased investment since 2016 to reduce distribution losses, increase storage and increase processing & production capacity.

Several critical infrastructure projects are being undertaken by the country's main utility provider, the National Water Commission (NWC), which, upon completion, will improve water supply services across the island and increase the country's resilience to climate change. The NWC is replacing aged transmission lines and infrastructure across several service areas in the country, which will improve the delivery of water supply.

Additionally, the implementation of its Non-Revenue Water Programme is expected to improve service delivery to its customers; enhance operational efficiency of the NWC, improve water distribution and facilitate huge energy and water savings.

This process is further strengthened with the use of Jamaica's Systemic Risk Assessment Tool which assesses climate risk to all infrastructure including Water. This tool was developed by CCRI and the University of Oxford with funding from the Green Climate Fund.

Mr. President,

We must address the elephant in the room. This is Energy Efficiency in the Water Sector. The high cost of energy has significantly impacted Jamaica's ability to distribute water to all. Despite this challenge, Jamaica has taken steps to reduce its energy consumption in the distribution process with updated equipment, and greater use of gravity fed systems. We are moving to integrate the use of renewable energy sources.

Service Providers in the water sector will adopt energy efficient technologies and techniques to reduce high energy costs and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

One such example is Jamaica's push to install a Floating Photovoltaic Renewable Energy Plant at the Mona Reservoir. The project involves the installation of a 45 Megawatt-peak (MWp) Direct Current (DC) Floating Photovoltaic Renewable Energy Plant with a 25 Megawatt-hour (MW/h) DC Battery Storage Facility.

Irrigation

Mr. President,

Our farmers are the providers of sustenance to our nation. Recognizing their significant contribution to growth and nation-building, we have commenced the biggest investment in Jamaica's history on irrigation, some \$250Million USD into the Essex Valley Irrigation Scheme and Pedro Plains Irrigation Project. For decades farmers have been clamoring for these systems, Climate Change has made the need more urgent. These projects are a national priority to improve food security.

Our farmers, despite not having irrigation, have proven to be amongst the best in the world. We thank the French Government for their support in this endeavor.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, Jamaica thanks the Governments of Tajikistan and the Netherlands for their bold leadership in hosting the 2023 Water Conference, towards achieving SDG 6.

Jamaica will undoubtedly benefit from its participation at the UN 2023 Water Conference. The country remains committed to achieving SDG 6, and by our water actions we will ensure that our water resources are effectively managed now and in the future.