



PRESENTATION BY

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OF

**JAMAICA'S VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
MONTEVIDEO CONSENSUS**

AT

3RD REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Jamaica is pleased to present its first Voluntary Report on its efforts to implement the Montevideo Consensus. The implementation is framed within the context of Vision 2030 Jamaica – National Development Plan which serves as the axis around which implementation of the 2030 Agenda is organized.

Jamaica's population and development programme over the past twenty (20) years has been framed by the principles, goals and objectives of the ICPD Programme of Action. Today, we are expressing our strong commitment and reaffirmation of these principles, as we move to achieve sustainable development within the context of Agenda 2030 and implementation of the Montevideo Consensus.

Jamaica has made some advancements in its population and development programme, however, challenges remain. These challenges are primarily triggered by the particular vulnerabilities and external economic shocks that countries of the Caribbean sub-region face as small island developing states. Notwithstanding, we learnt many valuable lessons which have formed the basis of the articulation of the initial stage of our implementation of the Montevideo Consensus for the period 2013-2017.

Jamaica recognises that critical to the advancement of the Montevideo Consensus is strong institutional coordination. Monitoring and implementation of the national population and

development programme is led by the Planning Institute of Jamaica. As early as 1983, Jamaica established a multi-sectoral, multidisciplinary, and multistakeholder Population Policy Coordinating Committee to monitor its National Population Policy. Since 2007, this mechanism has been renamed the Population Thematic Working Group of Vision 2030 Jamaica. The challenge, however, is to ensure sustainability, to be proactive, and adequately meet the growing demands of the population and development agenda.

In line with the policy framework thrust of the Montevideo Consensus, Jamaica has scheduled for the 5 year period, the revision and formulation of several critical policies and strategies to address the changing demographics of the country:

- Population
- Youth
- Senior Citizens
- International Migration and Development
- Poverty
- Social Protection
- Sexual and Reproductive Health
- Persons with Disabilities

The revision of the National Population Policy is being done within the context of the Montevideo Consensus, the SDGs and Vision 2030 Jamaica to reflect the linkages between population and development aimed at harnessing our demographic dividend.

In relation to Thematic Areas B and D, Jamaica is pleased to report that we have established a mechanism for integrating elements of the HIV/AIDS Programme into the National Family

Planning Board as one of the responses to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health. Over time, there have been substantial reductions in mother-to-child transmission of HIV and deaths due to HIV/AIDS.

We have made significant strides over the years in reducing total fertility rate from 6.0 children per woman in the 1970s to approximately 2.4 children; however, adolescent fertility remains a challenge. There is considerable work to be done to tackle adolescent pregnancy and also the SRH needs of adolescents.

In 2013, the Ministry of Education unveiled the Policy on Reintegration of teenage mothers in the formal education system to ensure that all teenage mothers are able to return to the formal education system and are encouraged to pursue their academic goals and break the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

Definitive steps have been taken to advocate with strong partnership from civil society groups, through policies and programmes for the administration of SRH services, treatment, counselling and care to minors. There is also the establishment of adolescent-friendly centres; multi-sectoral support for the National Strategic Plan for Pre-Adolescents and Adolescents; and the development of an Action Plan for standards of care.

Jamaica can report considerable reduction in infant, child and maternal mortality. One of the landmark initiatives contributing to this achievement, has been the implementation of the Programme for the Reduction of Maternal and Child Mortality since 2014.

Implementation in Thematic Area C has been uneven. The elderly is the fastest growing segment of the population and requires considerable attention. Jamaica has a long history of implementing social policies and programmes, there have been various mandates, ad hoc interventions, little connectivity coupled with increasing poverty, high unemployment and low levels of social security coverage. Bearing all of this in mind and examining best practices within Latin America, Jamaica has developed a comprehensive social protection strategy in 2014.

The basic tenets of the Social Protection Strategy:

- Support the outcomes of Vision 2030 Jamaica, recognizing that the priorities of the Montevideo Consensus and specific social protection targets of the SDGs are also covered
- Uses a life-cycle strategic approach to be comprehensive and inclusive for all
- Addresses various SP risks and cross-cutting issues
- Requires strong collaboration and integration across sectors and among agencies.

The Government of Jamaica is committed to gender equality through its gender mainstreaming efforts, which seek to promote the economic, social, cultural and political empowerment of women and men. In keeping with the goals and core principles of the National Policy for Gender Equality, significant work was advanced to promote and implement gender mainstreaming initiatives within all policies, plans, programmes and projects. While an ILO study reports Jamaica as having one of the highest

proportions of female managers globally, gaps remain for females in the areas of decision making and leadership.

The Women's Health Survey 2016 was recently launched and is the first report to provide a comprehensive examination of the nature and prevalence of violence against women and girls in Jamaica. This report provides evidence that violence against women in Jamaica is widespread. More than one in every four Jamaican women between the ages of 15 and 64 years of age have, over their lifetime, experienced intimate partner physical and/or sexual violence.

In support of the work on Thematic Area F, Jamaica has adopted the policy position that international migration can benefit country of origin, destination, and the migrants themselves. This is reflected primarily in the comprehensive and integrated national Policy on International Migration and Development. The overall policy goal is to ensure that “international migration is adequately measured, monitored and streamlined to serve national development goals embodied in Vision 2030 Jamaica.”

A significant amount of action was reported for Thematic Area G. The key to advancing this work has been the availability of relevant and up-to-date development orders and Local Sustainable Development Plans which reflect climate change, emergency management and disaster risk management considerations. Significant work has commenced on the development of a National Spatial Plan to ensure the optimal use of the nation's land and marine resources and outline the framework for their effective use and management.

Effective implementation of the Montevideo Consensus requires a commitment to resources in a region where vulnerabilities are many and can severely hamper any efforts towards achieving sustainable development. Jamaica wishes to underscore the need for continued technical and financial support to population and development programmes at the regional and national levels. We wish to convey our appreciation for the work being done by the UNFPA and ECLAC Sub-regional Offices and strongly urge that continued and increased resources be provided to these offices for sustainability of the work being done in the Caribbean sub-region.

Based on forecasts for several areas in the population and development programmes, we run the risk of eroding gains made if the wide scale contraction of critical development resources continue. Considerable attention has to be paid to countries like Jamaica caught in the middle income trap classified as upper middle income countries but face the particular vulnerabilities and challenges.

We remain concerned about inadequate access to high quality data, which is a critical requirement for making Agenda 2030 and the Montevideo Consensus a reality. We cannot overstate, therefore, the importance of capacity building to support the strengthening of data systems and producing high-quality disaggregated data. Jamaica reiterates the call to build data capacity, instruments and systems to facilitate the production of timely, accurate, reliable and comparable data, as well as effective programmes in line with the relevant areas of the Montevideo Consensus.

As I close, Jamaica is firmly committed to advancing the Montevideo Consensus to contribute to a better region and a better world.

I thank you.