

**JAMAICA’S COUNTRY STATEMENT**

**2017 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction**

**Cancun, Mexico**

**May 22- 26, 2017**

Mister Chairman

Ministers

Excellences

Delegates

Ladies & Gentlemen

***Good Afternoon***

Firstly, I am delighted to be here in Mexico at this Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). The Jamaican Delegation thanks the UNISDR and the Government of Mexico for the excellent organization of this conference and warm welcome and hospitality we have received. Mexico is a long standing partner to the Government of Jamaica and has contributed to the development and risk reduction efforts in Jamaica.

Jamaica takes this opportunity to re-affirm its commitment to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and further commits to continued regional dialogue and action through this global platform and beyond. The Government of Jamaica further commits to taking proactive strategic actions to reduce disaster risk and strengthen the resilience of our people. Our participation in the 5th Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction of the Americas in Canada, March of this year and this 5th Global Platform marks but one step on our journey in this regard.

Jamaica has long recognized the importance of disaster risk management, more specifically reducing disaster risk as critical to achieving our development objectives. Past disaster events in the last 2 decades has seen an average impact of 2-3% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The Government of Jamaica has articulated the strategic intent of strong economic growth and prosperity for our people. We acknowledge this can only be achieved if deliberate, proactive, strategic and integrated approaches to reducing risk are urgently implemented across all sectors and at all levels.

Jamaica and by extension the Caribbean must be treated as an especially vulnerable area given our geographic location, fragile economies and natural hazard exposure as SIDS. We have in fact made significant strides such as the creation of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) over 25 years ago and the promotion of Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) which preceded the Hyogo Framework Action. The Caribbean people have continued to show our proactive action and leadership. However, greater more deliberate and targeted support (technical and financial) is need with specific criteria that is accessible, flexible and fast tracked for the region.

Jamaica has embarked on a number of strategies and initiatives such as our Building Disaster Resilience Communities (BDRC) Programme supported by a number of development partners and NGOs over the last 8 years. Less include CIDA/DFATD, Jamaica Red Cross, HelpAge International and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB). These projects and interventions has seen us pursuing resilience activities in more than 200 of over 700 vulnerable communities on the island. We are taking steps to integrate DRR actions and Climate Resilience programmes and projects.

The World Bank is partnering with us under the Jamaica Disaster Vulnerability Reduction Project – which is a multi-sector, multi-level strategic programme involving government, academia and private sector partnerships. The Ministry of Health, with the help of PAHO/WHO has programmed 4 main areas for risk reduction initiatives to include the Smart Hospitals Strategy and targeted 100 health facilities for assessment within the next 4-5years. However, a lot more needs to be done as we seek to build institutional capacity and execute risk reduction programmes.

Additionally, Jamaica has acknowledged the use of geospatial data and information, as we have established a National Emergency Geospatial Information Specialist Team (NERGIST) – A team of volunteers across government and private sector that collect and analyze geospatial data to aid in preparation, mitigation and response efforts. Jamaica also co-chairs the Working Group on GI and Services for Disasters at the UNGGIM Committee of Experts, which has led in the development of a Strategic Framework on GI & Services for Disaster to complement the Sendai Framework. We are in the development stages of the creation of a National Risk Information Platform and a Climate Data Node, while at the same time, the Caribbean, through CDEMA, has created a Caribbean Risk Information System (CRIS) and the innovations keep growing.

The continued and even greater support of the regional and global community is needed if efforts are to be sustained and tangible results achieved.

Our minister with responsibility for Disaster Risk Management has charged our Office of Disaster Preparedness & Emergency Management (ODPEM), the National Disaster Management Authority in Jamaica to operationalize the Disaster Risk Management Act 2015 and to ramp up its efforts at mainstreaming disaster risk reduction and management in all sectors and further interventions for building disaster resilience. Tourism and Agriculture (2 of our primary economic drivers), Physical Planning & Environment, Health, Water, Housing, Education and Infrastructure are 8 priority sectors targeted.

Mister Chairman, Ladies & Gentlemen

The Jamaican delegation has been actively engaged in the discourse throughout this platform and I assure you the resolve and highest commitment of Jamaica in ensuring we continue to build a disaster resilient nation and further the regional and global exchanges, facilitation and promotion of disaster reduction and adaptation to climate change.

Presented by:

***Mr. Horace A. Glaze***

Senior Director, Preparedness & Emergency Operations

Office of Disaster Preparedness & Emergency Management (ODPEM)

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Jamaica