

**NATIONAL STATEMENT**

**2019 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction**

**Geneva, Switzerland**

**Presented by Hon. Desmond McKenzie CD, JP, MP**

**Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Jamaica**

**MAY 16, 2019**

* **Mr. Chairman**
* **Colleague Ministers**
* **Excellencies**
* **Delegates**
* **Ladies & Gentlemen**
* I am delighted to be here at this Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. The Jamaican Delegation thanks the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Government of Switzerland for the excellent organization of this Conference and the warm hospitality we have received.
* High on Jamaica’s agenda for sustainable economic growth and for building a resilient country are Disaster Risk Reduction initiatives. National projects and programmes being designed and implemented, include measures which signal the importance of Disaster Risk Management to the Government of Jamaica.
* Jamaica, as a Small Island Developing State, is experiencing the effects of Climate Change, and the after-effects of significant historical losses to due to natural disasters. **We have endured 35 Hurricanes since the start of the 20th Century: 24 in the 20th Century and 11 since the year 2000.** Building resilience is therefore imperative to our ability to respond effectively to the challenges of our geographic location. Our Tourism, Agriculture, Mining and myriad service sectors are among those vulnerable to Climate Change, and Jamaica is initiating measures which include mitigation, climate change adaption and research.
* The **Disaster Risk Management Act, 2015**, and the **Building Act 2019**, provide the legal framework within which Disaster Risk Reduction is being implemented at the national and parochial levels.
* Through the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM), Jamaica has made significant strides in forging local and regional partnerships in promoting a Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management approach, in collaboration with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency.
* Accordingly, Jamaica has embarked on several initiatives such as the development of a Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Policy which seeks to integrate Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation measures across all sectors, and operate as an overarching document to guide Disaster Risk Management locally. The implementation of a Contingent Credit Facility through partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank, will provide layers of financing opportunities in response to disaster events.
* The four priorities for action in the Sendai Framework are evident in the projects and programmes currently being implemented. These include: The **Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience** aimed at **improving our climate data** **and Information Management**.
* The **Adaptation Programme and Finance Mechanism** will allow for the development of a National Spatial Plan, among other initiatives geared at strengthening institutional capacities within the fisheries and housing sectors. The **Jamaica Disaster Vulnerability Project** has been designed to improve disaster and climate resilience and implement risk reduction measures across the island.
* **The Programme on Forests** seeks to assess the health of the mangrove ecosystem, and evaluate the mangrove ecosystem as a natural coastal protection system. The **Resilient Islands** **Programme** seeks to integrate nature-based solutions into development plans in order to provide physical protection from future storms, and to reduce recovery time through proactive environmental management.
* As the country prepares to host the **Seventh Regional platform of the Americas and the Caribbean in July 2020**, our time together will will assist in strengthening our Disaster Risk Reduction agenda.
* Disaster Risk Reduction is essential to Jamaica’s economic growth and efforts in this regard will provide protection to Jamaica’s most vulnerable. The continued support of the regional and global community is needed if our efforts are to be sustained and tangible results achieved.
* Thank You.

**Desmond McKenzie CD, JP, MP**

**Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Jamaica**