**Global Conference on Strengthening Synergies between the Paris**

**Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:**

**Maximizing Co-Benefits by Linking Implementation across SDGs and**

**Climate Action**

**Venue: UN City, Copenhagen/ Time: 1-3 April 2019**

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning,

I would like to start by expressing my appreciation to UN DESA and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change for organizing this very important conference as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Energy, Utilities and Climate of Denmark for hosting us here.

The issues being discussed at this Conference are of great importance to Jamaica. The potential opportunities to create synergies and strengthen synergies between the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development to generate important development and environmental benefits, make it highly relevant for Jamaica as a small island developing state (SIDS).

SIDS, such as Jamaica, remain among the most vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change. At present, the country’s vulnerability to the impact of climate change is one of the most serious threat to its sustainable development. This has negatively impacted livelihoods, agriculture, ecosystems, infrastructure, health and the productive sectors. The threat is even more severe for Jamaica due to the biophysical and socio-economic characteristics of the country.

The October 2018 Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report unequivocally reinforces the threats facing SIDS should there not be scaled-up actions by Governments to reduce global warming by at least 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

This is indeed a major cause for concern since SIDS contribute the least to the crisis but is paying the highest price. Furthermore, we risk leaving future generations to face a world where the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development remain unrealized and prosperity is a distant dream.

The question, ***what policies and initiatives are needed at the global and national levels to ensure a just transition for all*** is one we continue to grapple with given the myriad policies and initiatives presently in existence both nationally and globally. Globally, we call to mind the most recent, post 2015 Development Agenda and all its supporting multilateral agreements (Financing for Development, Paris Agreement, Disaster Risk Reduction, SAMOA Pathway etc) all of which are expected to address/foster economic progress, social inclusion and environmental sustainability ultimately ensuring prosperity for all. However, for there to be success these efforts rely on the full engagement of countries around the world to support each other in their efforts to translate the agenda into action. Unfortunately, countries, in particular developing countries, have fallen short of achieving these objectives because of the implementation deficit that they are faced with.

As is widely agreed, a just transition to sustainability is about ensuring that the economic, environmental and social costs of the transformation of economies and societies towards greater sustainability are managed in ways that reduce inequalities and maximize opportunities for all.

For many years, Jamaica’s planning efforts have had only limited success, due to inherent weaknesses which included relatively short-term planning horizon, inadequate resources to support implementation, an ineffective monitoring and evaluation framework, limited involvement of non-state actors and weak synergies between targets, indicators and budgets. However, through bipartisan support and wide ranging consultations the country has sought to change its approach development. In 2009, 6 years prior to post 2015 Development Agenda, Jamaica launched its National Development Plan, Vision 2030. The Plan is built on a results-based management framework and include 4 major goals and 15 national outcomes, which are intended to secure a prosperous future for all Jamaicans ensuring that “no-one is left behind”.

Having recognized our vulnerabilities to climate related events and natural disasters, the Plan prioritizes Jamaica having a healthy natural environment and a prosperous economy. The former speaks to reducing natural hazards and risks and being able to adapt to climate change, while the latter speaks to energy security and efficiency, a technology enabling society and a strong economic infrastructure, among other things. It is therefore no coincidence that the Sustainable Development Goals of Agenda 2030 is 91% aligned with Vision 2030 Jamaica. It is for this reason Vision 2030 Jamaica serves as the axis around which efforts to achieve the SDGs have been organized. Since the adoption of the SDGs in September 2015, the Government of Jamaica has strategically and deliberately made effort to localize and mainstream the SDGs in its national policies and planning frameworks. Jamaica has utilised existing mechanisms to anchor this process through continued engagement with stakeholders.

The principal vehicle for the implementation of the Plan is the Medium-Term Socio-Economic Policy Framework (MTF), which secures the implementation of the Plan. Under the current 2018-2021 MTF, Jamaica will continue to advance the mainstreaming of Agenda 2030 in the implementation of Vision 2030 Jamaica. Under the present MTF special attention will be paid to the impact of natural disasters and climate change vulnerability. For this reason, Vision 2030 Jamaica continues to postulate the need for a strong positive relationship between environmental sustainability and economic growth. Jamaica’s continued pursuit and implementation of the goals, outcomes and strategic framework of Vision 2030 Jamaica, through the MTF process, would largely lead to the achievement of the SDGs goals and targets relevant to Jamaica. We are of the view, therefore, that the oft repeated tension between economic growth and environmental sustainability is a false dichotomy.

For Jamaica, the question, **which participatory processes are required in the implementation of climate commitments to secure rights for all actors to play their part** is relevant as the Government recognizes that there is a high level of coherence between the SDGs, which articulates the central role of the environment to the achievement of the Goals, and other international platforms such as the Paris Agreement, Sendai Framework, Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the New Urban Agenda, and last but by no means least Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Accelerated Modalities of Action (S.A.M.O.A) Pathway. Synchronizing these platforms will provide the opportunity to build into the national development planning framework greater focus on policy coherence across different but overlapping areas. It is also crucial to harness the synergies, and build coherence in implementing these multilateral instruments. The relevance of this for Jamaica is stark, as the country manages its efforts to build resilience while navigating particular vulnerabilities and external economic shocks which can hamper our development trajectory. Vision 2030, Jamaica, recognizes the role that environmental sustainability must play in advancing Jamaica’s economic growth prospects.

It is also important to highlight that the Implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, which we consider no less important for SIDS when compared to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Both the SDGS and the Pathway are complementary and can serve to alleviate the many vulnerabilities faced by SIDS such as, environmental/ecological fragility, in particular frequent occurrence of natural disasters, limited land resources, high cost of basic infrastructure, geographic remoteness and isolation, high debt burdens, limited diversification, very open economies and weak institutional capacity.

In this regard, Jamaica has operationalized its response to vulnerabilities to natural and man-made hazards and climate change within the context of social, economic and environmental development. Macro-level priorities pursued have included addressing hazards on land and in water such as social erosion, inadequate waste management, inadequate physical planning, coastal erosion and coral reef degradation. While micro-level priorities pursued have included engagement of communities in hazard risk reduction and climate change mitigation initiatives, as part of advancing social and income security through sustainable livelihoods, and the creation and protection of private and public assets, including infrastructure.

For this reason, Jamaica accords high priority to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and has taken the necessary steps to integrate the Framework’s four (4) priorities for action into its National Development Plan through its alignment with National Outcome 14 focusing on Hazard Risk Reduction and Adaptation to Climate Change.

However, despite significant progress (establishment of a policy framework for DR financing, new building code, early warning system) been made in advancing Jamaica’s resilience agenda particularly in our most vulnerable communities, disasters continue to reverse development gains, undermine resilience, exacerbate inequality and curtail prospects for economic growth. While disaster mortality in Jamaica continues on a downward trend, disaster economic losses have continued to rise.

The World Bank Group, published in its 2018 report Advancing Disaster Risk Finance in Jamaica, that Jamaica will require approximately J$16 billion to finance disaster recovery efforts each year. Further projections indicate that J$9 billion of this sum will be needed to finance contingent liabilities such as damage to public and private infrastructure due to hurricanes. This speaks directly to SDG17, the country’s means of implementation.

In looking at the question, ***what successful experiences, policy and planning processes exist to draw upon for advancing ambitious climate action that leads to prosperity for all, leaving no one behind***, Jamaica would wish to reiterate its commitment to the Paris Agreement. In the first instance Jamaica developed a climate change policy framework, which is aimed at creating a mechanism for infusing climate change adaptation and mitigation in policies, sectoral plans, programmes, strategies and legislation as appropriate. The Framework outlines the institutional arrangements established to support its implementation, among which is the climate change focal point network (CCFPN). Focal Points are appointed in Ministries, Departments and Agencies to assist with the coordination of strategies and actions relating to climate change, as well as integrate climate consideration in policies, plans, programmes and other initiatives. In addition to the CCFPN, a Climate Change Advisory Board, mandated under the Climate Change Policy Framework to provide advice on addressing climate change in Jamaica is now operational.

To further reiterate the country’s commitment to the Paris Agreement, Jamaica’s contribution to the reduction in greenhouse gas emission is being done by way of its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDCs) focused on the energy sector. The NDCs are now under review and will take into account some of the sectors previously mentioned.

According the IPCC, limiting the global average temperature rise to 1.5C is still possible, however it will require “unprecedented” transitions in all aspects of society including energy, agriculture, urban and industrial systems; engagement of non-state actors; and integration of climate action into broader public policy and development framework.

It will be recalled that the IPCC report also advocated that climate action towards 1.5C, can help to achieve the SDGs that influence and are influenced by the climate. For us, this include those SDGs related to agriculture, water, energy, biodiversity, public health and cities sectors. It is important, in this regard, to strengthen the global response in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty. This implies system transitions that can be enabled by an increase in adaption and mitigation investments, policy instruments, the acceleration of technological innovation and behaviour changes.

In this regard, sustainable development supports, and often enables, the fundamental societal and systems transition and transformations that could help limit global warming to 1.5C. Such changes facilitate the pursuit of climate resilient development pathways that achieve ambitious mitigation and adaptation in conjunction with poverty eradication and efforts to reduce inequalities. From the findings of the IPCC, it is clear that climate action undertaken, to date, is inconsistent with sustainable development goals.

For Jamaica it is clear that current international mitigation ambitions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and by extension, reduce global warming will be challenged when it is projected that there could be an increase of 2.7°C to 3°C up to 2100, which is not in line with the Paris Agreement’s goal of limiting temperature rise to below 2°C. **This means that greater ambition is needed in subsequent climate change commitments on reducing emissions to decrease the likely impact on vulnerable countries such as Jamaica. This reinforces the need for the full support of the global community for accelerating climate action at the local and regional level. While the country has done its best in putting forward a coherence approach to SDGS, NDCs and Sendai Framework, a coherent approach is not enough. For a country’s implementation success, SDG 17, capacity building, partnerships, technology, financing are critical components of sustainable development. Our very survival is at stake, which means that all our efforts at attaining the SDGs would be counted for naught.**

**Thank you.**

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