



**PERMANENT MISSION OF JAMAICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

STATEMENT BY

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MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS & FOREIGN TRADE
JAMAICA**

DURING THE

PLENARY EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

AT THE

**UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 14: CONSERVE AND SUSTAINABLY USE THE
OCEANS, SEAS AND MARINE RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**6th JUNE 2017
UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK**

Co-Presidents,

On behalf of the Jamaican delegation, I extend warm congratulations to you and your Vice-Presidents on being elected to lead this Conference. Please be assured of our best wishes for productive engagements and meaningful outcomes to our deliberations.

We are pleased to align ourselves with the statement made on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States.

Recognizing that oceans, seas and coastal areas form an integrated and essential component of the Earth's ecosystem, and are critical to sustaining it, we are compelled to treat them with the seriousness they deserve. The General Assembly, in its decision to convene this Ocean Conference dedicated to the consideration of SDG 14, is giving clear and urgent expression to our collective commitment to its implementation.

Our national imperatives are clear.

Jamaica is a small island developing state in the Caribbean Sea. The sea ebbs and flows and knows no national bounds. Marine flora, fauna and manmade materials, move within and beyond areas of national jurisdiction. Like many other small island developing countries, we are highly vulnerable to the effects of marine pollution, ocean acidification, and their consequential impact on our coral reefs, as well as the effect of climate change on sea level rise. These factors all impact upon fishing communities, as well as tourism and, therefore, affect our people and our economy at all levels.

For Jamaica, therefore, the protection, sustainable development and management of the marine environment are not just desirable goals. They are duties, indeed obligations, which we must pursue with diligence and urgency, if we are to meet the current needs of our country and those of succeeding generations.

The pursuit of artisanal fisheries, which constitute a source of livelihood for entire communities, requires the sustainable management of the resources of the EEZ, including straddling and highly migratory species. We should all work to ensure that this is effectively pursued.

In the modern global shipping industry, Jamaica takes seriously its role as a transshipment hub. We have welcomed the opportunities to diversify and strengthen our economic base, with the progress made, and prospects for, enhanced growth in shipping for tourism, as well as for cargo vessels. At the same time, we seek to play our part in addressing challenges resulting from shippers, including our role as lead partner country, in the GloBallast initiative.

As host of the International Seabed Authority (ISA), Jamaica remains committed to the development of rules to secure the necessary environmental safeguards for deep sea-bed mining. To that end, this Conference and related activities, such as the negotiations on BBNJ, are truly significant.

We are surrounded by marine areas within the jurisdiction of adjacent and opposite states. We, therefore, have several maritime boundaries and are also, therefore, careful to pursue the provisions of UNCLOS on maritime delimitation, providing for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Our interest then, in all that the ocean signifies, is profound and enduring. We know that in this we find common cause, not only with other SIDS, but with all countries who made the commitment in *The Future We Want*, to “protect, and restore, the health, productivity and resilience of oceans and marine ecosystems, and to maintain their biodiversity, enabling their conservation and sustainable use for present and future generations....”

Co-Presidents,

Our common challenges require collective resolution. This is the intent of the **Call to Action** which this Conference is expected to adopt. In this regard, I congratulate the co-chairs for their work leading to its conclusion.

While we continue to encourage stronger action, Jamaica supports the considerations that have been given to urgent action to strengthen the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially Goal 14. We call for continued vigilance to address the issues identified as priority concerns, and to pursue same on the strength of partnerships at all levels. We are particularly keen for the international community to support capacity-building for SIDS such as Jamaica. There is need to generate pertinent data and information for establishing baselines and to inform decisions; and for the transfer of technical skills, ‘know how’ and empowerment to design and implement sustainable development strategies at the national level.

Even as we look to our partners for their support however, we acknowledge our own responsibility for national development. Jamaica is pleased, therefore, to signal its Voluntary Commitments in the following ways:

The first is in relation to Marine Protected Areas.

As at 2013, 15.1% of Jamaica’s maritime area had been declared as marine protected areas under national legislation. We will increase our marine protected areas by an estimated two per cent

(2%) by 2019 with the declaration of the Pedro Cays and surrounding waters, and the Black River protected area.

Secondly, we are committed to the strengthening of Jamaica's policy and legislative frameworks governing protected areas.

By 2020, Jamaica will further strengthen its regime governing protected areas, including marine protected areas, with the promulgation of a new protected areas policy and overarching protected areas legislation.

Co-Presidents, I thank you.