



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

STATEMENT

BY

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**MINISTER OF STATE
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Madam President,

It is my special honour to congratulate you on your recent election as President of the General Assembly. The UN's mission to ensure gender parity is clearly bearing fruit.

This Dialogue on migration and development is quite timely and Jamaica wishes to associate itself with the statement of the Group of 77 and China on this important subject.

Migration policies must be approached in a comprehensive manner, recognising the multi-dimensional nature of this phenomenon. We should therefore avoid the growing tendency to focus only on security and border control issues.

Other important concerns such as the human rights of migrants, identifying solutions to the negative impact of the "brain drain" and enhancing cooperation on issues related to migration and mobility are among those that should also be given equal treatment.

Remittances

Madam President,

Jamaica has experienced a rate of approximately 20,000 nationals migrating annually over the past four decades. One of the positive spin-offs of migration to Jamaica is the increase in receipts from remittances, moving from under US\$100million in 1990 to US\$1.65 billion in 2005. This represents 16% of Jamaica's GDP. Within the same period, poverty was reduced from 28.4% to 14.8%. It can therefore be concluded that there is a direct correlation in Jamaica between the reduction in poverty and the increase in the inflow of remittances.

A strategy to maximise the continued increase in inflows of remittances for national development is required. The following policy initiatives could therefore be considered:

- facilitating and stimulating short-term labour migration through bilateral agreements;
- decreasing the costs of formal transfers by stimulating more competition in the market; and
- developing creative synergies between banks and microfinance institutions.

Human Resources.

Remittances should in no way be seen as a reward for the migration of trained professionals. Such a conclusion would be wrong as remittances, as significant as it is, cannot adequately replace the loss of skilled human resources.

Jamaica and the other countries of the English-speaking Caribbean have a very high rate of loss of tertiary level graduates to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and

Development (OECD) countries. This is estimated at over 60% annually in the case of Jamaica.

It is in this context that Jamaica supports the proposal for co-development. There is a compelling case to be made for the developed countries to make some financial contribution to developing countries to offset some of the costs incurred in the training of these graduates.

Co-development partnerships must be linked with an element of training so that local personnel can take over when experts leave.

Human Rights Issues

Madam President,

The growing importance of migration makes it imperative that the rights of migrants be protected. While there are some bilateral agreements which offer this protection, this remains an area of major concern to Jamaica. As a result of this steps are currently being taken for Jamaica to become a Party to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.

Gender and Migration

Madam President,

Gender is a key dimension of international and regional migration. Men generally dominate initial immigration flows and are later joined by female family members and children as immigrants become more settled.

Nearly half of all international migrants are women, who outnumber men in developed countries. The data for the Caribbean is consistent with this finding, where throughout the Caribbean, women represent 52% of all migrants, and men 48%.

The gender transformation arising from emigration is having an impact on family structures and networks.

Women are vulnerable to gross abuses and exploitation, particularly those in domestic employment, and are also more likely to suffer gross violations of their rights. The beneficial outcomes of migration for women critically depend on respect for the rights enshrined in the core human rights instruments.

Diaspora

Madam President,

The Jamaican diaspora, plays a significant role in national development. The fundamental objective of the Government of Jamaica is to identify and organise members of the Jamaican diaspora in the various countries and develop a permanent and structured link with Jamaica. One element of this is a two-yearly diaspora conference in Jamaica. A second is the organising of the various Jamaican

communities in the host countries to allow for democratic and accountable representation including in the Diaspora Conferences. Jamaica also has the intention to create a Joint Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament. This initiative will elevate matters relating to the diaspora to the legislative level.

Our nationals overseas are increasingly politically empowered in their host countries. The diaspora must become strong advocates for policies which advance and protect the interest of their respective countries, the Region and its nationals both at home and abroad.

Conclusion

Jamaica is of the view that this Dialogue must not stop here. What is critical is to build on its outcome so that talk can be followed up by action.

We strongly recommend that follow-up should promote policy research and analyses on migration and development with the imperative to formulate and implement appropriate actions.

I thank you.