



PERMANENT MISSION OF
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Statement by Mrs Norma Taylor Roberts

**To the Third Committee
during the
63rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly**

on

**Agenda Items 56 (a) and (b) on the Advancement of Women, the Follow-up to the
implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the outcome of the twenty-third special
session of the General Assembly**

Monday, 13 October 2008

Please check against delivery

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to address this Committee on Agenda Item 56 (a) and (b) on the Advancement of Women, the Follow-up to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statements made by CARICOM and the Rio Group on these issues.

We thank the Assistant Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women for the comprehensive statement on the work of the Organization regarding the improvement of the status of women globally, and the achievement of their equality with men - as equal actors, partners, and beneficiaries of sustainable development, human rights, peace and security.

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The Government of Jamaica is committed to strengthening measures and programmes at the international, regional and domestic levels, aimed at the empowerment and advancement of women. As a demonstration of our commitment, Jamaica took an early decision to become Party to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Mr Chairman, in this regard, Jamaica shares the fundamental belief that equality of rights for women is a basic principle of the United Nations.

Consequently, we have continued to be involved in various multilateral processes through membership and active participation at the United Nations, Organisation of American States other regional fora. This includes the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination of against Women (CEDAW) and our current candidature for the Commission on the Status of Women. In this context, my delegation wishes to express our appreciation to the Secretariat for the role being played in addressing the concerns of Member States in promoting gender parity.

UNIFEM

Mr Chairman,

The Secretary General's report on the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) refers to a significant growth in its resource base over the past year, which we believe demonstrates an enhanced level of confidence by Member States in the work of the Organization. Indeed, Jamaica has worked closely with UNIFEM in the context of its four priority areas, namely, reducing feminized poverty; ending violence against women; addressing the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS; and achieving gender equality in democratic governance.

As a beneficiary of training and other support programmes undertaken by UNIFEM, Jamaica remains an active supporter of efforts aimed at strengthening gender-sensitive training for Member States. In keeping with Jamaica's commitment in this regard, the Government has for the first time, beginning this year, made multi-year pledges to the UNIFEM. Jamaica will continue to review prospects for making similar voluntary financial contributions to other relevant UN funds and programmes, where possible.

DOMESTIC ACTION

Mr Chairman,

At the domestic level, efforts to ensure the advancement of women is based on the premise that gender mainstreaming and promoting gender equality is integral to our development process. For Jamaica, it is central to ensuring that all policies, plans and programmes address the needs of both women and men in tangible ways.

At the mid-point of the implementation target for achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), we remain seized with the urgency of meeting the goals agreed by Member States and we are actively working closely with the UN Agencies, and our regional partners with respect to effective implementation. This has been achieved at the domestic level through, for example:

- enhanced legal and policy framework
- improved maternal health care and services
- skills and capacity building measures under the gender mainstreaming agenda

Jamaica continues to acknowledge the importance of women's contribution to national development. At the institutional level, there has been an increase in the participation and involvement of women in leadership capacities in government, the private sector and civil society.

Information from our national Gender Development Index indicates that the quality of life of Jamaican women has continued to improve in the areas of life expectancy, estimated earnings and combined gross enrollment ratios. Our institutions for higher learning reflect a much higher enrollment level of women; with positive implications for further earning ability.

Peacekeeping

Mr Chairman,

Women have also been playing an important role in fulfilling Jamaica's obligation to assist in the maintenance of international peace and security. Although Jamaica has limited human resource capacity, given the size of both the police and military forces, women are offered equal opportunities to participate in UN peacekeeping

operations. Since the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1325, the number of female members of Jamaican contingents to UN peacekeeping forces, though modest, has risen steadily, and the proportion now stands at nearly 50 percent.

Trafficking In Women and Girls

Mr Chairman,

Having established a legislative framework to eliminate trafficking in persons, Jamaica is proceeding to implement prevention measures, services for victims, judicial and penal sanctions for perpetrators. A National Task Force against Trafficking in Persons (NATFTIP) monitors and sets policy to strengthen anti-trafficking measures. The Government is also conducting ongoing training for members of the police force; immigration and customs personnel; the judiciary; and other officials in Government Ministries and Agencies. A public awareness and education campaign has also been launched.

Against this backdrop, we support the recommendations in the Secretary General's report on activities undertaken by Member States to combat and eliminate trafficking in women and girls; such as, the coordination among stakeholders; ensuring prosecution of perpetrators and imposing appropriate sentences; as well as enhanced measures to protect and support victims.

Elimination of Violence against Women

The Government of Jamaica supports international efforts toward the elimination of all forms of violence against women and has committed to measures implemented by the United Nations in this regard. Jamaica recognizes the need to include the consideration of the girl child in this context, as violence against women embraces the girl child in an equal manner. Additionally, Jamaica considers domestic violence (mental, physical and sexual abuse) rape; carnal abuse; and incest as violence against women and violation of their human rights.

As such, we support the comprehensive approach referred to in the Secretary General's report for the prevention and elimination of violence against women.

BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION

Mr Chairman,

The Beijing Platform for Action and the Special Session of the General Assembly have laid the blue print to assist States with the formulation of national policy, in keeping with global standards and norms and to implement the respective international agreements on gender equality and the empowerment of women. The United Nations has been a key partner in our efforts to promote women's advancement and empowerment, in standard setting and as an important avenue for discussion and

agreement on concerted action by States, as well as in the provision of technical assistance.

The various measures and actions being taken by Jamaica are aimed at conforming with the Beijing Platform for Action and follow-up to the Special Session of the General Assembly, as well as the various international instruments on the advancement of women. We are committed to maintaining and enhancing a collaborative approach at the international, regional and national levels, towards achieving gender parity. This will be facilitated by, among other measures, the sharing of information on best practices with relevant the stakeholders.

I thank you.