



PERMANENT MISSION OF
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT BY

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ON

AGENDA ITEM 28 (a) & (b):

Advancement of Women

&

*Implementation of the Outcome of the Fifth
World Conference on Women and of the Special
Session of the General Assembly*

IN THE THIRD COMMITTEE
OF THE 65TH SESSION OF THE UNGA

NEW YORK

TUESDAY, 12 OCTOBER, 2010

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Mr Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

I have the honour to address this Committee on Agenda item 28 (a) and (b) on the Advancement of Women and Implementation of the Outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the twenty-third session of the General Assembly.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, by Chile on behalf of the Rio Group, and by Guyana on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). I would like, however, to make a few remarks on issues which Jamaica consider to be of particular importance and briefly delineate the main efforts of my country in promoting the advancement of women.

Mr Chairman,

We thank the Secretary General and the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, for the comprehensive reports presented on the work of the Organisation to improve the status of women globally.

In particular, Jamaica welcomes the Secretary-General's Reports on the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women, trafficking in women and girls and measures taken and progress achieved in follow up to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action and the acknowledgement that important progress has been made in some areas in global, regional and national policies. We also acknowledge that major gaps and challenges in advancement of women still remain.

Jamaica fully supports the work of the United Nations in promoting the advancement and empowerment of women. In this regard, we welcome the New Gender Entity – *UN Women* and the appointment of the Under-Secretary General and hope that with this institutional change, there will be a smooth transition, without programme interruption which could adversely affect developing countries.

In view of Jamaica's, and indeed CARICOM's, longstanding contribution to UN activities concerning the empowerment of women, we support CARICOM's bid to continue this active role through membership on the Executive Board of UN Women, as indicated by Guyana yesterday. We therefore urge Member States to support the election of Grenada and St Vincent and the Grenadines to this august body in the forthcoming ECOSOC elections.

Mr Chairman,

Notwithstanding its limited resources and the impact of the Global Economic and Financial Crisis which continues to negatively affect the country, Jamaica has made progress in a number of areas, such as, the collection of data disaggregated by sex, through our Planning and Statistical Institutes and relevant Ministries, in collaboration with our International Development partners.

Consistent efforts have been made to reverse and eliminate the persistence of gender stereotyping, negative cultural attitudes and other practices which discriminate against women through on-going public education campaigns (both formal and informal – workshops, seminars, schools, churches, communities) using print and electronic media. In addition, a national transformation programme known as *Fresh Start Jamaica*, was recently introduced to mobilize, coordinate and energize an ongoing process of positive behaviour change, as well as to transform and unite mass public perception and action concerning national core values.

Mr Chairman,

There still remains a high level of violence against women and girls which is not acceptable and we are committed to giving priority attention to this issue. It is for this reason that a new legislative provision in the form of the *Sexual Offences Act* was passed in 2009 which creates new provisions for the prosecution of rape and other sexual offences. This is to ensure that the rights of women are given adequate protection.

We have also conducted awareness-raising sessions, including, training and sensitization of several stakeholders, in particular, the judiciary, law enforcement officers and prosecutors, as well as teachers, health-care and social workers and the media. In this regard, we express our appreciation to the UN agencies, particularly the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for the technical assistance provided under the Strengthening State Accountability Project aimed at reducing gender based violence, particularly deeply entrenched stereotypical views regarding issues of power relations and masculinity through strengthened and responsive state and civil society actions

Jamaica continues to utilise the commemoration of special days for women - International Women's Day and International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women to specially recognize women's contribution and the advancement of human rights and the promotion of gender equality.

Mr Chairman,

Jamaica is further committed to ensuring the implementation and effective enforcement of existing laws, and the priority passage and implementation of pending laws. We are unswerving in our efforts to the establish an effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism in order to regularly assess the impact and effectiveness of law enforcement and programmes aimed at preventing and providing redress to victims of violence.

In our continued efforts to eliminate discrimination on the basis of gender, we took the added step in 2009 to establish a *Male Desk* in the Bureau of Women's Affairs to extend Jamaica's reach and provide opportunities to engage men in the gender discourse. It will also serve as a central point to provide information on men's health

and development, parenting as well as the role of men in the elimination of gender-based violence among other issues.

Jamaica continues to ensure capacity-building for women in urban, as well as rural communities through the support and strengthening of leadership at the parish and community levels. These efforts are designed to assist the national machinery in the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment. We have made every effort to meet the needs of rural women including, ensuring their representation at all levels in organisations involved with development and planning.

Mr Chairman,

We remain committed to the principle of gender mainstreaming and are cognizant of the need to redress the negative imbalances which discriminate against women. While legislation has addressed some of these concerns, there still remains some degree of cultural and societal biases against women. We have sought to address these issues through policies, programmes and projects.

In order to address gender inequality in governance, particularly at the highest level of decision-making, the Government has partnered with several organizations, locally and internationally, to implement programmes aimed at eliminating discrimination against women in public life. In 2009, the United Nations Democracy Fund sponsored a project entitled: "Strengthening Women's Leadership in Jamaica," which was geared towards increasing, improving, and consolidating the presence and influence of women serving on boards and commissions in Jamaica.

Mr Chairman,

Jamaica has made great strides in addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic as this has been one of the priority areas for the Government. Despite this milestone, however, women and young girls are still particularly vulnerable to the epidemic. Having recognized this, measures including, the enactment of legislation, introduction of policy initiatives and public education programmes, have been undertaken. We will continue the rigorous efforts to alleviate the problem.

Finally, the Government of Jamaica is committed to achieving gender equality and, despite limited resources and cultural and social challenges we have instituted measures towards the achievement of Goal 3 of the MDGs. In this regard, we will continue to give high priority to the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women.

I thank you.