



PERMANENT MISSION OF  
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

**STATEMENT BY**

**THE MOST HONOURABLE PORTIA SIMPSON-MILLER, ON, MP  
PRIME MINISTER OF JAMAICA**

**TO THE**

**GENERAL DEBATE OF THE**

**67<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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*PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY*



Mr. President,

Allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the Presidency of this 67<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly. I assure you of the full support and cooperation of the Jamaican delegation as you carry out your duties.

I place on record my delegation's appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Nassir Al-Nasser, for his invaluable guidance of the work of the General Assembly during its 66<sup>th</sup> Session.

I also thank the United Nations Secretary General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and the staff of the UN Secretariat, for their dedication and hard work in serving Member States.

Mr. President,

There is a tale of a young woman from a deep, rural village in Jamaica who was approached by a political candidate seeking to represent her community. "What is it you want most from your representatives?" the candidate asked her. The young woman considered the question for a moment. Slowly and thoughtfully she replied,

*All I want is an opportunity...I want you to provide me and my family with a living environment in which I can work, contribute and prosper. Most of all, I want you to provide for my family an environment that is safe and secure".*

Mr. President, our respective peoples have for hundreds of years looked to their leaders with great expectations. They elected governments that they felt could provide them with the greatest sense of wellbeing and security. Historically and to this present day, they look to heads of state and government to provide them, their families, communities and ultimately their respective nations with leadership and direction that foster that all-important sense of well-being, and feeling 'secure'. Over time, across the world there has been an increasing sense of impatience and agitation born of a sense of growing global insecurity.

Accordingly, the UN agenda has expanded its focus to address the multifaceted challenges of foodsecurity, climate change, global pandemics and the global economic and financial crisis. We have already witnessed citizens from several nations 'spring' into action with demands for change.

Others chose to 'occupy' various spaces in protest. In light of this reality, many of you...indeed many of us as leaders stand as buffers between apathy and anarchy. The theme for this year's session of the Assembly, "*Bringing about adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means*", is most appropriate and timely, given current events in a number of countries and regions which pose a threat to international peace and security. It is reflective of the call made by that young woman who simply asked her representative to provide for her and hers "*...an environment that is safe and secure*". Yet, her request is not as simple as it appears:

The insecurity, impatience and unease that have emerged worldwide are explosive accelerants. They emerge from the heart-breaking scourge of poverty that is so aptly described by the Jamaican National Hero, Marcus Mosiah Garvey, who reminded us that:

*“Poverty is a hellish state to be in.  
It is no virtue.  
It is a crime.  
To be poor is to be hungry without possible hope of food;  
To be sick without hope of medicine;  
To be tired and sleepy without a place to lay one’s head;  
To be naked without the hope of clothing;  
To be despised and comfortless...”*

Mr. President,

We must seek to rid ourselves of conditions which lead to poverty. We must pursue social and economic policies that will ensure social equity and justice for our people and increase their wellbeing and sense of security. This can only be achieved if we, as Member States, work together in good faith to secure the sustainable future we agreed to at Rio. Let us create the future we want...and put our people first.

Mr. President,

The global economy continues to be beset by uncertainty. This is compounded by the lingering negative effects of the financial and economic crises. The global shocks have affected all our peoples. They threaten our communities; weaken our families...and challenge individuals everywhere - regardless of hemisphere or region...whether they live in ‘developed’ or ‘developing’ countries...situated in the North, South, East or West. Some have fewer options than others. This is a vicious ‘cycle of insecurity’.

We dare not forget that a significant proportion of the world’s poorest citizens live in Middle Income Countries. This is a diverse group which includes large developing economies and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), such as those in the Caribbean.

Many of us face common challenges. Several are highly indebted and extremely vulnerable to external shocks and natural disasters. We face significant obstacles in our efforts to spur economic recovery and growth. We are hampered by the volatility of energy and food prices, decreases in export commodity prices, and weak capital inflows. Increasing food prices cause untold hardships for many of our people, particularly the most vulnerable in our societies. Small countries need greater support to build resilience to economic and environmental shocks.

I come to you today from such a nation. Jamaica is a nation – small in size but enormous in spirit. A nation with a people whose speed defies the laws of physics, whose musical messages

have inspired positive and revolutionary global change and whose minds have provided the world with myriad solutions in areas including science, law and medicine. Yet, many nations like Jamaica have such great possibility and potential that are not reflected in, or reflective of its present economic indicators.

Reforms in global economic governance, including the international financial institutions, are required to take into account the need for special and differential treatment for small and vulnerable economies. Refocusing of the development agenda in terms of financial flows, will also go a long way in helping to bolster our natural resilience and resolve.

We commend UNCTAD on the work which it has done over the last forty-eight years to advance the trade and development agenda and to assist developing countries. There is still much to be done and we look forward to working with the full range of development partners.

Mr. President,

There is a particularly vulnerable group - the women and children of our world for whom, what we call 'external shocks', cause real and serious dislocation in their daily lives. Too many mothers have to face tough choices to meet their basic needs. Too many children are subjected to violence and abuse.

Children, especially girls, are being used as pawns for economic gain, including through human trafficking and other exploitative actions. Human trafficking is a dastardly threat to the welfare of our women, girls and boys. Our ancestors fought for our freedom. It is disgraceful that at this juncture of world history we should see the emergence of a form of modern-day slavery which renders women, girls and boys to be traded as chattel.

Many vulnerable young women are deceived and lured away by attractive offers to get them and their families out of poverty. They then find themselves in a strange land, with no support, no identity and no hope of returning home; sold into modern day slavery, their very bodies used as a currency of exchange.

Jamaica is resolute in its commitment to strengthening local and national programmes to eliminate violence against women and children. At the same time, I call on the international community to take bold actions to address this scourge. Issues that affect women and children must be central to decision-making processes. We look forward to continued collaboration with UN Women and the international community to help break this cycle of exploitation and insecurity.

Mr. President, the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS and non-communicable diseases also propels the 'cycle of global insecurity'.

Jamaica is cognisant of the considerable investment that the United Nations and the international community have made in the fight against HIV/AIDS. This support has allowed developing countries, including Jamaica, to make a difference in the lives of those affected.

Nevertheless, Mr. President, inadequate human and financial resources constrain our ability to scale-up testing and treatment, as well as to implement programmes to increase awareness and reduce the risk of new infections.

The developing world and lower income populations are hardest hit by the impact of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). The high social and developmental costs of NCDs demand concerted policy actions at the national and international levels. We must implement the outcomes of the High-Level Meeting on NCDs held last year.

Mr. President,

We are on the threshold of 2015, the target date for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The results thus far have been uneven. We need to reinvigorate Millennium Development Goal 8 - the Global Partnership for Development.

I wish to underscore the situation associated with our Middle Income Country status. Country categorisations should not serve as obstacles to delivering support to the world's poorest and most vulnerable.

We urge that middle income countries not be pushed to the margins of the development agenda, nor be put on the fringe of the development assistance provided by the international community.

A review of the factors used by the relevant multilateral agencies in the measurement of a country's wealth is urgently needed. We are supportive of the proposals put forward by ECLAC for an alternative but complementary approach to the criterion of per capita income for the allocation of financing for development.

Mr. President,

I now turn to global political developments. The cycle of insecurity transcends borders. Recent events have called attention to the fragility of peace and security in many parts of the globe and underscore the importance of respect for the rule of law, democracy and good governance. Jamaica reiterates its adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter, multilateralism and the inviolability of diplomatic institutions in the conduct of relations among States. We will

continue to add our voice to the ongoing work at the United Nations to secure human rights, justice, social equity and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Transnational crime, narco-trafficking and the illicit trade in small arms and ammunition are major components of the cycle of insecurity. They continue to endanger lives, undermine the rule of law, and fuel violent crime. We remain resolute in our call for increased partnership to fight this scourge and will continue to work with all delegations to achieve a comprehensive and robust Arms Trade Treaty.

The conflict in Syria poses a real threat to international peace and security. We are deeply concerned at the escalating internal violence and the resulting loss of life. It is our conviction that this conflict can still be resolved through political and diplomatic means.

We continue to urge the leaders of Israel and the Palestinian Authority to resume negotiations as early as possible, based on the two-state solution and relevant United Nations resolutions. These address Israel's right to exist within secure borders as well as the aspirations of the Palestinian people for self-determination and statehood.

We must ensure that the UN remains relevant to its membership through a process of reform of its organs, including the Security Council. Negotiations should proceed urgently towards a satisfactory conclusion.

Mr. President,

More than two years after the devastating earthquake, Haiti's plight remains deeply troubling. We are concerned that only a fraction of the pledges have been disbursed and yet the humanitarian situation in Haiti is perilous. As a close friend and neighbour of Haiti, with strong historical ties, I encourage members of the international community to make good on their commitments. The Haitian people need our continued support.

The long-standing trade and economic embargo against Cuba, another close neighbour and friend of Jamaica, has had severe negative effects on its growth and development. Jamaica reiterates its call for an end to the embargo against Cuba and the extra-territorial measures aimed at extending its reach to include third countries.

Mr. President,

Jamaica continues to work with our partners to erect a memorial at the United Nations to honour the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. We are grateful for the generous contributions received to date to erect the permanent memorial and reiterate the call for continued financial support.

Mr. President,

Fifty years ago, upon gaining our independence, Jamaica committed itself to the aims of the United Nations and fully accepted the responsibilities of membership. Our national pledge commits each and every Jamaican to stand up for justice, brotherhood and peace and to play our part in advancing the welfare of the whole human race. We will not resile from this commitment.

Let us work together to end the cycle of global insecurity.

Let us provide an opportunity for every man, woman and child to fulfill their God-given potential.

I leave you with the words of Robert Nesta 'Bob' Marley, who sang:

One Love, One heart...

Mr. President,

I hope that the peoples of the world will one day live together in peace, love, security and prosperity.

I thank you.