

**17<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change  
Statement at the High Level Segment by Mr. Keith Porter, Principal Director, Forestry Department,  
Ministry of Housing, Environment, Water and Local Government on behalf of the Jamaican  
Delegation**

Madam President:

We would like to thank the Government of South Africa for being such gracious hosts and for your able conduct of the meetings involved in this Conference of the Parties in Durban. We have had ample opportunity to take in the warmth of the weather and of the people as we made our way here each day. We have been impressed by the examples of the work being done in South Africa to combat climate change and your exposure of young people to the issues and solutions you are implementing in your cities.

I must apologize for the absence of our Minister, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang who, owing to urgent matters of national priority, was unfortunately not able to attend the Conference. Climate change is a critical issue for the Minister who is responsible for various sectors which are being affected by the adverse impacts of global warming.

Madam President, Jamaica wishes to associate itself with the statements made by Argentina on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and Grenada on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) which have highlighted the issues of critical importance to vulnerable small islands and the least developed countries.

Jamaica, as a small island, is sometimes barely visible on maps of the world, but we are a vibrant country of creative people who have made contributions to the world in terms of art, science, culture, sports and entertainment. Jamaica, as noted in our *State of the Environment Report*, has a "remarkable diversity of species and ecosystems and is... ranked fifth amongst islands in the world in terms of its endemic flora and fauna".

With the threat of sea level rise, we risk losing some of our valued natural history, as the repositories for specimens of our flora and fauna and artefacts hundreds of years old are located near the coast. The majority – 80% - of our small farmers depend on rain-fed agriculture and this means that they will have to adopt other methods of farming to adjust to the longer dry periods and shorter, more intense rainfall seasons. As is the case for other small island developing states who have spoken before, there is a lot at stake. Our tourism industry, agriculture, water resources and human settlements are all at risk from hurricanes and storms of increased intensity, droughts, and saline intrusion.

Our Second National Communication to the UNFCCC sets out our vulnerability assessment, Greenhouse Gas emissions and adaptation recommendations for priority sectors. Allow me, Madam President to thank the Global Environment Facility and the United Nations Development Programme for their excellent support to the preparation of this report which has been submitted at this COP and to say that we propose to prepare the third national communication shortly.

Next year will see the observation of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the UN Conference on Environment and Development at which the UNFCCC was adopted. It is shocking that twenty years later dangerous emissions of greenhouse gases have increased, and that there has been no agreement yet that they

must peak by 2015. For our part, Jamaica, through its national energy policy, Vision 2030 Jamaica – National Development Plan and its national renewable energy policy has set the target that by 2030, 20% of the country's energy mix will be from renewable sources. We are already on the way with just over 9% of energy now being produced from renewable sources, such as the 7MW Wigton Wind Farm. We are also preparing adaptation plans for various sectors and carrying out risk and vulnerability assessments in priority areas.

Madam President, here in Durban we are at a crossroads in the process. There are some difficult but important decisions that must be made, if the multilateral regime on climate change is to remain effective. We have been dithering and vacillating for too long and the time for concrete and decisive action is now. Our main expectation is a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol which is the axis around which the regime revolves. We continue to call on all Annex I parties to subscribe to a second commitment period as part of their moral obligation. You must demonstrate greater ambition to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere if we are to thrive on planet Earth.

Also of key importance is a legally binding agreement under the Convention without which the multilateral regime would not be complete. As AOSIS has consistently articulated, a pledge-and-review system which could lead to temperature rise in excess of 4 degrees will undoubtedly threaten the survival and viability of small island developing states (SIDS).

We join in the call for an early agreement on the modalities for the establishment and capitalization of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) which would constitute an important demonstration of the commitment of Annex I Parties to addressing this important obstacle. We expect that the GCF will go a long way to making available the requisite financing which is critical to support adaptation efforts by SIDS.

As Jamaica prepares for its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence next year, it is a time to reflect on the country's achievements as well as the challenges that we need to overcome to propel our country on a path towards sustainable economic growth and development in accordance with Vision 2030, our national development plan. Our environment is a significant component of this process. It is our sincere hope that we will succeed in sealing a deal here in Durban, the southern tip of the cradle of humanity, which will ensure that we pass on to future generations, a place of choice to live, work, raise families and do business.

Thank you, Madam President