**Press Statement By**
**The Prime Minister Of Jamaica**
**The Most Honourable Andrew Holness, On, Mp**

**On The Occasion Of**
**The State Visit**
**5TH -7TH August 2019**
**Of**

**The President Of The Republic Of Kenya
His Excellency Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta**

**Office Of The Prime Minister**
**5th August 2019**

* Members of the Media,
* Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for joining us this afternoon,

I am delighted to welcome my brother and friend, His Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta*,* President of the Republic of Kenya and his delegation on his historic State Visit to Jamaica.

The President and Mrs. Kenyatta are our Special Guests for the celebration of the 57th Anniversary of our Independence.  I am particularly pleased that both the President and his lovely wife have accepted my invitation to visit Jamaica during our national festivities.

We very much hope that they will enjoy the cultural displays – from our music, to our dance traditions and our food, as well as the warm hospitality for which Jamaicans are renowned. While the President will also experience a little bit of rural Jamaica, on his visit to the Denbigh Agricultural Show in Clarendon, we will have to defer our debate on best beaches – that is Montego Bay versus Mombassa.

**Mr. President**, your presence here today and your recent appointment of the very first Kenyan High Commissioner for Jamaica, reflect the growing relationship between Jamaica and Kenya. Indeed, this demonstrates to us your deep personal commitment to the Jamaica-Kenya partnership and to developing stronger ties with CARICOM as well.

Today, President Kenyatta and I have engaged in critical discussions on issues of mutual interest to Jamaica and Kenya. The robust dialogue we had builds on our fruitful exchanges last year, including at the G7 Summit in Canada and takes forward our strong desire to increase trade and investment ties and to expand economic and technical cooperation.

In so doing, we have agreed that we must now optimise the potential of our historical relations to yield concrete benefits in our cooperation efforts. Here, I emphasize that Jamaica - Kenya relations are deeply rooted in our historical connection with the African continent, which pre-dates the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1976.

It is well-documented that our first National Hero, the Rt. Excellent Marcus Mosiah Garvey, had a significant influence on Jomo Kenyatta, the first Prime Minister of Kenya and later its first President. He is, of course, President Kenyatta’s late father. Jomo Kenyatta was an ardent advocate for Kenyan independence and was a student of Garvey’s teachings on unification and Pan-Africanism.  That experience contributed to his efforts to create and lead a unified Kenya after the country gained its independence; as well as his solidarity with other great African leaders pushing for Africa’s liberation, unity and development.

In that context, we also recall that the late Dudley Thompson, as a Jamaican lawyer and Pan-Africanist in East Africa, was resolute in his staunch defence of Jomo Kenyatta, when he was charged with treason by the British colonialist government of the day.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

These longstanding fraternal connections between Jamaica and Kenya have undoubtedly helped to inspire and deepen the solidarity between our two countries today. As we move to capitalise on our historically positive relations, the President and I agreed that improving trade in goods and services, increasing investments and facilitating the movement of people, must be central to our strategy.

Kenya is recognised among the top-10 fastest growing economies in Africa.  That continent will remain in 2019, as the region with the world’s fastest growing economies. Like us, Kenya is showing positive macro-economic results. It is time therefore, that we look beyond the customary fraternal bonds and seek ways to create real and measurable economic and commercial activity to secure greater prosperity for our countries and peoples.

President Kenyatta and I have warmly welcomed the interest of the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce and the Kenyan National Chamber of Commerce and Industry in strengthening economic linkages, including through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the two Chambers.

Last December, Jamaica and Kenya signed an Air Services Agreement and today, we also discussed how to utilise that instrument to advance our goal of deeper engagement, through increased trade and travel.

Our two Foreign Ministers have just now signed a Framework Agreement on Cooperation, which creates a structured mechanism for regular dialogue to pursue meaningful and defined cooperation activities in areas such as trade, agriculture, sports, culture, education, tourism and health.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Our two Governments also welcomed the signing of three MOUs, namely, the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Fields of Sport, Culture and Heritage, the Memorandum of Understanding on Political Consultations as well as the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Tourism. We are equally confident that with the signing of these MOUs the relations between our two countries will be strengthened and advanced.

At the multilateral level, we have been collaborating actively within the context of the Commonwealth, the ACP Group of States and at the United Nations. We are particularly appreciative of the strong support that Kenya provided during Jamaica’s Presidency of the ACP Council last year and wish Kenya every success as it now prepares to host the next ACP Summit in Nairobi later this year.

During our talks today, we emphasized the significance of international cooperation and partnerships in the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Of course, the critical issue of Climate Change was also a major part of our discussions. In spite of vast geographic distance and differences, both Jamaica and Kenya have a vested interest in promoting urgent climate action. Once again, we commend Kenya’s leadership in championing these issues at the global level.

**President Kenyatta,**

It is both a pleasure and honour to host you and to engage on these matters in the spirit of friendship and cooperation that has characterised Jamaica-Kenya relations over the past 43 years.

I am hopeful that our renewed commitment showcased today, will propel Jamaica-Kenya relations to unprecedented heights, as we work towards achieving peace and prosperity for the benefit of both our peoples.

Thank you.