



Remarks by the Most Honourable Andrew Holness, Prime Minister

on the

Pinning of Members of Parliament with Sustainable Development

Goals (SDGs) Pins

on

Tuesday, November 7, 2017

- Mr Bruno Pouezat - UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative
- Dr. Elsie Laurence-Chounoune – UN Deputy Resident Representative
- Other Members of the UN Country Team

As is evident from the pinning ceremony which took place today, the United Nations Development Programme is a critical partner that continues to demonstrate commitment to provide support to governments to integrate the sustainable development goals (SDGs) into national development plans and policies. This ceremony symbolizes the fact that Parliamentarians have a responsibility to play a significant role in promoting and advancing the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and creating ownership of these goals.

Since the international community, including Jamaica, adopted the SDGs at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015, the UN agencies have been providing unwavering support to Jamaica's

efforts. One notable manifestation was the support received from the UNDP Country Office to facilitate the development of a road map for the effective implementation of the SDGs in Jamaica.

We will recall that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were born at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in 2012. The objective was to produce a set of universal goals that meet the urgent environmental, political and economic challenges facing our world.

The SDGs replaced the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which started a global effort in 2000 to tackle the indignity of poverty. The MDGs established measurable, universally-agreed objectives for tackling extreme poverty and hunger, preventing deadly diseases, and expanding primary education to all children, among other development priorities.

For 15 years, the MDGs drove progress in several important areas: reducing income poverty, providing much needed

access to water and sanitation, driving down child mortality and drastically improving maternal health. They also kick-started a global movement for free primary education, inspiring countries to invest in their future generations. Most significantly, the MDGs made huge strides in combatting HIV/AIDS and other treatable diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis.

The legacy and achievements of the MDGs provide us with valuable lessons and experience to begin work on the new goals. But for millions of people around the world the job remains unfinished. We need to go the last mile on ending hunger, achieving full gender equality, improving health services and getting every child into school beyond primary. The SDGs are therefore an urgent call to shift the world onto a more sustainable path. All 17 Goals interconnect, meaning success in one affects success for others and to keep them forefront in our minds; let me list them here:

- Goal 1: No Poverty
- Goal 2: Zero Hunger
- Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being
- Goal 4: Quality Education
- Goal 5: Gender Equality

- Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation
- Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy
- Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
- Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
- Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities
- Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
- Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
- Goal 13: Climate Action
- Goal 14: Life Below Water
- Goal 15: Life on Land
- Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
- Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals

Dealing with the threat of climate change impacts how we manage our fragile natural resources, achieving gender equality or better health helps eradicate poverty, and fostering peace and inclusive societies will reduce inequalities and help economies prosper. In short, this is the greatest chance we have to improve life for future generations.

Obviously, different countries are at different stages and therefore we would have to incorporate and align the SDGs with our own national objectives and trajectory as we seek to build a sustainable, safer and more prosperous nation.

Jamaica is committed to achieving the 2030 Agenda, and already has the mechanisms in place to ensure effective implementation. A Rapid Integrated Assessment of all Jamaica's national planning documents by the UNDP in 2016 confirmed that Vision 2030 Jamaica – National Development Plan; the Medium-Term Socio-Economic Policy Framework (MTF); and sectoral policies and plans are strongly aligned with the SDGs.

With respect to monitoring and reporting, Jamaica is also very well positioned to monitor progress towards the SDGs, having completed a map of its data capacity in relation to the SDG indicators.

As part of its follow-up and review mechanisms, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development encourages member states to "conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which are country-led and country-driven". Next year, at the 2018 High level Political Forum, Jamaica will be presenting its Voluntary National Review, and in so doing provide an update, on the

actions and measures taken to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs.

With the ethical imperative of the new development agenda articulated in the phrase “no one left behind”, I wish to emphasize inclusiveness as the underlying driving principle. Recognizing that we must secure our future by our actions today, I want to specially recognise the participation of students in this ‘pinning ceremony’, as they play a pivotal role in leading the charge. Their presence clearly symbolizes increasing awareness and interest in the global development agenda, which augurs well for the sustainability of Jamaica’s efforts towards attaining the SDGs.

I could not stand here today without highlighting the alarming findings in the recently launched UNICEF Report: *A Familiar Face: Violence in the Lives of Children and Adolescents* which shows the frightening number of Jamaican children who die violently and who are regularly subjected to sexual violence and violent discipline in their homes, schools and communities. The report noted that eight in ten Jamaican children in the 2-14 years age group

experience violence as a form of discipline. It also noted that 47 children were killed by violent means between January and October of this year based on police statistics; already more children have been killed violently this year than in 2016. While we highlight the importance of the SDGs today; we must reflect on their all-encompassing influence in making the world a better place for our children. Without changing the means by which we discipline our children and how we resolve conflict; and on that note I must reiterate the commitment to not only banning corporal punishment in schools but generally in society so that it is no longer an option. In looking back at the SDGS we note that these issues while influenced by and connected to all goals will directly impact on our achievement of in particular Goal 3 – Good Health and Well-being and Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. Jamaica recognizes this and is taking the necessary steps to make the changes required.

With support from the UNDP, Jamaica has embarked on several initiatives aimed at ensuring the effective implementation of the SDGs and I am confident that the strong partnership developed will continue.