

**HIGHLIGHTS OF JAMAICA’S SUBMISSIONS to the  
World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), Johannesburg 2002**

Presented by Senator the Honorable A. J. Nicholson,  
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**Presented at the Fourth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Alliance of  
Small Island Developing States (AOSIS), 1<sup>st</sup> September 2002:**

Our position is based on “the uniqueness of our environmental and economic vulnerabilities.”

The Barbados Programme of Action is of “central importance to the long-term viability of our island ecosystems and small island economies” as it “defines a sound strategy for the sustainable development of our countries.”

There are three important initiatives that Jamaica would wish to highlight:

**1. Vulnerability** – need to secure support from the international community for initiatives to strengthen the capacity of SIDS to reduce vulnerability to natural disasters resulting from global climate variability and climate change. Vulnerability described by a comprehensive report on Vulnerability and Small Island States presented by UNDP in Montego Bay, May 2002.

**2. Sustainable Energy** – “Sustainable energy services are...the foundation of sustainable development.” They are “an essential pre-requisite for the achievement of economic growth and for raising the quality of life of all our citizens.”

Global energy systems must make the transition to sustainable energy in the shortest possible time to minimize the negative impact of climate change.

If we are to continue to speak with authority on the need to address climate change and sea level rise, then we must lead by example:

- Energy use in the long term must not negatively affect our fragile ecosystems
- We need to reduce our dependence on petroleum
- We need to develop and maximize use of renewable energy resources

**3. Management of the Caribbean Sea** – an initiative to ensure the integrated management and protection of our fragile marine environment, which is being progressively degraded. SIDS need the support of the international community as we seek to define this concept and establish a framework for its implementation.

Also: “Water and sanitation are basic human rights, and should be non-negotiable.”

**Presented to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, 4<sup>th</sup> September 2002:**

We conclude that we might have underestimated the complexity and the requirements involved in implementing Agenda 21.

We underestimated the national and local capacity that is necessary, as well as the power of entrenched special interests to resist change.

Globalization has weakened the nation state in many crucial areas and has left several countries, particularly those in the developing world, more vulnerable to the vagaries of the market, disruptive capital flows, and the capricious behaviour of too many companies, national and international. Of course, this is in addition to the usual risks and uncertainties that small developing states face from both man and nature.

In Jamaica, we have sought to place our economy in a position to compete globally by ensuring macroeconomic stability, protection of property rights, having a consistent and enabling policy framework to encourage investment. In carrying out these necessary reforms, we find ourselves faced with what appears to be a trade-off between poverty reduction and sustainable environmental practices. We know that this is a false dichotomy, since we cannot sustain economic growth and raise living standards unless we bring into proper balance the elements of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental.

**Jamaica supports the guiding principles of the Earth Charter as a framework for sustainable development.** We affirm the wisdom that, for sustainable development to be realized, it must be pursued within a framework of true partnership in decision-making and action among all stakeholders.

**Jamaica recognizes the valuable contribution to development that is being made by non-governmental organizations and other members of civil society.** In this context, we assert the imperative of integrating meaningful gender considerations in the entire development process.

Partnership initiatives must be established within defined parameters that adequately protect the interests of all partners, and incorporate appropriate mechanisms for monitoring implementation.

Partnership arrangements should not be seen as a substitute for the traditional Overseas Development Assistance flows. These initiatives should not be understood by the developed countries as mechanisms to renege on the firm commitments given for the transfer of resources to assist developing countries.

We recall that the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, adopted in 1994, was:

- The first expression of Agenda 21 translated into specific policies and action to be undertaken;
- The first meaningful and concrete effort at a global alliance for the pursuit of sustainable development.

Its adoption reaffirmed the recognition of the international community, expressed at Rio, that the sustainable development needs of SIDS demands special attention. We therefore welcome the proposed ten-year review of the Barbados Programme of Action in 2004.

Progress on SD in Jamaica:

- Increased awareness on the part of government, the private sector and civil society concerning the need to promote economic growth and development from a people-centred, environmentally sensitive perspective.
- Legislation, policies and programmes implemented
- Sustainable Development Council and other institutions established
- Research, education and public awareness initiatives undertaken.
- Engagement in international negotiations covering areas including climate change, biodiversity, the law of the sea, sustainable fisheries and marine pollution, and, more recently, in trade negotiations and in financing for development.

**“The government of Jamaica fully accepts its responsibility for establishing the necessary legal, institutional and policy framework to ensure the implementation of Agenda 21 and the agreements flowing from this encounter.”**

Results expected from the WSSD: “Firm commitments for urgent action and meaningful implementation in most areas.”

We support the special section on Small Island Developing States in the Summit Plan of Implementation and the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development as well as other initiatives aimed at advancing science, technological development and environmental management.

Concerns:

- Inadequate attention to the rules for governing private sector engagement in the implementation of Agenda 21.
- Failure to establish firm targets for renewable energy to catalyse the transformation from non-sustainable to sustainable energy
- Insufficient consideration was given to the place of micro, small and medium enterprises in these deliberations.
- We intend, along with our partners, to press in other international fora for support to fully address these issues, for they speak to the long-term viability of small societies.

Johannesburg 2002 should be regarded as a turning point, an historic step in the march along the road toward the elimination of what our host, President Mbeki, has described as global apartheid.

*Source:* Presentations prepared by Jamaica’s delegation to the WSSD under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, September 2002, and circulated to Jamaica’s NGO delegates.