



STATEMENT

BY

**MR SHELDON BARNES
ALTERNATE TO THE RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF JAMAICA TO THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY**

ON

**THE OCCASION OF THE 62ND REGULAR SESSION OF
THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC
ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA)**

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Mr. President,

I wish to congratulate you on your election to the Presidency of this 62nd Regular Session and also convey appreciation to you and the members of the Bureau for steering the work of this Conference most effectively.

Jamaica, as a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), is grateful for the support provided by the IAEA under its Cooperation Programme Framework (CPF) which will support the country's national development objectives and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the transfer of nuclear technology and technical cooperation resources.

Last Month, the Deputy Director General of Technical Cooperation, Mr. Dahzu Yang visited Jamaica to sign the CPF for 2018-2023 in Kingston. During the visit, Mr. Yang, met with key stakeholders in the Government of Jamaica, as well as conducted site-visits, including to the Nuclear Medicine Centre at the University of the West Indies. This visit underscored the longstanding relations between Jamaica and the IAEA, as well as the willingness of both to further cooperation in various areas.

Jamaica is mindful that the path towards sustainable development would be unattainable without partnerships with multilateral and bilateral partners. In light of this invaluable technical transfer, we encourage all fellow Member States, in a position to do so, to continue to contribute to the technical cooperation fund in order to ensure that there are sufficient resources to meet the growing demand for the IAEA's assistance.

Mr. President,

I delight in mentioning the fact that Jamaica is the first English speaking country in the Caribbean to have joined the IAEA in 1965, some 50 years ago.

Since then, Jamaica has continued to work closely with the IAEA in its efforts to peacefully harness nuclear energy for sustainable development. We earnestly believe that the work of this august body is intimately connected to the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular Goal 3 on health; Goal 6 on sustainable management of water and sanitation and Goal 7 on access to affordable, reliable sustainable and modern energy.

Having benefited significantly from the Agency's technical cooperation activities, Jamaica maintains a strong interest in the IAEA programmes and welcomes the thrust by the agency to synergise national development priorities and IAEA assistance within the broader UN development Assistance Framework.

At the regional level, the critical role of the Regional Cooperation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean (ARCAL) cannot be overemphasised. ARCAL is an important mechanism for technical cooperation in the region, and Jamaica has taken the necessary steps to benefit from the Extension Agreement by depositing the instrument in May 2017.

Over the 50 years of Jamaica/IAEA relations, the IAEA has continued to offer technical assistance in education, health and research. These include courses and training; the programme of action for cancer therapy (PACT); and the project for the conversion of the SLOWPOKE reactor in Jamaica from high enriched uranium (HEU) to low enriched uranium (LEU); Re-Establishing Nuclear Medicine Capacity in the Public Sector, just to name a few.

The latter programme is of significant importance to the region, as Jamaica hosts the only research reactor in the Caribbean, at its International Centre for Environmental and Nuclear Sciences (ICENS) in Kingston. The conversion project ensures that the Caribbean is completely free from high enriched uranium which is used to manufacture nuclear weapons.

In addition, the doubling of the capacity of the reactor provides an opportunity for Jamaica to expand its research to assist other countries in the Caribbean with their scientific work. This is particularly important considering the increase in IAEA membership from the Caribbean.

Mr. President,

The Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology and the International Centre for Environmental and Nuclear Sciences in Jamaica are also closely liaising with the IAEA to strengthen the regulatory infrastructure in the region to provide for effective "cradle to the grave" control of radioactive sources.

In keeping with Jamaica's commitment to use nuclear energy for scientific and peaceful purposes, the Jamaican Parliament passed a bill entitled, the Nuclear

Safety and Radiation Protection Act, and established the Hazardous Substances Regulatory Authority in July 2015.

I am pleased to mention that both frameworks were designed to regulate activities, practices and facilities involving ionizing radiation and nuclear technology, for the protection of people, property and the environment from the harmful effects of radiation.

Mr. President,

Notwithstanding the fact that Jamaica and other Caribbean Member States present a negligible threat as they are not producers of weapons- related dual use technologies, their strategic location, porous borders and socio-economic realities make them a soft target for nuclear terrorism.

As a State Party to the Treaty of Non – Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Jamaica reaffirms its commitment to total disarmament in line with the three pillars of the Treaty - nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear technology. We continue to encourage States, which have not yet done so, to accede to legally - binding international conventions and to commit in earnest to the negotiations geared towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

In addition, the Government of Jamaica was pleased to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by the General Assembly on 8th December 2017, which is an important step for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We welcome its entry into force and encourages countries who have yet to sign the agreement to do so.

Last year, the Latin American And Caribbean Region commemorated the 50th Anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco in the margins of the 25th Session of the General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL). Jamaica considers this milestone of tremendous significance given the Treaty's role in establishing the Region as a nuclear weapon-free zone (NWFZ).

Jamaica remains steadfast to the cause of prohibiting the use, storage and transport of nuclear weapons in line with the Articles of the Treaty, as well as promoting the utility of such zones, globally.

In closing, Mr. President, please allow me to commend the Director-General of the IAEA, Mr. Yukiya Amano, for his leadership and vision and I join others in wishing him a speedy recovery.

Please be assured of our full cooperation and support for the work of the Agency in collaboration with other members and partners, towards the fulfillment of its mandate. Jamaica reaffirms its commitment to the goal of the safe and effective uses of this technology for the global good.

I thank you.