



REMARKS FOR THE LAUNCH OF
WORLD POPULATION DAY
JULY 11, 2011

*“The World at 7 Billion – Population Ageing: Implications for
Development in Jamaica*”

By

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Blue Mountain Suite, Knutsford Court Hotel
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Good morning.

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to join you in today's launch of World Population Day 2011.

Strong partnerships among key stakeholders in public, private and civil society have ensured Jamaica's proactive involvement in national and international fora/forums relating to the Population and Development process, including the subject of this year's focus—Population Ageing. Consequently, Jamaica has been able to build capacities and strengthen its population and development programmes especially with regards to policy formulation and meeting our development goals.

This year's theme: "***The World at 7 Billion – Population Ageing: Implications for Development in Jamaica***", is timely as the world approaches another population milestone, and as Jamaica, through

its long-term National Development Plan, embarks upon the journey of achieving a “*healthy and stable population*” towards the broad national goal of “... *empowering [everyone] to achieve their fullest potential* by 2030.

Our statistics indicate that at the end of 2010 there was an estimated 2.7 million people living in Jamaica and that by 2030 this figure is projected to reach approximately 2.9 million. This relatively slow projected growth of the total population is an expected result of declining replacement level fertility, that is, each woman having approximately two children, and continuing high levels of external migration.

However, in spite of this expected slow growth there is a fundamental transformation of the population structure that is taking place. The child population under 15 years is projected to decline to around 20 per cent of the total population by 2030, from 29.0 per cent in 2010. On the other hand, the working age

population, 15 to 64 years, is expected to increase to approximately 66.0 per cent in 2030 from 64.0 per cent in 2010. By 2030 the elderly population, 60 years and over, is projected to grow to 450,000 from 299,500 in 2010. This group is currently the fastest growing segment of the total population and will continue to do so to 2030.

Chairperson, while our responses to these and other realities as individuals, families, and government have to be set against the background of the challenges our society faces from the global economic crises, climate change and natural disasters, we as a country have to appreciate the imperative of planning strategically for these population and demographic changes.

Luckily, scholars are increasingly underscoring the importance of taking into account the “Price of [this] maturity” and transformation as well as who will pay “the price of [its] economic and [social]

consequences”. At the PIOJ we must also embark upon our own studies based on our own reality.

And while we are mindful that the changes in the population present challenges, let us realize that this “demographic bonus” is a perfect window of opportunity for growth in economic development and well-being.

Chairperson, in this regard, I’m happy to say that we are on the right track. The PIOJ as the agency charged with leading the process of policy formulation on economic and social issues for sustainable national development, is ensuring that these structural changes are integrated in all national policies, plans and programmes. This will facilitate the necessary adjustments to provide support to health care, education, social protection systems and the elderly population. The formulation of the National Development Plan, for example, bears testimony to this.

The current undertaking of the 2011 Population and Housing Census by STATIN is also important for the PIOJ and the country as the data collected when analysed will enable us to provide evidenced-based technical and policy advice for planning.

Today's event presents a perfect opportunity for us as Government, private sector, NGOs and civil society to:

- (i) bring greater awareness to the characteristics of population ageing and the changes in Jamaica's population structure
- (ii) create a common space for stakeholders to share their experiences and knowledge
- (iii) develop strategies in all relevant sectors to guide policy, planning and programme development.

In concluding, as we join with other nations to observe this World Population Day, I urge you to be mindful that the efforts we make today and in the future will help to determine whether or not there

is sustainable well-being of our people and country. Our future lies therefore, in our hands.

Thank you.

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