

**SPEECH BY PERMANENT SECRETARY**  
**MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**  
**MRS MARSHA HENRY-MARTIN**  
**AT THE**  
**UNDRR SIDE EVENT OF THE 2022 HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM**  
**A RISK INFORMED APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT IN A COVID 19 TRANSFORMED WORLD**  
**JULY 11, 2022**

**Excellencies, Delegates,** A very warm Jamaican greeting.

In 2021, Jamaica had the distinct honor of hosting the 7<sup>th</sup> Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the Caribbean between November 1 and 4 in 2021 after being postponed for approximately 1 ½ years due to the COVID 19 Pandemic. Held under the **theme “Building Resilient Economies in the Americas and the Caribbean”**, it is my pleasure to participate in this forum on a risk informed approach to development in a covid 19 transformed world.

This was the first time this very important conference was being held in a Small Island Developing State (SIDs) in the Caribbean. Due to the impact of the COVID 19 Pandemic, the conference was held as a hybrid event for the first time. This created unique opportunities to organize high level events that were sustainable, globally inclusive yet carbon neutral whilst facilitating a broad base for the participation of fellow countrymen and relaying its proceedings to 52,000 persons globally.

36 sessions were convened which included 23 official statements, a technical session on the Regional Action Plan and a Ministerial and High-Level Authorities meeting. 3 preparatory meetings were convened including a Youth Forum for the Americas and the Caribbean for the first time. The completion of the regional action plan for the Sendai Framework to the Sustainable Development Agenda in the Americas and the Caribbean must be underscored as an important contribution by Jamaica. The consultative and technical sessions focused on strengthening social protection mechanisms and safeguarding vulnerable populations and livelihoods, low cost and low vulnerable housing, business, government, and basic services continuity in the event of disasters, enhancing public private partnerships, investing in Disasters Risk Reduction (DRR) for sustainable development and taking action to strengthen local government capacities to address systematic and cascading risks.

2 major outcomes which must be highlighted are:

1. Agreement on the adjustments made to the Regional Action Plan to reflect the progress and priorities of each country,
2. An official output of the Plan and adoption at the Ministerial meeting based on agreed changes.

The Ministerial meeting was successful as the Ministerial Declaration and Regional Action Plan were adopted for the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2015 to 2030. Ministers considered an integrated approach to achieving the 4 priorities of the Sendai Framework and spoke to the importance of understanding disaster risks using an all-

hazards approach and stressed the need to meet the commitments set out in the Sendai Framework.

The discussions highlighted the need to help society recover from the pandemic by strengthening international cooperation for development and facilitating access to vaccines against COVID for the countries in the region that require them. Other highlights included:

1. Climate change and variability as underlying factors of risk and the urgency to embark on a pathway to resilience by doubling efforts in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
2. The importance of linking DRR to partnerships and financing to build resilience was emphasized.

For the very first time, a statement of the Youths of the Americas and the Caribbean was presented on DRR to the Ministerial Meeting and was accepted.

It is important to ensure that the SDGs in the Caribbean are risk informed given the risks faced by SIDs in the Caribbean and given the context of the present climate emergency.

COVID 19 has further exposed vulnerabilities of our economies and reminded that there must be support for DRR financing and that DRR strategies must be integrated in development planning.

In conclusion, as we approach the ending of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action, it is critical that we renew our ambitions and commitments and support DRR in Small Island Developing states if we are going to build back better and stronger especially given our unique vulnerabilities.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank You and One Love

END