

UNDP COUNTRY PROGRAMME LAUNCH

SPEAKING NOTES

January 26, 2023

The Planning Institute of Jamaica is pleased to participate in the launch of the UNDP's 2022–2026 Country Programme (CP). The UNDP remains one of Jamaica's main Development Partners providing well-needed grant resources which are targeted at critical areas across a range of sectors. I have often said that the value of UNDP's support to Jamaica's socio-economic development exceeds its monetary value.

The 2022–2026 Multi-Country Programme resides in the United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (MSDCF) which guides programming for the Region towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Country Programme localizes the Development Framework in alignment with Jamaica's strategic objectives articulated in the Vision 2030 Jamaica – National Development Plan. The PIOJ is pleased to have participated fully in the highly consultative process in which the Country Programme was developed and to have contributed to the crafting of a country programme that recognizes local planning processes, as reflected in its full alignment with Vision 2030, in respect of the thematic areas:

- Social resilience and inclusion, which supports Goal 1 “Jamaicans are empowered to achieve their full potential”
- Citizen safety and security and the rule of law, which supports Goal 2 “The Jamaican Society is secure, cohesive and just”
- Climate change resilience, which supports Goal 3 “Jamaica has a healthy natural environment”
- Sustainable natural resource Management supports Goal 1.

The focus being given to these thematic areas in the new Country Programme is well placed and well justified, as the UNDP has, over the years, developed an understanding of issues and a competitive advantage in the areas of Poverty Reduction, Environment and Climate Change, Disaster Risk Reduction, Security, Justice and Biodiversity Conservation.

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The UNDP has also over the years shown a willingness to explore creative partnerships around emerging priorities. Examples of projects in the country programme that touch the pulse of some of Jamaica's most critical development challenges include:

1. The SALIENT project aimed at Reducing Small Arms and Light Weapons
2. The Investor Map Initiative aimed at connecting investors to market specific investment opportunities which support the attainment of SDG targets
3. The Amplifying Youth Voice and Action project, which sought to enable youth participation in decision-making related to their own safety and security

We recall a range of other innovative projects, implemented over time, and anticipate that the same level of creativity and out-of-the-box thinking will characterise all the projects that will be supported under the CP.

The PIOJ would like to highlight the leadership, responsiveness and adaptive nature of the UNDP's programmes in meeting Jamaica's development needs. We note the UNDP's sterling contribution at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, when they teamed with the government and other agencies in providing a quick response to the country's need for critical and informed support. The UNDP demonstrated agility and leadership in the development of the External Support Coordination Platform, which is an Electronic Data Management Information System to track development assistance during crisis situations.

We commend the UNDP for the systematic approach that is being taken to the conduct of ex-post evaluations of projects and programmes and anticipate that this will be sustained under this CP. Additionally, we hope that the findings of these evaluations will continue to be used to inform further programming. As Government, we intend to do much more to institutionalise the use of evaluations towards improved project design and implementation for all projects and programmes.

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In the current Country Programme we look forward to attention being paid to some critical areas such as:

- ❑ Continued close collaboration with the PIOJ, MDAs and other stakeholders, to develop, monitor and evaluate projects and programmes in a structured, coordinated and efficient manner, to ensure evidence-based decision-making
- ❑ We hope there will be opportunities for targeted capacity building of government partners to contribute to better and more sustainable interventions.
- ❑ We anticipate increased effort to extend initiatives undertaken, by implementing longer term programmes. This may include a phased approach given the resource mobilisation constraints that place limits on the amount of funds available for a particular intervention.
- ❑ Where gaps in programme design are recognised, we would welcome a continued commitment to collaborating with relevant partners to improve this critical area of the project cycle in order to optimise the expected benefits of the programmes.

In closing, the PIOJ recognizes the invaluable relationship that has been built with the UNDP through the development of several cycles of country strategies and country programmes. We are grateful for this long-standing partnership with the organisation and look forward to strengthening the collaboration and camaraderie which have characterized our cooperation with UNDP. We also look forward to deepening the friendships which we share with Mrs Antonio and the entire UNDP team, who we know are all committed to the single objective of assisting Jamaica to attain its full development potential.

We at the PIOJ are aware of the myriad implementation challenges that impact the quality of project implementation and therefore, the extent to which the much-needed investments generate the expected and planned benefits. We ask the UNDP and other partners to accept our

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assurance that we will continue efforts towards the provision of an enabling environment within which this valuable country programme and our wider development portfolio can be implemented effectively and efficiently to achieve or Vision 2030 goals.

Thank You Ladies and gentlemen.