

Let's Talk Goals

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs

What is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development? Why does it matter? What does it mean for us as Jamaicans? Over the next five weeks, we will be presenting articles on topical issues related to development in Jamaica, written by sector specialists on inclusive growth, social protection, community development, trade and investment.

Let's Talk Goals is part of the communication programme from the Planning Institute of Jamaica to raise awareness and call to action on Jamaica's pursuit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In 2015, Jamaica was among the 193-member states of the United Nations (UN) that adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). There are 17 SDGs and 169 targets that serve as the centrepiece of the global 2030 Agenda, which includes other supportive instruments on development financing, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and disaster risk reduction. The 2030 Agenda and the SDGs promote development through an interconnected focus on the environment, economy and society. Applying a whole-of-society approach, member states of the UN have committed to: pursuing poverty reduction, economic empowerment, reduce inequality and improvement of the planetary boundaries by 2030.

The adoption of the SDGs continues Jamaica's tradition of development planning through a partnership framework that encompasses all sectors of society. Broad stakeholder consultations locally, contributed to the development of the Vision 2030 Jamaica – National Development Plan in 2009, and the negotiations in the transition from the Millennium Development Goals, the precursor to the SDGs. Jamaica's efforts in advancing the 2030 Agenda at the global level are most prominent in advocacy for improved development financing for small island states, disaster risk reduction and food security.

Since adopting the SDGs, Jamaica has integrated the goals and strategies into Vision 2030 Jamaica. This enabled a seamless local implementation process, supported by the performance measurement and budgetary processes of the Government of Jamaica (GOJ). By aligning the corporate and operational plans of ministries, departments and agencies to the three-year Medium-term Socio-economic Policy Framework (MTF) of Vision 2030 Jamaica, there is a whole-of-government approach to achieving the SDGs. Other stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations, private sector and civil society are part of the whole-of-society approach to national development, contributing directly to the outcomes of

the SDGs and Vision 2030 Jamaica through advocacy, implementation of programmes and individual action.

The Planning Institute of Jamaica was appointed as the National Focal Point for monitoring the SDGs, and as the national planning agency, has responsibility for the development, coordination and monitoring of the Vision 2030 Jamaica – National Development Plan. The Statistical Institute of Jamaica has responsibility for data and statistics for monitoring the progress on the SDGs, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade has responsibility for foreign policy and leads on negotiation processes. Together, these three entities form the National SDGs Core Group and combined with a larger multi-stakeholder body—the National 2030 Agenda Oversight Committee—oversee the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs for Jamaica.

The institutional framework of government alone, cannot achieve national development. The 2030 Agenda and the SDGs are designed to enhance citizen participation and involvement, as key actors for people-centred development. Every Jamaican, whether at home or abroad, armed with information to support collective action has a role to play in achieving these national goals. Citizens’ participation in governance in their communities and parishes will help to translate national development objectives locally, thus streamlining the development process and enabling ownership of the process and results. Strong social capital is key; placing people at the centre of development means ensuring that every child, youth, adult and elderly person are engaged as active agents of development.

With six years remaining in the current plan to achieve our national development goals and the SDGs, there is opportunity to build on the gains we have made and to advance the transformations being pursued in the areas of financing, health, education, economic diversification, innovation and digitalization. Environmental protection, appropriate disaster risk management and mitigation measures support the protection of natural resources, and safeguard infrastructure and people’s lives and livelihoods. Underpinning this is the imperative of having strong supportive institutions that are characterized by accountability, transparency and capacity to drive development in various sectors, as well as a strong human capital that is equipped to meet the labour market and innovation demands.

Pursuing this inclusive agenda strengthens the capacity for implementation beyond 2030, by recognising the challenges and opportunities for achieving sustainable development. The remaining articles in this series address some of these key areas of transformation—social protection, community development, trade and investment, and inclusive growth. The series is being published around the Summit of the Future to be convened during the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, from September 20 to 24, 2024. The Summit will bring together leaders from around the world to “forge a new

international consensus on how we deliver a better present and safeguard the future". Jamaica will participate in the Summit and has been active in the negotiations, cofacilitating the Declaration of Future Generations [see <https://www.un.org/en/summit>].