



GOVERNMENT OF JAMAICA

STATEMENT BY

**DR. THE HONOURABLE NORMAN DUNN, MP, JP
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL
SECURITY**

AT THE

**GENERAL DEBATE
17TH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES (COSP17)
TO THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH
DISABILITIES (CRPD)**

GENERAL ASSEMBLY HALL

UNHQ, NEW YORK

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Mr. President, Jamaica is pleased to provide an update on the progress being made in its implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

We are pleased to do so following the constructive dialogue we had in March 2022, recalling the commendations, principal areas of concern and recommendations provided by the Committee in its concluding remarks. We also had a very useful presentation at COSP16 in June 2023.

Jamaica maintains a strong commitment to the progressive resolution of the noted concerns, and, with the Disabilities Act, 2014 now in effect, is intent on making further significant advancements. The Act established the Disabilities Rights Tribunal (DRT) to promote, protect, and ensure the rights of persons with disabilities, representing an important first step toward the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the CRPD.

Accordingly, we are reporting that the DRT is now in operation and had its first hearing on May 21, 2024. A key outcome of the meeting is the adoption of the rights-based approach to matters relating to persons with disabilities. This includes strengthening and implementing mechanisms for the effective involvement of persons with disabilities, in the following ways:

1. **General principles and obligations (Articles 1 to 4):** The Government of Jamaica is actively pursuing work toward the review of its Constitution including the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, 2011. As part of this thrust, the Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities, the state agency which promotes the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, communicated its intention to make submissions on entrenching as a constitutional right, the right not to be discriminated against, based on a disability.
2. **Accessibility (Article 9) -** The Government has been consistent in addressing the issue of accessibility and most recently the focus has been on public transport, with the acquisition of additional buses with facilities for persons with disabilities. Plans are underway to acquire another two hundred (200) buses, a portion of which will allow for wheelchair access.

Mr. President,

I close by reiterating Jamaica's deep commitment to its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: we will continue to make significant strides towards its implementation.