

COUNTRY PROGRAMME 2022 - 2026



**UNDP MULTI COUNTRY
OFFICE IN JAMAICA**

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**Executive Board of the
United Nations Development
Programme, the United Nations
Population Fund and the
United Nations Office for
Project Services**

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Item 6 of the provisional agenda
Country programmes and related matters**

**UNDP Multi-country programme
document for Jamaica (2022 - 2026)**



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I. UNDP within the United Nations Multi-country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

1. The programme is aligned with the United Nations Multi-country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNMSDCF) 2022-2026, the national priorities outlined in “Vision 2030 – Jamaica National Development Plan” and the UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025. The programme will focus on four priorities: (a) social resilience and inclusion; (b) citizen safety and security and the rule of law; (c) climate change resilience; and (d) sustainable natural resource management.

2. Jamaica, a small island developing State with a population of 2,726,000,¹ has made notable strides in areas central to its vision to make Jamaica, “the place of choice to live, work, raise families and do business”.² The Government has prioritized the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, which are 91 per cent aligned with Vision 2030 and associated national planning documents.³ In 2019, Jamaica attained a Human Development Index value of 0.734,⁴ placing it in the high human development category. However, when discounted for inequality, the value fell to 0.612, a loss of 16.6 per cent. Despite a fall in the poverty rate of 6.7 percentage points, to 12.6 per cent, rural poverty is still relatively high at 15 per cent.⁵ With a Gender Inequality Index of .0396, ranking 88 of 162 countries, Jamaica needs to accelerate efforts to advance gender equality.

3. Jamaica has a relatively developed social protection system, as outlined in its comprehensive Jamaica Social Protection Strategy. However, the main social protection programme, the Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education, does not adequately benefit all vulnerable groups, with persons with disabilities being the most disadvantaged. Notably, there also remains a need for improving service coverage for other vulnerable groups such as women and persons living with HIV and AIDS.⁶

4. Jamaica registered a historically low unemployment rate of 7.3 per cent⁷ in January 2020, attributable to a decline in female unemployment. Youth unemployment, however, remained high at 19 per cent, a 2.8 per cent decrease over the same period in 2019. Furthermore, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic severely impacted the Jamaican economy due to a drastic decline in tourism revenue, accounting for one third of gross domestic product (GDP). This decline led to job losses, resulting in a 1.5 per cent increase in unemployment and a contraction in the economy of 10 per cent.⁸ The pandemic negatively impacted micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), with an estimated 30 per cent⁹ having had to discontinue their operations since March 2020. Considering the adverse economic impacts of the pandemic, the Government provided 25 billion Jamaican dollars in economic stimulus targeting vulnerable groups, unemployed persons and MSMEs. Additional policy measures are needed to accelerate socioeconomic recovery through innovative solutions, research and development and improved digital infrastructure.

5. Crime and violence pose a significant threat to the country’s socioeconomic development. With the region’s highest homicide rate, Jamaica recorded 1,323 murders¹⁰ in 2020. Young males aged 16-24 are the main victims and perpetrators of violent crimes. This challenge is exacerbated by the use of illicit small arms and light weapons. Additionally, sexual and gender-based violence¹¹ remains a concern, with more than one in every four women

¹ Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2020.

² Planning Institute of Jamaica, Vision 2030: National Development Plan, 2009, pg. vi

³ Vision 2030 and planning documents are estimated to be 91.3 per cent aligned to the Goals according to the rapid integrated assessment done by UNDP in 2016 and the voluntary national review report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development published by the Planning Institute of Jamaica (2018).

⁴ UNDP, Human Development Report, 2020, The Next Frontier: Human Development and the Anthropocene.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ United Nations Common Country Analysis: Jamaica, 2020.

⁷ Statistical Institute of Jamaica, January 2020.

⁸ Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2020.

⁹ UNDP, Social and economic impact of the COVID-19 and policy options in Jamaica, 2020.

¹⁰ Jamaica Constabulary Force, 2020

¹¹ Williams, Carol Watson, Women’s Health Survey 2016: Jamaica, UN-Women, 2018.

experiencing intimate partner and sexual violence in their lifetime. Justice system reform is essential to combat crime and thus remains a priority. Despite improvements, institutional capacity gaps remain, namely equitable access to and quality of justice services related to human rights and the rule-of-law institutions, especially for women and other vulnerable groups. Another threat to the country's socioeconomic development is its vulnerability to extreme weather events and climate risks. This has severe impacts on livelihoods as the most vulnerable often suffer income and productivity losses.

6. The country's biodiversity and natural resources fuel its economy, but several environmental challenges hinder environmental sustainability and natural resource management. As such, improving the island's resilience to natural hazards and climate change is integral to achieving Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals. For example, attaining the national target of 33 per cent of electricity generation from renewables by 2030 will require a shift in Jamaican dependency on fossil fuels as an energy source. Additionally, an expansion of the Jamaican blue economy, currently responsible for approximately 7 per cent of GDP, is critical. Notably, 61 per cent of the population live in communities within five kilometres of the coast. Therefore, it is imperative to safeguard the economic and social value of highly vulnerable coastal communities and infrastructure to support sustainable development.

7. The Common Country Analysis identified key economic accelerators including expanding the blue and green economies; advancing justice reform and tackling crime and violence; addressing social resilience and inclusion; protecting biodiversity; and enhancing resilience to climate change and natural disasters. UNDP continuously demonstrates its comparative advantage in: (a) developing policies; (b) promoting gender equality and women's empowerment; (c) developing the capacities of national organizations in the rule of law, energy, climate change and mitigation; and (d) fostering inclusion while addressing socioeconomic inequalities of vulnerable groups. The UNDP convenor role has facilitated the formation of strategic cross-sectoral partnerships to address development challenges, including governance, citizen security and the COVID-19 pandemic. UNDP has also displayed agility and responsiveness to national disasters and crises in the countries served by the multi-country office in Jamaica,¹² including the Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

8. The independent country programme evaluation and project evaluations show that UNDP has established a strong reputation in Jamaica through its support, transparency, accountability and access to funding. The evaluation underscored that the UNDP programme is aligned to national development priorities. While the programme achieved some notable results, the UNDP aim to achieve transformational results under social protection was impeded by limited financial resources. The evaluation highlighted opportunities to scale up access to justice, social cohesion, human security and resilience programming. UNDP work to advance sustainable energy and increase national capacities to use and manage its biodiversity is noteworthy, as is the enhancement of environmental resilience in the Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos Islands. UNDP also made solid contributions to strengthen the country's capacity to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by supporting an improved institutional and coordination framework through analytical documents such as the voluntary national review report, the road map for the Goals and support for innovative financing.

9. The ability of UNDP to provide multidimensional policy advice allows for support to Governments to develop and implement policies to accelerate recovery. The UNDP capacity to leverage and connect the Government to its global network will be paramount in improving the Jamaican capacity to address challenges through South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives. UNDP will leverage its knowledge and innovative capacity to translate new ideas into practical development solutions in new ways, namely through increased engagement of youth, women and communities, which produces gender-responsive and risk-informed

¹² In addition to Jamaica, the multi-country office serves the Bahamas, Bermuda, Cayman Islands and the Turks and Caicos Islands

policies. UNDP will support new priority areas like the blue economy by leveraging regional coordination mechanisms such as the Caribbean and Brazil North Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems. Given the need for an integrated United Nations response, the new programme will ensure that programmatic results are delivered through innovative solutions, joint programming and an enhanced research development agenda. Strategic partnerships will be fostered with the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) to explore joint programming to support the United Nations country team in the areas of human rights, gender equality, reduction of violence against women and girls, youth development and women's empowerment.

II. Programme priorities and partnerships

10. The vision of this UNDP multi-country programme is to support the Governments of the Bahamas, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Jamaica and Turks and Caicos Islands in reducing multidimensional poverty through gender-responsive, inclusive, sustainable and equitable social and economic development pathways towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The four programme priorities emerged from a two-tiered consultative and validation process with the Government, civil society and private sector stakeholders. The four programme priorities – social resilience and inclusion, citizen safety and security and the rule of law, climate change resilience, sustainable natural resource management – are aligned to the outcomes of the UNMSDCF and will contribute to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

11. Led by the office of the Resident Coordinator, the UNMSDCF planning and development processes included United Nations agencies, government and key regional partners to ensure strategic programming and promotion of a common understanding. The programme development process was facilitated through national-level consultations with UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund and UN-Women, which allowed the agencies to pool their comparative advantages within a single strategic framework that aligns with and supports the achievement of Vision 2030.

12. This new programme will integrate the six UNDP signature solutions guided by productivity, inclusion and resilience. Cross-cutting strategies will include: (a) evidence-based decision-making; (b) demand-driven and locally owned development solutions; (c) human rights-based and gender-inclusive development; and (d) innovation and digitalization. Additionally, UNDP will support the Governments of the Bahamas, Bermuda and Jamaica in developing and accessing innovative financing and in utilizing tools such as the investor maps for the Sustainable Development Goals by leveraging its existing partnerships with strategic United Nations partners, including UNICEF and the United Nations Capital Development Fund, international financial institutions, the private sector and other non-traditional development partners. UNDP will also engage in South-South and triangular cooperation to further develop the nascent Jamaican development finance ecosystem. With a focus on community-level programming, UNDP will seek to strengthen the abilities of civil society organizations (CSOs) to enhance their capacities, services and advocacy skills.

Social resilience and inclusion

13. The outlined initiatives and strategies will be critical contributors to Jamaica achieving its national development priorities and Sustainable Development Goal 1 (poverty reduction). It is envisaged that under this pillar, UNDP will improve the social and economic resilience of vulnerable groups such as women, youth, persons with disabilities, persons living with HIV and AIDS and those employed in the informal economy. The programmatic logic implies that if efforts are made to expand social services and advance the socioeconomic empowerment of vulnerable communities, then there will be improved social and economic resilience and

inclusion of the targeted populations. To this end, UNDP will leverage its comparative advantage and build on previous results and partnerships to support gender-responsive programming by bridging the digital divide at the local level; supporting the development and implementation of local sustainable development plans to strengthen local governance; expanding local entrepreneurship initiatives to ensure the inclusion of youth, persons with disabilities and victims of gender-based violence; increasing access to markets for MSMEs within the agriculture and tourism sectors; and increasing access to financing for women- and youth-led businesses.

14. In alignment with signature solution 1 of its Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, UNDP will collaborate with UNESCO and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS to support national efforts to enhance economic empowerment of target groups through capacity-building and the establishment of community-based social enterprises. With key consideration for the differentiated needs of men and women, UNDP will support the expansion of social services to vulnerable groups, enabling increased access and inclusion. The institutional capacity of relevant non-governmental organizations will be strengthened to complement national efforts to improve data collection and analysis; enhance social accountability interventions such as participatory planning through policy dialogues; expand policy-based solutions which reduce stigma and discrimination; and expand private sector engagement to increase employment opportunities for vulnerable populations.

15. Interventions will primarily be focused on Jamaica with joint programming opportunities in the Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands reaching women and youth in key sectors. Additionally, through multi-country programming, South-South and triangular cooperation opportunities will be maximized to ensure the systemization of lessons learned and the adoption of best practices to enhance programme development and implementation. Success under this priority area will include partnerships with the Jamaican Ministry of National Security, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Ministry of Education and Youth and Information, the Planning Institute of Jamaica, Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica, Jamaica Social Investment Fund and the Jamaica Business Development Corporation. The programme will engage with CSOs such as Jamaica AIDS Support for Life, Eve for Life and Equality for All Foundation. UNDP will explore joint programming with other United Nations agencies such as UN-Women, and the International Labour Organization to accelerate the overarching principle of leaving no one behind. UNDP will seek to complement the work of international partners such as the United States Agency for International Development, Inter-American Development Bank, the Bahamas Development Bank, the World Bank and local foundations of multinational private sector organizations.

Citizen safety and security and the rule of law

16. Complementary to social resilience and inclusion is the enhancement of citizen safety and security and the rule of law. The key assumption is that if the capacities of State and non-State actors are strengthened to ensure equitable access to and delivery of justice services, then there will be improved institutional effectiveness of justice service delivery and capacities to reduce crime and violence. Through this priority area, UNDP will strengthen institutions, legislation and justice services that advance the rights and equitable outcomes for all, especially women, girls and other disadvantaged groups. Additionally, focus will be given to enhancing the Government's capacity to reduce crime and family violence, emphasizing the inclusion of vulnerable populations.

17. In support of national development goal 2, “the Jamaican society is secure, cohesive and just”, UNDP in partnership with the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, will support the Government's efforts to reduce the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Specifically, attention will be directed at improving the institutional capacities of national and subnational organizations in crime reduction and

prevention mechanisms while strengthening policy and legislation. To address the continued prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence, UNDP will collaborate with other United Nations agencies to support the ongoing implementation of the National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender-Based Violence in Jamaica, the economic empowerment of men and women who are impacted by violence and the mainstreaming in local plans of strategies to prevent sexual and gender-based violence.

18. UNDP will continue to support justice reform by enhancing the capacities of rule-of-law institutions and expanding justice services and awareness for all. Specifically, UNDP will support the establishment of robust case and records management systems through digital technology. Efforts will focus on strengthening the legislative and regulatory frameworks for providing alternative justice services and improving the institutional capacities of the Ministry of Justice and its agencies. This will increase access to and knowledge of justice services for the most vulnerable and enhance trust and confidence in the justice system.

19. UNDP will support the Ministries of Justice, of National Security and of Gender, Entertainment, Sports and Culture, and the Bureau of Gender Affairs to implement their established plans and strategies to mainstream gender and the human rights-based approach. These interventions will involve partnerships with other United Nations agencies and community-based organizations. UNDP will seek to complement the work of international partners such as Global Affairs Canada and the European Union. By developing strong institutions to carry out justice reform, reduce sexual and gender-based violence and enhance the security of citizens, UNDP will contribute to the sustainability of the programme.

Climate change resilience

20. This outcome assumes that if the capacities of State and non-State actors are strengthened, then key Jamaican sectors will be better positioned to advance a low-carbon development pathway. UNDP will focus on strengthening policy and legislative frameworks in key sectors, promoting low-carbon solutions through the use of renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies, and developing nature-based solutions to strengthen local climate change adaptation capacities.

21. UNDP will continue supporting the Governments of the Bahamas and Jamaica to meet their national and international climate change obligations and advance ratification of relevant treaties and declarations. UNDP will introduce innovative ways to advance nature-based solutions for climate change adaptation at the sectoral and community levels, focusing on key sectors such as agriculture and tourism. UNDP will work with a diversity of partners including the Climate Change Division, the Department of Environmental Planning and Protection, the Ministries of Housing, Urban Renewal and Climate Change and of Local Government and Rural Development, and the University of the West Indies.

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