

STATEMENT BY THE MOST HONOURABLE ANDREW HOLNESS, ON, PC, MP
PRIME MINISTER OF JAMAICA
WHITE HOUSE GLOBAL COVID-19 SUMMIT ON ENDING THE PANDEMIC AND BUILDING BACK
BETTER HEALTH SECURITY TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT
22ND SEPTEMBER 2021

Mr. President,
Madame Vice President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to participate in the White House Global COVID-19 Summit and congratulate the Biden Administration on this important initiative. My administration firmly believes that *no one is safe until all of us are safe*. For this reason, the Government supports the aims and objectives of this Summit and conveys its endorsement of the draft targets related to:

- (i) *Vaccinate the World,*
- (ii) *Save Lives Now* and
- (iii) *Build Back Better,* emphasizing that these are three essential elements which are critical to ending the pandemic and to fuel our rebuilding efforts.

Vaccinate the World

A most immediate priority is the issue of vaccine access. I thank you for the leadership that you have provided, Mr. President, in responding to the calls of Jamaica and the wider CARICOM in this regard. It is anticipated, however, given the emergence of new variants, that vaccine access will remain a critical feature of our COVID-19 response for the foreseeable future. We, therefore, endorse this focus, as vaccines will remain an indispensable feature of our collective efforts to combat the spread of the virus.

Save Lives Now

At the core of building resilience and building back better, is restoring the health and well-being of our people. As such, my Government would support the targets recommended under this section, in particular the need to address the oxygen crisis, eliminate the testing gap, ensure that all countries have timely access to safe and effective therapeutics, boost Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) manufacturing capacity, and improve detection, monitoring and mitigation of new COVID-19 variants.

Build Back Better

The multiple challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic have constrained our fiscal capacities and threatened our hard-won macro-economic gains. We, therefore, must pay special attention to the issue of Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond. It is for this reason that I have been working with the Prime Minister of Canada and the UN Secretary-General, to underscore the importance of finding ambitious, yet practical policy options for consideration by the international community to support COVID-19 response and recovery. I,

therefore, look forward to us working to ensure complementarity of efforts, and have noted with interest the proposal to create a sustainable health security financing, by establishing and financing a global health security financial intermediary fund (FIF). I would urge, even as the details are elaborated, that access to such a fund takes into account a country's socio-economic and environmental vulnerabilities, which remain vital to effectively responding to and recovering from the health, social and economic implications of the pandemic.

Vision

My vision remains to move Jamaica from *Poverty to Prosperity*. It is the fulcrum of our 2030 Vision for National Development and informs our efforts to implement the Sustainable Development Goals. For this reason, we are committed to creating herd immunity by vaccinating at least 65% of our population by March 2022. We believe that this will be critical to protecting both lives and livelihood. We, therefore, look forward to working with all our partners in this endeavor.

In closing, I welcome the opportunity that the follow-up discussions next year will provide, as we anticipate being able to return to normalcy.

Thank you.