



**NATIONAL REVIEW REPORT ON
THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND
PLATFORM FOR ACTION
2019-2024 - JAMAICA**

Jamaica's National Policy for Gender Equality (NPGE) presents a rights-based approach to achieving gender equality and promotes programmes which must be developed against an understanding of international commitments such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Over the last five years, the Government of Jamaica (GoJ) through its national gender machinery, the Bureau of Gender Affairs (BGA), Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport (MCGES) continued to advance the rights of women and girls through legislation, policies, plans, programmes, projects and other initiatives which are outlined in this report.

Jamaica is guided by the principle that gender equality is an intrinsic human right and the foundation of democracy, social justice and good governance. For Jamaica, gender equality is more than a core objective; it is an important instrument for achieving inclusive sustainable development and therefore aligns with Jamaica's commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

To mainstream gender equality considerations in our national development plans, policies, programmes and related activities, the following have been critical:

- The interdependent or complementary roles of women and men should be recognized that one cannot be changed without also affecting the other;
- Gender issues are not confined to one sector but must be addressed across all sectors. Therefore, while it is a development objective in itself, it is also instrumental to the achievement of other development goals.

The National Report is structured in six sections covering main achievements, challenges, priorities, measures to advance gender equality, availability of data and the plans and challenges for the future.

Section One: Highlights

1. Over the past five years, what have been the most important achievements, challenges and setbacks in progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women?

Over the past five years Jamaica continued to advance women's rights and promote gender equality through legislation, policies, strategies, plans, programmes and initiatives. These include:

- The Sexual Harassment (Protection and Prevention) Act, 2021
- The Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act, 2023
- Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act, 2021
- The Offences against the Person (Amendment) Act, 2021
- Child Care and Protection (Amendment) Act, 2022
- The Revised National Policy for Gender Equality (NPGE), 2021
- The continued implementation of the National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender- based Violence in Jamaica (NSAP-GBV) 2017- 2027
- The #NoExcuseForAbuse Campaign to address gender-based violence
- The Gender and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (GCCSAP), 2022
- The launch and implementation of the National Strategy for Shelters and other Safe Spaces for Survivors of GBV in Jamaica along with the accompanying Comprehensive Guidelines and the Comprehensive Guidelines for the Operationalization of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Helplines in Jamaica.
- The ratification of conventions such as C189 and ILO's Decent Work Agenda to strengthen policy and legislative frameworks for the empowerment of women and protection of workers
- Sectoral policies are strongly aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) including SDG 5 (Gender equality and the empowerment of women).
- New and Emerging Policy Frameworks – International Migration and Development, Water, Poverty, Social Protection Strategy
- Progressive increase in the number of women in politics and decision-making/Boards and Commissions/Non-traditional sectors
- The launch and implementation of the Continuum of Care, 2022
- Domestic Violence Intervention Centres
- Enhanced capacity of the national gender machinery through the establishment of four new Units
 - The National Shelter Unit
 - The Sexual Harassment Investigation Unit
 - The Gender-based Violence Helpline Unit
 - The Male Empowerment Unit

Notwithstanding these achievements, there have been challenges/setbacks which have impacted the efforts to advance women's rights and gender equality.

- Limited resources inclusive of lack of gender responsive budgeting which would aid in closing the gender gaps and provide the necessary resources to enhance the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data to inform legislation, policies, plans and programmes.
- Prevailing negative social norms and gender stereotypes that impact the achievement of gender equality, social justice and the socio-economic empowerment of women.
- Lack of widespread understanding about the importance of gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment.
- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

The preparation of this national report was led by the BGA working collectively with other Government Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), as well as civil society and non-government stakeholders responsible for implementing or overseeing various provisions of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

The BGA received inputs from MDAs and other units of specific organizations, women's groups and other relevant stakeholders.

Details on Achievements

Legislation

The Sexual Harassment (Protection and Prevention) Act, 2021

The Sexual Harassment (Protection and Prevention) Act, 2021 came into effect on July 3, 2023. This legislation addresses discriminatory behaviours involving sexual harassment, providing protection to both men and women from unwanted sexual advances in the workplace. The Act therefore establishes a framework for the Government of Jamaica (GoJ) to address sexual harassment in the workplace including educational institutions, correctional facilities, places of safety, nursing homes, medical facilities and other private and public institutions and spaces.

The Act:

- ❖ Provides protection to all persons who experience sexual harassment;
- ❖ Ensure that environments for work, school and accommodations are free from sexual harassment;
- ❖ Highlight the nature of the offensive conduct;
- ❖ Establish the liability of the offending party and, where necessary, outline the liability of the accommodating parties.

Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act, 2023

The amendments to the Domestic Violence Act are indicative of the unwavering commitment of the Government of Jamaica to ‘tackle head-on’ the vexed issue of domestic violence and by extension, all forms of gender-based violence within the society. They also seek to enhance protection and legal recourse to the survivors of domestic violence. Notable changes include:

- ❖ The inclusion of the Children's Advocate as a party eligible to apply for protection orders and a widened scope for entities which can ‘ramp-up’ the support provided to persons who have increased vulnerability;
- ❖ Expansion of the range of prohibited conduct, emphasizing relinquishing firearms in the interest of safety;
- ❖ Penalties for breaching protection orders have been significantly increased.

Policies, Plans, Programmes and Initiatives

National Policy for Gender Equality (NPGE)

The revision of the 2011 National Policy for Gender Equality (NPGE) in 2021, builds on, updates and extends the previous version of the NPGE. While much progress has been achieved since the Policy was approved in 2011, several manifestations of gender inequality remain. While the revised policy provides the scope to continue some of the generic aspects of gender mainstreaming, it focuses on a smaller number of target areas identified by stakeholders, as persistent barriers to gender equality.

Implementation of the National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender- based Violence (NSAP-GBV, 2017- 2027)

The National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender-Based Violence in Jamaica (NSAP-GBV 2017-2027) is Jamaica’s ten (10) year comprehensive multi-sectoral plan that is structured to address the key issues and challenges of of victims, perpetrators, and witnesses of who experience gender-based violence (GBV) in Jamaica. This Plan provides a coordinated approach to eliminate GBV in Jamaica, with particular focus on violence against women and girls.

The Plan outlines five (5) strategic priority areas to eliminate gender-based violence and allocates responsibilities for their achievement through collaboration and partnership with other key stakeholders (government agencies, civil society groups, international development partners and private sectors). The strategic priority areas include: Prevention, Protection, Investigation, Prosecution and Enforcement of Court Orders, Enforcement of Victim’s Rights to Compensation, Reparation and Redress and Protocols for Coordination of NSAP and Data Management Systems.

In this regard, the BGA has implemented the first Public Education Campaign under the NSAP-GBV in 2021, titled the “No Excuse For Abuse” #NEFA. The #NEFA was informed by the Women’s Health Survey (WHS, 2016). It was guided by gender and behavioural change communication and aimed to eliminate the conditions that condone, enable, ignore and treat

violence against women as a normal part of life. The #NEFA aims to increase public awareness on GBV, increase knowledge on the laws and services that aims to protect and prevent GBV; this saw the introduction of #NEFA Health Fairs, Public Education Sessions and training in this regard.

In keeping with the implementation of the NSAP_GBV a robust programme of sensitization and training is done at the community level to increase knowledge on the types and forms and GBV, who and where to go to and the laws and legislative framework that provides support to GBV. In 2023, there were:

- Eighty-two (82) public education sessions with community groups, faith-based organizations, educational facilities and non- government organisations;
- Sixteen (16) first responders training sessions, police officers, justices of the peace, teachers, guidance counsellors, nurses and pastors were sensitized.

In 2022, the BGA hosted eleven (11) first responders and human service providers training were conducted and in 2021 a total number of forty- seven (47) sensitization and awareness raising sessions were aimed at increasing knowledge and strengthening the community's response to GBV. The BGA also conducted four (4) Human Services Workers training sessions.

In 2020, twenty (20) sensitisation and capacity building sessions for human service workers' and four (4) financial literacy training sessions.

Public Education and Outreach in Schools & the wider Jamaican Public

The BGA hosted a number of sensitisation sessions in keeping with the focus on public education and outreach across communities in rural parishes and urban town centres. Areas of focus included matters such as sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence (GBV), anti-bullying, human trafficking, legal literacy, the girl child, the boy child, women and rural development, men and masculinity, food security & sovereignty.

The Gender and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (GCCSAP), 2022

The Gender and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (GCCSAP), 2022 was developed to inform the implementation of the Government of Jamaica's commitment to gender-responsive climate action. The GCCSAP is led by the Climate Change Division (CCD) in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation (MEGJC) and the Bureau of Gender Affairs in the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, (MCGES).

The implementation of the National Strategy for Shelters and Other Safe Spaces for Survivors of GBV in Jamaica, 2023 and the Comprehensive Guidelines for the Operationalization of Gender-based Violence Helplines in Jamaica.

In November 2023, the National Strategy for Shelters and other Safe Spaces for Survivors of GBV in Jamaica along with the accompanying Comprehensive Guidelines and the

Comprehensive Guidelines for the Operationalization of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Helplines in Jamaica were officially launched. These guidelines were developed for providers of safe spaces for survivors of GBV and operators of Helplines to ensure that all internal operations and systems are in alignment with national policies, Jamaica’s legal framework and international quality standards for GBV services. These documents emphasize prioritising the survivor-centred approach for both public and private entities and encourage the development of protocols and guidelines for their day-to-day management.

The Gender Advisory Council (GAC)

The Gender Advisory Council (GAC) was officially established with approval by Cabinet January 8, 2018 for an initial tenure to span a period of three (3) years with effect from January 8, 2018 to January 7, 2021. The GAC provides oversight for the implementation of the National Strategic Action Plan for Gender Based Violence (NSAP-GBV) and the National Policy for Gender Equality (NPGE). The first Meeting of the Council was held in July 2018. A report was completed and circulated among the members. A further submission was made to include other stakeholders to serve at the level of technical working groups (TWGs) to support the implementation of the National Plan. A Gender Mainstreaming Manual was developed for the public sector and was implemented through the Gender Focal Point network as a sector strategy. The new members of the GAC were announced in 2023 and the first meeting was held in September 2023.

The Continuum of Care, 2022

The NSAP-GBV is being implemented using the “Continuum of Care” for Coordinated Delivery of Services to Survivors of Gender-based Violence (GBV). This “Continuum of Care” is built on the premise that GBV is best eliminated through strategic partnerships and collaboration to synchronize activities at the national, regional and local levels with government agencies, academia, the private sector, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), International Development Partners (IDPs) and other relevant groups. The “Continuum of Care” uses the survivor centered approach to ensure that survivors have access to appropriate and good quality services including health care; psychological and social support; security; legal services. Through the Continuum of Care, the BGA employs a multisectoral response model which includes holistic, inter-organizational, inter-agency, interdisciplinary efforts that promote participation and collaboration across key sectors that respond to GBV, including life-saving services. to ensure seamless provision of services by all MDAs to survivors of GBV.

Establishment of New Units

The National Shelter Unit, 2020

Under the Protection component of the NSAP-GBV, the National Shelter Unit was established to provide safe spaces for victims of gender-based violence. Since the official opening of the first government-owned and operated Shelter, in October 2022, GBV survivors and their dependent children have been accommodated and provided with comprehensive and holistic support in the North-East and Eastern Regions of the country. In addition, the operations of the Shelters are guided by the National Strategy for Shelters and other Safe Spaces for Survivors

of GBV in Jamaica along with the accompanying Comprehensive Guidelines and the Comprehensive Guidelines for the Operationalization of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Helplines in Jamaica. Two state-owned and operated Shelters (2020/2021) for survivors of gender-based violence are currently operational, with a third property being renovated in the Western region of the country.

The Sexual Harassment Investigation Unit, 2022

Sexual Harassment has been a vexed issue in Jamaica that has been seen as a major social problem widely regarded as a form of discrimination and a violation of fundamental human rights. To support the implementation of and compliance with the 2021 Act, the Sexual Harassment Investigation Unit was established. This Unit is responsible for handling matters regarding sexual harassment in the workplace. The Unit is guided by the Act. Consequently, the GoJ stands firm in implementing mechanisms to eradicate any form of gender-based violence in our society and strives to uphold the fundamental human rights of our people. To date, approximately thirty-eight thousand, one hundred and ninety-four (38,164 participants) have been sensitized (14,895 males; 23,269 females) on sexual harassment and the legislation spanning various sectors including: the MDAs, Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs) and public and private organizations. The Unit is staffed with one (1) Senior Sexual Harassment Investigative Officer who supervises three (3) Sexual Harassment Investigative Officers who investigate sexual harassment claims, sensitise persons on the Act, ensure compliance within institutions, raise awareness and provide support to the Sexual Harassment Tribunal. Eighteen (18) Officers from the BGA successfully completed an intensive five-day training in Sexual Harassment Investigation through the Department of Criminal Investigations Training (D-CIT), National Police College of Jamaica, Jamaica Constabulary Force.

Plans are advanced for the establishment of a Sexual Harassment Tribunal. It should comprise a fourteen member panel to hear cases of sexual harassment and make awards in keeping with the parameters of the legislation.

The Gender-based Violence Unit, 2023

The GBV Helpline Unit was officially established in September 2023, to support victims, survivors, and witnesses of gender-based violence. The Unit is staffed with one (1) Director and three (3) Gender-based Violence Helpline Specialists, with approval granted for an additional three (3) Gender-based Violence Helpline Specialists posts. The Unit offers support services to the victims and survivors of GBV at the community and national level by providing psychosocial support; gender-based violence related information; counselling; assessing survivors' needs and allowing space for safety planning. The GBV Helpline Unit is also one of the entry/referral points to the National Shelter Programme.

The Male Empowerment Unit, 2023

The Male Empowerment Unit was officially established in September 2023 and is staffed with one (1) Director, who supervises two (2) Male Empowerment Officers and an Administrative Assistant. The establishment of this Unit is in keeping with the policy imperative to more

effectively engage men and boys in reflections about rigid gender norms, power relations, gender-based violence, inequalities and change which impact women.

Gender Ambassadors Programme (GAP)

The Gender Ambassadors Programme (GAP) was launched on March 2019. The GAP targets students from secondary and tertiary level institutions, to facilitate awareness-raising and activism on gender equality and the elimination of school-related gender-based violence. Since the launch, twenty-five (25) schools (including single sex schools) have participated in a myriad of activities through the GAP.

Section Two: Priorities, achievements, challenges and setbacks

2. Over the past five years, what have been the top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country through laws, policies and/or programmes?

Over the past five years, steady progress has been made to advance gender equality and equity, facilitate the empowerment of women and girls, towards ending all forms of discrimination.

These are recognized in the areas such as education and social security, namely:

1. Provided adequate human and financial resources to the Bureau of Gender Affairs to allow it to carry out its mandate fully and effectively;
 - As a strategic policy response to the problem of gender-based violence in Jamaica, the prevention component of the National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender-based Violence (NSAP-GBV), 2017-2027 was strengthened to offer the following:
 - a. The GBV Parish Coordination Platform (2021) was created to increase strengthen the human services and coordination efforts among all MDAs, who are dedicated to supporting survivors of Gender-based Violence (GBV).
 - b. The National Strategy for Shelters and Other Safe Spaces for Survivors of GBV in Jamaica, 2023 was developed to streamline the operationalization of all shelters and safe spaces, inclusive of the State-Owned Shelters across Jamaica.
 - c. The Comprehensive Guidelines for the Operationalization of Gender-based Violence Helplines in Jamaica, 2023 was developed to streamline the operations of GBV Helplines, inclusive of the National GBV Helpline in Jamaica.
 - d. The Referral Pathway is a guidance document which was developed to assist all GBV Helpline operators in identifying relevant MDAs responsible for specific services, as well as to ensure seamless access of GBV survivors to any information on a case by case basis.

- e. Memorandum of Understanding: ‘Continuum of Care’ with key stakeholders involved in the delivery of services critical to GBV. Through the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), several partnerships were developed among key ministries, departments and agencies, development partners, civil society and the private sector under the MOU to provide greater protection to women and their families. Undoubtedly, this provided greater access to the entitlements of citizenship of women and children in Jamaica and reduced the possibility of survivors of GBV being repeated victims of GBV. In the absence of having direct services to increase women’s awareness of their rights and legal literacy in civil and labour law disputes and on the possibility of bringing complaints alleging gender-based discrimination, women who face intersecting forms of discrimination benefit immensely from the referral services of the Bureau of Gender Affairs, as they enable clients to access the services of:
- The Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) established Domestic Violence Intervention Centres, in 2021, dubbed “DVICare” centres across Jamaica. The centres provide confidential & compassionate care for victims of domestic abuse. Each “DVICare” centre is managed by a Police Officer who is trained in offering intervention through counselling, referrals, law enforcement intervention, protection, follow up, home visits and other services to victims of domestic violence as needed. There are currently ten (10) Domestic Violence Intervention Centres across the island. The Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) and the Ministry of Health (MOH) continue to improve data collection and analyses. This facilitates the tracking of data trends and the identification of gaps in reported cases of sexual assaults and non-reported cases. This was particularly evident among victims seeking attention in the public hospitals island-wide, for both men and women.
 - Victim Services Division - Counselling is offered island-wide by the Victim Support Division (VSD), Dispute Resolution Foundation (DRF), Peace Centres and Women’s Centres as well as various faith-based institutions. Tertiary Level Institutions (The University of the West Indies (UWI) and the University of Technology (UTECH) also offer counselling and referrals for their student bodies and staff. In addition, the non-governmental organization (NGO), Woman Inc. Crisis Centre (Kingston and Montego Bay), provides counselling, shelter facilities and support groups (for rape, adult survivors of incest, spousal/domestic violence).
 - National Land Agency (signed the MOU, and Continuum of Care to allow for easier access of survivors of GBV to the necessary resources and services)
 - Ministry of Labour and Social Security (Assists in the search for job opportunities. As part of the Continuum of Care For Survivors of Gender-based Violence, the Continuum facilitates easier access of survivors of GBV to the necessary resources and support services)
 - Municipal Authorities across Jamaica (Poor Relief Offices continued to provide additional support to GBV survivors)

- Ministry of Health and Wellness (Offers health services and staff are sensitized to deal with GBV survivors)
- Ministry of Justice (Legal Aid Clinic) - Legal aid and advice for victims and their families is available from the Family Courts island wide, the Government's Legal Aid Clinic and Council (in the Ministry of Justice), the Legal Aid Clinic at the Norman Manley Law School, UWI and Women's Resource and Outreach Centre (WROC).
- The Ministry of Education and Youth (Facilitates increased access to educational materials, identifies opportunities for skill development, and also offers services for children)
- Non-profit organisations working on connecting rural and disabled women with the needed services to function in Jamaica. These include the Jamaica Society for the Blind, Jamaica Association for the Deaf and the Jamaica Network of Rural Women Producers (JNRWP).
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Ministry of National Security (Assist with relocating foreign nationals, who are survivors, to their homeland)

Through the services provided in-house at the Bureau of Gender Affairs, clients have been able to benefit directly from:

- Sexual harassment sensitisations
- Financial literacy training;
- Sensitizations on the provisions of the Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act, 2023 in Jamaica
- A 24-hour line to the public where survivors of gender-based violence can call and receive tele-case management support. The interventions provided on the line include the following: psychosocial support, psychological first aid, referral services, and gender-based violence related information. It is important to note that this helpline continues to enable several women in Jamaica to become aware of their rights in areas relating to safety, access to social services, land ownership and housing, as well as accessing healthcare services.
- Introduce Gender-Responsive Budgeting across all government departments and set gender benchmarks and targets for meeting the national gender goals that are aligned with national development priorities across sectors,
- Strengthen coordination between the Bureau of Gender Affairs, the cabinet minister appointed to focus on gender affairs, the Gender Advisory Council and gender focal points in the various ministries,
- The project, 'Facilitating a Gender Responsive Approach to Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation in Jamaica' was launched in January 2021. The project is being administered by the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ). The project was financed by a grant of US\$270,000 from the Green Climate Fund Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme was implemented to strengthen the nation's institutional coordination, promoting gender responsive climate action and ensuring that policies, programmes and projects address gender inequalities. The initiative brought together climate change practitioners and gender experts from the Bureau of

Gender Affairs, to construct and advance the gender and climate change agenda. The initiative facilitated the nexus between gender and climate change by executing a gender assessment of policies and plans. The preparation of a Gender and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan was also pivotal to promote gender mainstreaming of sectoral policies. The project will also strengthen coordination mechanisms by increasing dialogue between gender focal points and the climate change focal point network within Ministries, Departments and Agencies, to strengthen the institutional linkages for climate action.

It will also develop functional multi-stakeholder mechanisms and that will be done by establishing a gender thematic working group under Vision 2030 to ensure that the Gender and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (GCCSAP), 2022 is implemented in line with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Gender Action Plan, and that the gender issues are mainstreamed into the Sectoral National Action Plans and our Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) implementation. It is expected also that it will further explore gender budgeting. In July 2022, the GoJ launched the Gender and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (GCCSAP). The GCCSAP is being led by the Climate Change Division in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, and the Bureau of Gender Affairs. The plan is designed to lay the groundwork for mainstreaming gender and climate considerations into projects and policies as a means of effective disaster risk reduction and strategic development planning.

- In keeping with Goal 5 of the Social Development Goals (SDGs), the following major initiatives reflect progressive achievements and key milestones in this process:
 - Legislative review for equality and non-discrimination under the law and timely access to justice for accelerating progress for women and girls.
 - Increase in Government budgetary allocations for the BGA's priority programmes.
 - Sectoral policies are strongly aligned with the SDGs including SDG 5 (Gender equality and the empowerment of women).
 - Progressive increase in the number of women in politics and decision-making/Boards and Commissions/Non-traditional sectors. This is inclusive of the Bicameral Caucus of Women Parliamentarians in Jamaica, 2022. The first all women parliamentary sitting through the Young Women in Leadership programme, held in Jamaica in 2022/2023.
- The GoJ through the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce (MIIC) has approved the revision of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) and Entrepreneurship Policy, 2013, to be implemented from 2023-2027 to support the growth of MSMEs. This plan focuses on the development of micro, small and medium sized enterprises (MSME). The programmatic areas include: business development support, capacity building, enabling business environment improving financing fostering a culture of entrepreneurship which includes a gender component which

ensures that businesses are gender sensitive. The objectives of the gender component include: identifying factors that constrain the participation of women in entrepreneurship and enterprises, developing appropriate strategies to address the constraints and building the capacity of organizations to develop and deliver programmes that incorporate the unique challenges of female and male entrepreneurs.

3. Over the past five years, what specific actions have you taken to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of marginalized groups of women and girls?

The Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries (MICAF) and the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment, and Sport (MCGES) signed a memorandum of understanding in November 2017 to facilitate strategic partnership on programmes for women in entrepreneurship. Through this partnership, female entrepreneurs are selected to receive an award each financial year to strengthen their institutional capacity.

- The COPE Initiative was designed to facilitate the implementation of the National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender-based Violence in Jamaica (NSAP-GBV) 2017-2027. This includes improved partnerships with NGOs and community groups to achieve the stand-alone gender transformative Goal 5 which promotes gender equality for all women and girls. The initial phase of the COPE Initiative began in July 2019 with eight (8) community groups/NGOs receiving developmental grants for the period, April 2019-March 2020. Under Phase 2, nine (9) partners received grants and in April 2021, Phase 3 commenced and provided financial and technical support to thirteen (13) NGOs and community groups.
- The Women's Entrepreneurship Support (WES) Project, 2017 (Phase II, 2021) was spearheaded by the Bureau of Gender Affairs with a distinct focus on women with disabilities.

Programme of Empowerment with Girls in State Care

Whereas, the realities of young girls in Jamaica today have improved since the adaptation of the Beijing Platform for Action through the concerted efforts of the GOJ to address the inequalities faced by women and girls. The Government through the Bureau of Gender Affairs remains committed to continues to implement programmes, plans and policies to ensure that women and girls have equal access to socially valued goods and are able to contribute to national development.

To reduce and address the vulnerability faced by girls in State Care, the BGA entered a one-year programme of empowerment with YADEL Home for Children in 2021. This programme

of empowerment with the YADEL home for Children saw the Bureau conducting a one-year programme of empowerment with the Home that included;

- a) Training and sensitization on sexual harassment in schools.
- b) Training and sensitization on school-based gender- based violence, bullying, human trafficking and other forms of gender- based violence.
- c) Training and sensitization to challenge harmful gender norms & stereotypes, discriminatory beliefs and practices as well as social and cultural biases to reduce vulnerability.
- d) Training and capacity building sessions to improve leadership and decision-making skills.
- e) Conduct financial literacy training session to financial literacy skills.
- f) Development of appropriate training sessions to address the constraints of young girls in the areas of youth empowerment and skills training.
- g) Provision of first level intervention and psycho- social support.
- h) Provision of referral and liaison with relevant government and other state agencies and organizations to ensure the attainment of the specified objectives of the programmes are met.
- i) Empowerment sessions with key state agencies that addressed the needs that the girls faced.

A similar programme of empowerment was done with Village Academy School of Agriculture in 2022, the Annie Home for Children in 2023 and the Summerfield Child Facility.

4. Over the past five years, how has the confluence of different crises affected the implementation of the BPfA in your country and what measures have you taken to prevent their negative impact on progress for women and girls?

COVID19

The measures taken to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, affected the implementation of the BPfA. A series of interventions were rolled out, including the following:

- “Sanitation/Dignity Kits” were provided to the Divisions, Departments and Agencies and other public bodies within the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment & Sport (MCGES), to ensure that all the locations were equipped with the requisite protective gear, resource materials as part of the national response;
- Ramped up the COPE Initiative to include two (2) new groups from the community for persons with disabilities (i.e. Jamaica Society for the Blind and the Jamaica Association for the Deaf)
- Under Phase 2 of the COPE Initiative, nine (9) groups will receive monthly subventions to support the efforts of the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport to eliminate Gender-based Violence in keeping with the five (5) Strategic Priorities Areas of the NSAP GBV.
- Island wide, the public health system ensured the availability of commodities/services and access to contraceptive methods prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Family Planning services and commodities remain accessible,

although COVID-19 has resulted in persons having to wear masks when visiting health facilities, undergoing a body temperature check for entry to health facilities, sanitising, social distancing and adhering to all COVID-19 guidelines. Additionally, outreach efforts increased in some Regions to inform patient populations about the available family planning services and the reduction in early pregnancies, including statistical data thereon, and maternal mortality.

- Care Packages were distributed among Two Hundred and Forty-Five (245) (52M; 193F) beneficiaries to offset the immediate financial burdens.

Hurricane Beryl

Hurricane Beryl, which occurred over a two-day period in July 2024, had a detrimental effect on several rural areas of Jamaica. In response to the hurricane's impact, various initiatives were implemented to provide support to affected individuals (including children, families, parents), institutions (schools, shelters, other safe spaces and homes), and farmers. Specifically, the Bureau of Gender Affairs, Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment, and Sport, in collaboration with UN Women, coordinated efforts to distribute relief packages containing essential supplies. These packages were targeted towards specific groups such as schools, shelters, safe spaces, homes, families, children, parents, and farmers, aiming to alleviate the trauma and mitigate the adverse effects caused by Hurricane Beryl.

5. Over the next five years, what are the priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country through laws, policies and/or programmes?

Priorities Areas as identified in the Guidance note for comprehensive national-level reviews, 2023, in alignment with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995):

- Equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice
- Quality education, training and life-long learning for women and girls
- Eliminating violence against women and girls
- Political participation and representation
- Women's entrepreneurship and women's enterprises
- Unpaid care and domestic work / work-family conciliation (e.g. paid maternity, paternity or parental leave, care services)
- Promoting gender equality as part of environmental sustainability, climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies
- Gender-responsive budgeting
- Changing discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes
- The Girl Child
- Women and the Media
- Women and Poverty

Section Three: Progress across the 12 critical areas of concern

6. Over the past five years, what actions has your country taken to advance gender equality in the world of work (including informal and non-standard employment as well as entrepreneurship)?

- The Industrial Relations Department of the Ministry of Labour & Social Security established a COVID-19 Hotline to facilitate improved access among clients, workers, employers and the general public. Persons were assisted to source information on the Labour Laws, register a complaint or clarify any labour related concern.
- The Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries (MICAF) – now Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce (MIIC) - and the Ministry of Culture Gender, Entertainment, and Sport (MCGES), through the Bureau of Gender Affairs, signed a Memorandum of Understanding on November 1, 2017. The MOU was designed to facilitate strategic partnership on programmes for women in entrepreneurship through the Women’s Entrepreneurship Support (WES) Project.

The WES project aimed to provide financial support to create a favourable climate to increase the number of women entrepreneurs and the size of their companies. The MIIC mobilized funding for this project for 2 years, which benefitted 10 women in each financial year during which it was active. Phase I of WES was launched on November 13, 2017, and four (4) beneficiaries were allocated funding to purchase materials and equipment, to renovate and expand their businesses, as well as to set up business-related projects. Phase II of WES was launched on August 26, 2021. Under Phase II, ten (10) women in Medium, Small and Micro enterprises (MSME) received a financial assistance of \$100,000 each to assist with sustainability and expansion of their businesses as well as recovery from COVID-19.

They also received six - week training workshop sessions to provide the necessary knowledge and empowerment opportunities to scale up their enterprises. During the 2021/2022 financial year, MIIC and the Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica (PSOJ) launched a SME Access to Finance Advocacy and Action Form to raise awareness among the financial sector about the need to make access to affordable financing more inclusive for all groups, specifically women and youth. Additionally, the MIIC in collaboration with the Bank of Jamaica hosted a webinar in 2023 to promote financial inclusion for disadvantaged groups, namely women, youth and the disabled.

- The Rehabilitation Programme, established since 1972, provides assistance to individuals in need, whether for compassionate purposes or for income generation. The Programme offers four (4) types of grants, including a Rehabilitation Grant, which specifically helps individuals/families to undertake income generating projects to improve their economic status. It provides assistance to establish or improve small businesses, in areas such as haberdashery items, dressmaking, cosmetology, cattle and poultry rearing and farming etc. At the end of March 2020, 4,117 individuals benefitted from all grants disbursed through the Rehabilitation Programme, totalling J\$165.6M

for FY 2019/20; 75.6% (3,115) of all grant beneficiaries were females. Of that total, 1,025 beneficiaries received Rehabilitation Grants totalling J\$40.9M; 78% (800) of Rehabilitation Grant beneficiaries were females. For FY 2020/21, J\$17.8M was disbursed in Rehabilitation Assistance Grants to 356 individuals (72% females)

- The Social Intervention Programme (SIP) offers Short Term Employment and Educational and Entrepreneurship Grants (E&EG) to beneficiaries. Short-term employment is offered through its Special Employment Programme (SEP), where decent and productive employment opportunities are created for young unattached persons, aged 18 – 35 years, for a period of six (6) months. SEP's objectives are to offer skills training to these individuals, introduce them to the work environment, equip them with marketable experience to access long-term employment, and to promote economic opportunities. For FY 2019/20, 446 individuals were placed in short term employment through SEP; 83% (370) of SEP placements were females. For the 2020/2021 FY, 373 individuals were placed under the SEP; 76.7 % of the individuals placed were females.
- SIP's Education and Entrepreneurship Grants (E&EG) Programme, targets 'at risk' youths, 16 - 40 years of age, and enables them to pursue further education and training or be engaged in entrepreneurial activities. For FY 2019/20, J\$35.6M was disbursed to 462 youths under the E&EG Programme; 95% (439) of total E&EG beneficiaries received Educational Grants, 74.9% (329) of which were females. Twenty-three (23) persons benefitted from the Entrepreneurial Grants, 60.8% (14) of which were females. In FY 2020/2021, J\$36.7M was disbursed to 417 (321 F; 93 M) youths under the E&EG component of SIP. Of this amount, 400 (313 F; 87 M) youths received Educational Grants amounting to J\$35.2M.
- On November 1, 2017, the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport (MCGES) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries (MICAF) to promote women in business. The objective of this MOU is to facilitate more opportunities for women in the micro, small and medium-size enterprise (MSME) sector. The agreement is designed to promote sustainable and productive entrepreneurial activities to generate income among disadvantaged women, particularly among those persons living in poverty and rural women.
- The Special Emergency Relief Programme was introduced in November 2020 to assist individuals affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic and assisted 5,060 persons, by the end of FY 2020/2021, with Compassionate Grants, totalling J\$90.8M.
- The Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities (JCPD) is responsible for the implementation of policies and programmes for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). In terms of programmes, the JCPD provides PwDs with assistance in obtaining employment; grants for income generating projects; assistance with school fees and books. A J\$17M Economic Empowerment Grant (EEG)/ Assistive Aids Grant (AAG)

is made available to PwDs to facilitate their management of small business ventures for their economic development, as well as their acquisition of assistive devices. As at March 31, 2020, 71 clients were approved for the economic Empowerment Grant, receiving a total of J\$8.75M; 38 percent (27) of the recipients were females.

- The project, ‘Facilitating a Gender Responsive Approach to Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation in Jamaica’ was launched in January 2021. The project is being administered by the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ). The project was financed by a grant of US\$270,000 from the Green Climate Fund Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme is being implemented to strengthen the nation’s institutional coordination, promoting gender responsive climate action and ensuring that policies, programmes and projects address gender inequalities. The initiative brings together climate change practitioners and gender experts from the Bureau of Gender Affairs, to construct and advance the gender and climate change agenda. The initiative will build the gender and climate change nexus by executing a gender assessment of policies and plans, and the preparation of a Gender and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan and promotion of gender mainstreaming of sectoral policies.

The project will also strengthen coordination mechanisms by increasing dialogue between gender focal points and the climate change focal point network within Ministries, Departments and Agencies, to strengthen the institutional linkages for climate action. It will also develop functional multi-stakeholder mechanisms and that will be done by establishing a gender thematic working group under Vision 2030 to ensure that the Gender and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (GCCSAP) is implemented in line with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Gender Action Plan, and that the gender issues are mainstreamed into the Sectoral National Action Plans and our Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) implementation. It is expected also that it will further explore gender budgeting. In July 2022, the GoJ launched the Gender and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (GCCSAP). The GCCSAP is being led by the Climate Change Division in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, and the Bureau of Gender Affairs. The plan is designed to lay the groundwork for mainstreaming gender and climate considerations into projects and policies as a means of effective disaster risk reduction and strategic development planning.

7. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to recognize, reduce and/or redistribute unpaid care and domestic work, promote work-life and family balance and strengthen the rights of paid care workers?

The Industrial Relations Department established a COVID-19 Hotline where clients, workers, employers and the general public can contact the MLSS via WhatsApp, text or call in order to obtain information on the Labour Laws, register a complaint or clarify any labour related concern.

The Abilities Foundation (AF), established in 1992, is a specialised vocational education and training programme for PwDs. AF aims to increase the employability of PwDs and facilitate their social and emotional readjustment into the wider society. AF's Training Programmes include: Housekeeping, Furniture Making, Data Operations, and Horticulture and Landscaping. Students receive job coaching and placement, upon completion of their training. Herb Thyme is the Social Enterprise established by the Foundation to produce vegetables, herbs, as well, as occasional home decor in the form of plant terrariums. In February 2020, FHI360/USAID awarded a grant, of approximately J\$3M, to establish the implementation of the Herb Thyme Social Enterprise. The main objective of this Capital injection was to create a sustainable stream of income to assist the programme delivery of the foundation and create job apprenticeship opportunities for the disabled community. This project was successfully executed and was closed in March 2020. Additionally, the United States Embassy Innovative Women Grant Award (US\$ 20,000), was implemented as a pilot project aimed at empowering women to be independent and innovative. Through this initiative, 20 women with disabilities were successfully trained in Furniture Making and Agriculture. In addition, the beneficiaries were placed in job apprenticeships for three (3) weeks and earned a stipend of US\$60 per week.

- 8. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to reduce the gender digital divide?**
- 9. In the past five years, how has the macroeconomic and fiscal policy environment affected the implementation of the BPfA in your country, and what macroeconomic policies has your country implemented in support of a more gender-equal economy?**
- 10. In the last five years, what actions has your country taken to reduce/eradicate poverty among women and girls?**

As Jamaica works towards achieving the commitments under international agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the BGA continues its efforts to mainstream gender throughout Jamaica, towards the development of human capital and the achievement of gender equality and social justice as outlined in the NPGE and the NSAP-GBV. To this end the BGA promotes the empowerment of rural women and girls through various community-based initiatives, public education and training and project implementation. These initiatives include public education and awareness raising, through school and community-based sensitization, mobilizing and empowering rural/inner city women and conducting first level interventions for persons in crisis, financial literacy training and other empowerment sessions to strengthen the collective voice, leadership and decision making of rural women and girls. The BGA commemorates Activities for International Day of Rural Women (IDRW) on October 15 annually to highlight the role of Rural Women and exceptional contribution to the enhancement of agriculture, food security,

eradicating rural poverty and rural and national development. Also, to strengthen efforts to ensure that the economic, social, psychosocial and developmental needs of rural women are addressed.

Initiatives include:

- In commemoration of the International Day of Rural Women (IDRW) in 2022, the Bureau of Gender Affairs hosted the following activities:
 - Two Empowerment Workshops on Monday, October 10, 2022 in St. Mary and on Thursday, October 13, 2022 in St. Elizabeth. These workshops covered topics including mental health, financial literacy, goal setting and planning for rural and sustainable development.
 - Youth Forum “Rural Girls Rock” was held at the Bishop Gibson High School in Mandeville, Manchester on Wednesday, October 12, 2022. The event aimed to empower young rural girls by providing encouragement, building their confidence, building their leadership qualities, and highlighting their hard work and achievements towards community and national development.

The IDRW Banner Event, Women’s Empowerment Forum was held on Friday, October 14, 2022. This event was carried out by the BGA in collaboration with the Jamaica Network of Rural Women Producers.

In addition, the GoJ implemented a social and economic support programme, the WE CARE Programme to provides assistance to vulnerable individuals and small businesses through innovative and existing delivery channels.

11. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to improve access to social protection for women and girls?

- The Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) is mandated to spearhead the development of a National Development Plan, Vision 2030 Jamaica that provides a guide to Jamaica into achieving developed country status by 2030. A succinct and yet broad vision was crafted – Jamaica the place of choice to live, work, raise families and do business – as the ideal around which the plan would be developed. To support this objective, the PIOJ identified a number of thematic areas that should be addressed by the Plan and established Task Forces to develop sector plans under each of the thematic areas. A special Task Force - Persons with Disabilities Task Force- was formed to look at the issues faced by persons living with disabilities and to keep their issues on the top of the policy agenda. Disabilities are one of the themes addressed in public policy under the broad umbrella of Social Protection. The Persons with Disabilities Sector Plan contributes to Jamaica’s National Outcome 3, “Effective social Protection” which falls under Goal # 1: “Jamaicans are empowered to achieve their fullest potential”. In this light Jamaica’s Social Protection Plan approved in contextualizing the national agenda, Jamaica’s Strategic Priorities focuses on: human capital development, economic growth and job creation as well as social inclusion and development.⁸ Jamaica’s

development framework is aligned with the Vision 2030 Jamaica National Development Plan, the third Medium-Term Socio-Economic Framework 2015–2018 and the Gender Sector Plan, framed within the sustainable development global 2030 agenda. In 2014, GoJ approved a comprehensive National Social Protection Strategy (SPS) to ensure that the poor and vulnerable are not left behind. The strategy was developed in response to the country’s commitment to ensuring the security of all its residents and citizens, specifically to target the attainment of agreed basic minimum standards of living and address the various threats.

- Four (4) key pieces of gender-based violence legislation (Sexual Offences Act, the Offences Against the Person Act, the Domestic Violence Act and the Child Care and Protection Act) were reviewed for reform in line with the National Policy for Gender Equality to ensure equality, non-discrimination under the law, as well as, greater access to justice
- The Women (Employment of) Act which restricted women from working at night was repealed.
- The Maternity Leave (Amendment) Act, 2022 has been amended to increase the period of paid leave allocated to women following childbirth.
- The Employment (Equal Pay for Men and Women) Act, along with proposed amendments, was reviewed during the 2018/2019 fiscal year to address concerns previously raised by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and make its provisions more relevant to today’s society. As of the 2019/2020 fiscal year, The Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS), has been awaiting a Policy Directive for whether to proceed with the proposed amendments to the Act.
- The Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Suppression and Punishment) Act was updated in 2018 to enable a judge to try trafficking offences without a jury (subsection 10). This was done to reduce the high risk of juror and witness intimidation by the gangs and criminal networks often involved in cases of trafficking in persons. The Act was also amended to allow for victims, or the prosecution on behalf of the victims, to enforce an order of restitution in the same manner as a judgement in a civil action (section 5). Further amendments to the Act are being prepared so that the legislation will better reflect current realities.
- The Cybercrimes Act, which is used to support the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Suppression, and Punishment) Act, was amended in 2015. This legislation provides criminal sanctions for the misuse of computer systems or data and the abuse of electronic means of completing transactions and facilitates the investigation and prosecution of cybercrimes.

- The draft Complaints & Response Protocol was finalized and approved to provide a complaint and redress mechanism for victims of gender-based violence in keeping with the NSAP-GBV.
- The state's capacity for evidence-based practice in monitoring and responding to security and safety concerns was strengthened through continued development of the Jamaica Crime Observatory – Integrated Crime and Violence Information System (JCO - ICVIS)
- Thirteen (13) Night Courts were made operational to increase access to justice services and reduce backlog in cases
- Relevant legislation to support greater transparency and efficiency in the hearing of cases and thereby reducing case backlog were passed and capacity strengthened for the drafting and promulgation of legislation including capacity building of relevant Court personnel through customer service and the establishment of Customer Service desks in Family, Parish and criminal courts. The state and particularly local level capacity for Alternative Dispute Resolution was strengthened by the establishment of Parish Justice Centres to support efforts to reduce case backlog and improve trust in formal justice processes through the use of alternative dispute resolution approaches – including restorative justice, child diversion and mediation.
- Digital recording equipment was installed in Parish Courts (78 courtrooms) to assist victims of crimes as it relates to attendance in courts and the mitigation of possible trauma due to interactions with alleged perpetrators. There was also provision of legal representation to persons with mental illnesses.
- The Child Diversion Act 2018 was enacted, with the Child Diversion Programme Offices and Committees of the Ministry of Justice fully operational in all 14 parishes across Jamaica as of September 2020. The Programme seeks to divert children who come in conflict with the law away from the formal criminal justice system.
- The GoJ recognizes the importance of increasing women's awareness of their rights and legal literacy, and, as such has:
 - Developed a Gender Mainstreaming Manual for the Public Sector informed by the National Policy for Gender Equality (NPGE), which includes a Resource Guide/Directory of Services for women
 - Updated the current training and education materials for peer educators on GBV
- The BGA disseminated literacy materials widely through various community groups, including community networks, FBOs and CBOs. In addition, the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) has public education information learning materials that are widely disseminated on topics such as, "Jamaica's Obligations under International Law"; "The Right to Life";

"Protection against Arbitrary Arrest and Freedom of Movement"; Accessing your Right to Legal Representation" and matters concerning the Jamaican Constitution are covered. Also, a list with Legal Aid Duty Counsel is available for public access.

- The GoJ through its Ministries, Department and Agencies (MDAs) has been engaged in a number of public education/ “know-your rights” campaigns: ○ The National Family Planning Board (NFPB) in partnership with the Office of the Public Defender (OPD) has been engaged in the 'Know Yuh Rights' campaign, with the objective of ensuring that Jamaicans are properly equipped with the necessary knowledge to prevent the violation of their rights.
- The “No Excuse for Abuse” (#NEFA) public education campaign through the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport was launched to bring an end to gender-based violence through legislative, policy and programmatic actions that protect victims of violence; see to it that perpetrators are punished; ensure that the victims get redress, and build a culture in which there is no gender-based violence.
- The Government of Jamaica has made a deliberate effort in building the Gender Responsive services of the country between 2017-2022. As a strategic policy response to the problem of gender-based violence in Jamaica, the prevention component of the National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender-based Violence, 2017-2027 was strengthened to offer the following: the GBV Coordination Platform, the Parish Coordination Platform, National Shelter Operationalisation Plan, Referral Services and Memoranda of Understanding with key stakeholders involved in the delivery of services critical to GBV. Through the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), several partnerships were developed among key ministries, departments and agencies, development partners, civil society and the private sector under the ‘Continuum of Care’ to provide greater protection to women and their families. Undoubtedly, this provided greater access to the entitlements of citizenship of women and children in Jamaica and reduced the possibility of survivors of GBV being repeated victims of GBV.
- In the absence of having direct services to increase women’s awareness of their rights and legal literacy in civil and labour law disputes and on the possibility of bringing complaints alleging gender-based discrimination, women who face intersecting forms of discrimination benefit immensely from the referral services of the Bureau of Gender Affairs, as they enable clients to access the services of:
 - Legal Aid Clinic
 - Victim Services Division
 - National Land Agency

- Ministry of Labour and Social Security
 - Municipal Authorities across Jamaica (Poor Relief Offices)
 - Ministry of Health and Wellness
 - Ministry of Justice
 - The Ministry of Education and Youth (to access the services for children)
 - Non-profit organizations working on connecting rural and disabled women with the needed services to function in Jamaica. These include the Jamaica Society for the Blind, Association for the Deaf and the Jamaica Network for Rural Women Producers
 - Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Ministry of National Security (to relocate domestic violence visiting survivors to their homeland)
- Through the services provided in-house at the Bureau of Gender Affairs, clients have been able to benefit directly from:
 - Sexual harassment sensitizations
 - Financial Literacy trainings
 - Sensitizations on the provisions of the Domestic Violence Act in Jamaica
 - A 24-hour line to the public where survivors of gender-based violence can call and receive tele-case management support. The interventions provided on the line include the following: psychosocial support, psychological first aid, referral services, and gender-based violence related information. It is important to note that this helpline continues to enable several women in Jamaica to become aware of their rights in areas relating to safety, access to social services, land ownership and housing, as well as accessing healthcare services.

12. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to improve health outcomes for women and girls in your country?

To ensure the access of women and girls to affordable modern contraceptive methods, The National Family Planning Board (NFPB) utilises a contraceptive Procurement Plan and initiates the procurement process in advance of demand from the Regional Health Authorities to ensure the availability of the commodities and to avoid stock-outs. When necessary, the NFPB engages in emergency procurement on the local market or airfreight shipment of the commodities. Training in forecasting and data management techniques is provided island wide to public health nurses and midwives to enhance availability and reduce stock-outs to family planning clinic attendees. Additionally, training is provided to doctors, nurses and mid-wives in the insertion of intrauterine devices and the promotion of long-acting reversible contraceptives, such as the Jadelle implant. Sexual and reproductive health specific public awareness/health promotion campaigns are undertaken, through television and radio interviews that are developed and aired to improve gender-specific public awareness. Some are funded by

the Government of Jamaica through NFPB and others through grants, such as that from the International Development Bank (IDB), which focused on the administration of long-acting reversible contraceptives at no cost to 500 adolescents. The project output is to have one (1) health centre in 10 of the 14 parishes which offers all family planning commodities and services, including the Jadelle implant, which is mainly obtained at hospitals. Numerous social media engagement through Instagram, Twitter and Facebook are implemented which increase the visibility and accessibility of the family planning products and services offered, as well as promote safe pregnancies, addressing issues such as hypertension, diabetes and overweight. Additionally, women are invited to visit the Victoria Jubilee Hospital and participate in the family planning clinic, where they are afforded the opportunity to access the contraceptive implant, Jadelle. Concomitantly, the National Family Planning Board provides the commodities to the Regional Health Authorities and replenishes supplies of the commodities to meet their orders. For clients to choose from, it provides training in forecasting and data management at least twice yearly and periodic audits of the family planning log books at health facilities to ensure that stock-outs are avoided. Additionally, outreach efforts have been increased in some Regions to inform patient populations about the available family planning services.

13. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to improve education outcomes and skills for women and girls, including in sectors where they are underrepresented?

14. What actions has your country taken to ensure that economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic closes gender gaps in poverty, employment, social protection, education, and/or health that the pandemic has exacerbated?

The GoJ continues the phased and strategic implementation of the 10-year NSAP-GBV in partnership and collaboration to challenge the normalization of GBV, to build resilience and to provide empowerment before, during and after periods of disasters through:

- Increased support is provided to victims and survivors of GBV and gender-differential responses and options in case of intimate partner violence incidences
- Increased social media presence under the No Excuse for Abuse Campaign to ensure that the public is aware of the Hotline for the current shelter for domestic violence, as well as the Hotlines to call and report intimate partner violence and other forms of Gender-based Violence
- Provided community/advocacy groups monthly subventions to support the Ministry's efforts to eliminate Gender-based Violence in keeping with the five (5) Strategic Priorities Areas of the NSAP-GBV;
- Increased social media presence under the "No Excuse for Abuse Campaign" to ensure that the public is aware of the Hotline for the current shelter for domestic violence, as well as the Help Lines/Hot Lines to call and report intimate partner violence and other forms of Gender-based Violence; Help lines/Hot Line Numbers: Toll-Free Line: 888-NO ABUSE Females: Males: 876 553 0372 /876 236 1713 & 876 553 0387

- Increases messages through the BGA’s social media platforms re: social distancing, with a special focus on women are currently trapped in abusive or toxic situations or are potential victims of intimate partner violence
- Continued ongoing discussions with other ministries, departments and agencies, private sector, community-based organizations, international development partners and other civil society organizations to ensure that the gender-differential needs are prioritized during and after the COVID-19 pandemic
- Issued “Dignity Packages” issued to four hundred and fifteen (415) girls enrolled in the Programme for Adolescent Mothers (PAM) under the Protection component of the National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender-based Violence (NSAP-GBV) 2017 2027
- “Sanitation Kits” provided to the Divisions, Departments and Agencies and other public bodies within the Ministry to ensure that all the locations are equipped with the requisite protective gear, resource materials as part of the national response;
- Ramped up the COPE Initiative to include two (2) new groups from the community for persons with disabilities (i.e. Jamaica Society for the Blind and the Jamaica Association for the Deaf)
- Under Phase 2 of the COPE Initiative, nine (9) groups will receive monthly subventions to support the efforts of the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport to eliminate Gender-based Violence in keeping with the five (5) Strategic Priorities Areas of the NSAP GBV.
- Islandwide, the public health system continues to ensure the availability of commodities/services and access to contraceptive methods prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Family Planning services and commodities remain accessible, although COVID-19 has resulted in persons having to wear masks when visiting health facilities, undergoing a body temperature check for entry to health facilities, sanitising, social distancing and adhering to all COVID-19 guidelines. Additionally, outreach efforts have been increased in some Regions to inform patient populations about the available family planning services and the reduction in early pregnancies, including statistical data thereon, and maternal mortality.
- In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the Bureau of Gender Affairs provided care packages to Two Hundred and Forty-Five (245) (52M; 193F) beneficiaries to offset the immediate financial burdens.

- In line with the Committee’s guidance note on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Corona virus disease (COVID-19) issued on 22 April 2020, please indicate measures implemented by the State party in the context of the COVID 19 pandemic to redress long-standing inequalities between women and men by placing women at the centre of recovery as an economic diversification strategy; to meet the needs and uphold the rights of women and girls, including those belonging to disadvantaged and marginalized groups and women in conflict or other humanitarian situations; and to ensure that lockdown measures, whether partial or total, and post-crisis recovery plans do not see women and girls relegated to stereotyped gender roles.

15. Over the past five years, which forms of gender-based violence, and in which specific contexts or settings, has your country prioritized for action?

- Domestic Violence – Review of the Act towards strengthening the protection in place for women and girls
- Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) – Provision of enhanced protection of women while also providing focusing on perpetrators through the REFOCUS Perpetrators Programme (RPP) aimed at reducing incidences of IPV by providing an alternative conflict resolution and rehabilitation option for perpetrators of intimate partner violence.
- The Sexual Harassment (Protection and Prevention) Act, 2021 - This legislation addresses discriminatory behaviours involving sexual harassment, providing protection to both men and women from unwanted sexual advances in the workplace.

16. In the past five years, what actions has your country prioritized to address gender-based violence?

The Jamaica Constabulary Force has Domestic Violence Intervention Centres, dubbed “DVICare” centres across Jamaica, which provide confidential compassionate care for victims of domestic abuse. Each “DVICare” centre is managed by a police officer who is trained in offering intervention through counselling, referrals, law enforcement intervention, protection, follow up, home visits and other services to victims of domestic violence as needed. There are eleven (11) Domestic Violence Intervention Centres across the island. Counselling is offered island-wide by the Victim Support Division (VSD), Dispute Resolution Foundation (DRF), Peace Centres and Women’s Centres as well as various faith-based institutions. Tertiary Level Institutions (The University of the West Indies (UWI) and the University of Technology (UTECH) also offer counselling and referrals for their student bodies and staff. In addition, the non-governmental organization (NGO), Woman Inc. Crisis Centre (Kingston and Montego Bay), provides counselling, shelter facilities and support groups (for rape, adult survivors of incest, spousal/domestic violence). Legal aid and advice for victims and their families is available from the Family Courts island wide, the Government’s Legal Aid Clinic and Council (in the Ministry of Justice), the Legal Aid Clinic at the Norman Manley Law School, UWI and Women’s Resource and Outreach Centre (WROC).

Through the services provided at the Bureau of Gender Affairs, clients have been able to benefit directly from:

- Sexual harassment sensitizations
- Financial Literacy trainings
- Sensitizations on the provisions of the Domestic Violence Act in Jamaica
- A 24-hour line to the public where survivors of gender-based violence can call and receive tele-case management support. The interventions provided on the line include the following: psychosocial support, psychological first aid, referral services, and gender-based violence related information. It is important to note that this helpline continues to enable several women in Jamaica to become aware of their rights in areas relating to safety, access to social services, land ownership and housing, as well as accessing healthcare services.

The GOJ continues the phased and strategic implementation of the 10-year National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender-based Violence (NSAP-GBV) in partnership and collaboration to challenge the normalization of gender-based violence (GBV),

- to build resilience and to provide empowerment
- Provide increased support to victims and survivors of GBV and gender-differential responses and options in case of intimate partner violence incidences
- Increased social media presence under the No Excuse for Abuse Campaign to ensure that the public is aware of the Hotline for the current shelter for domestic violence, as well as the Hotlines to call and report intimate partner violence and other forms of Gender-based Violence
- Provided community/advocacy groups monthly subventions to support the Ministry's efforts to eliminate Gender-based Violence in keeping with the five (5) Strategic Priorities Areas of the NSAP-GBV
- Increased social media presence under the "No Excuse for Abuse Campaign" to ensure that the public is aware of the Hotline for the current shelter for domestic violence, as well as the Help Lines/Hot Lines to call and report intimate partner violence and other forms of Gender-based Violence; Helplines/Hot Line Numbers: Toll-Free Line: 888-NO ABUSE Females: Males: 876 553 0372/876 236 1713 876 553 0387

17. In the past five years, what strategies has your country used to prevent gender-based violence?

- Legislative and policy review
- Sensitization and awareness raising
- Capacity building and training
- National Shelters for survivors of GBV
- GBV Helplines
- DVICare Centers

18. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to prevent and respond to technology-facilitated gender-based violence (e.g. online sexual harassment, online stalking, non-consensual sharing of intimate images)?

The following were used to prevent and respond to technology-facilitated gender-based violence

- The Sexual Harassment (Protection and Prevention) Act (2021)
- The Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act 2023
- The Cybercrimes Act, 2015
- A 10-year National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate GBV in Jamaica (2017-2027) was launched in 2018 by the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport to prevent violence, protect and deliver adequate services to victims and deal appropriately with perpetrators.
- Additionally, a public education campaign, titled, 'No Excuse for Abuse' was developed to take anti-violence messages to communities across the country.
- Memorandum of Understanding signed with the UN Women Multi-Country Office of the Caribbean to support the Plan's implementation.
- The Government acquired property outside Kingston for use as a shelter and safe spaces for women who need to leave abusive environments.
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed to address challenges facing women in business and to strengthen collaboration in developing programmes to encourage entrepreneurship among females.
- The Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport developed an initiative, dubbed, 'A-STREAM' (Advancing Secondary, Tertiary, Remedial Education for Adolescent Mothers). A-STREAM, which is administered through the Women's Centre of Jamaica.
- The establishment of a Sexual Harassment Tribunal to preside over sexual harassment matters, and the designation of Field Officers from the Bureau of Gender Affairs as Authorised Officers.
- The Special Service Desk for Men conducted seven sensitisation and awareness-raising sessions reaching 309 men and boys. Issues dealt with included Toxic Masculinities, Health and Employment.
- The Ministry conducted economic opportunity workshops and entrepreneurial training, among other support interventions to enable communities to take advantage of the opportunities from World Heritage Designation of certain sites.

19. In the past five years, what measures has your country taken to resource women's organizations working to prevent and respond to GBV?

A 10-year National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate GBV in Jamaica (2017-2027) was launched in 2018 by the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport to prevent violence, protect and deliver adequate services to victims and deal appropriately with perpetrators.

There have also been Sexual Harassment sensitization sessions with MDAs, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs) and public and private organizations.

The COPE Initiative provides grant funding to selected community and advocacy groups which support the implementation of the National Policy for Gender Equality (NPGE) and the National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender-based Violence in Jamaica (NSAP-GBV) 2017-2027. Through the COPE Initiative, the BGA provides financial and technical support to the Jamaica Network of Rural Women Producers (JNRWP) for capacity-building and institutional-strengthening. The JNRWP caters exclusively to rural women and was the first such organization to be established in the Caribbean.

20. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to address the portrayal of women and girls, discrimination and/or gender bias in the media, including social media?

The BGA has hosted sensitization with the national media houses in Jamaica aimed at:

- Increasing awareness on the role of the Bureau of Gender Affairs, the national shelter and other key services that support GBV and how to access them.
- Enhancing the capacity of the media to provide appropriate reportage on gender equality and gender-based violence (GBV) at all
- Enhancing knowledge on gender equality, gender inequality and gender-based violence.
- Highlighting the role of the media in eliminating/addressing gender-based violence and other forms of gender inequalities.
- Active social media engagement which created visibility and accessibility of the services offered by BGA– Instagram & Facebook pages.

21. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken specifically tailored to address violence against marginalized groups of women and girls?

In order to create mechanisms to combat the pervasive challenge of VAW, the GoJ approved and begun the implementation of the NSAP-GBV 2017-2027. The NSAP-GBV is designed to address the different forms and manifestations of GBV and VAW taking into account the commonalities and overlaps between them, as well as institutional and structural issues that facilitate their perpetuation. Eliminating GBV requires change at all levels — from State systems and laws through to organizations such as schools, workplaces and support services, local communities, and individual relationships and behaviours. The goal of the NSAP-GBV is to eliminate GBV in Jamaica, with special focus on VAWG. The implementation plan includes a programme on victims' protection, redress, reparation and rehabilitation. It incorporates a full range of support services, which will be rolled out over a ten year period (i.e. 2017- 2027) for those affected by GBV. Specific actions include the provision of psychosocial and health care to improve support for victims, rigorous review of legislation to

'fast-track' the prosecution of perpetrators, and an increase of partnership with key stakeholders to enforce Court orders in a sensitive and timely manner. Additional measures are the 'roll out' of public awareness campaigns, and standardisation of the collection of sex-disaggregated data.

Legislation

Key pieces of legislation were reviewed, with recommendations for penalties or increased penalties for offences against women, children, the elderly and persons living with disabilities; the strengthening of penalties, particularly in relation to aggravated assault and the murder of pregnant women; the creation of the criminal offence of stalking and harassment. The legislations include of inclusive of:

- ❖ Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act, 2021
- ❖ The Offences against the Person (Amendment) Act, 2021
- ❖ Child Care and Protection (Amendment) Act, 2022
- ❖ Sexual Harassment (Protection and Prevention) Act, 2021
- ❖ Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act, 2023
- ❖ The Sexual Harassment (Protection and Prevention) Act, 2021

Reporting Cases of Abuse

Several public awareness campaigns have been launched to encourage victims, as well as the general society, to report cases of domestic and sexual violence. This includes the #NoExcuseforAbuse campaign by the BGA. Through this campaign, the BGA reached a wide range of stakeholders, engage men and boys as advocates and agents of change to challenge harmful social and cultural norms and facilitated constructive conversations on strategies to eliminate GBV.

In addition to the various campaigns, the GoJ through the BGA continues to engage with relevant stakeholders through workshops, symposia and other community outreach activities.

Victim Assistance and Support Programmes

The GoJ has put various programmes in place to address the physical and psychosocial needs of victims of GBV. The following are some of these programmes and initiatives:

- (i) The continued phased implementation of the National Strategic Action Plan to eliminate Gender-Based Violence (NSAP-GBV) in Jamaica 2017-2027.

The NSAP-GBV has five strategic priority areas which are interlinked, with overlapping issues. These 5 areas are Prevention, Protection, Investigation, Prosecution and Enforcement of Court Orders, Enforcement of Victims' rights to Compensation, Reparation and Redress Protocols for Coordination of NSAP & Data Management Systems. The NSAP-GBV is being implemented using the "Continuum of Care" for Coordinated Delivery of Services to Survivors of Gender-based Violence (GBV).

- (ii) The Continuum of Care, 2022

The "Continuum of Care" is built on the premise that GBV is best eliminated through strategic partnerships and collaboration to synchronize activities at the national, regional and local levels

with government agencies, academia, the private sector, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), International Development Partners (IDPs) and other relevant groups. The “Continuum of Care” uses the survivor centred approach to ensure that survivors have access to appropriate and good quality services including health care; psychological and social support; security; legal services. Through the Continuum of Care, the BGA employs a multisectoral response model which includes holistic, inter-organizational, inter-agency, interdisciplinary efforts that promote participation and collaboration across key sectors that respond to GBV, including life-saving services. to ensure seamless provision of services by all MDAs to survivors of GBV.

The “Continuum of Care” uses the survivor centred approach to ensure that survivors have access to appropriate and good quality services including health care; psychological and social support; security; legal services. Through the Continuum of Care, the BGA employs a multisectoral response model which includes holistic, inter-organizational, inter-agency, interdisciplinary efforts that promote participation and collaboration across key sectors that respond to GBV, including life-saving services. The level of services provided by each MDA in the Continuum of Care is survivor-centred (which includes safety, confidentiality, respect and non-discrimination), rights-based and trauma-informed, supported and complemented by other international and regional human rights approaches, such as the Rights-based Approach and the Best Interest of the Child Approach, Leave No One Behind (LNOB), Do No Harm Principle, the GBV Guiding Principles and the Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence. The key groups of services in the continuum of care include; safe shelter, health care, psychosocial care and community support, child care and protection, security and safety, access to justice.

(iii) The National Shelter Unit, 2020

Under the Protection component of the NSAP-GBV, the National Shelter Unit was established to provide safe spaces for victims of gender-based violence. Since the official opening of the first government-owned and operated Shelter, GBV survivors and their dependent children have been accommodated and provided with comprehensive & holistic support in the North-East and Eastern Regions of the country. In addition, the operations of the Shelters are guided by the National Strategy for Shelters and other Safe Spaces for Survivors of GBV in Jamaica along with the accompanying Comprehensive Guidelines and the Comprehensive Guidelines for the Operationalization of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Helplines in Jamaica and the Complaints and Response Protocol. Two state-owned and operated Shelters (2020/2021) for survivors of gender-based violence are currently operational, with a third property being renovated in the Western region of the country.

22. In the past five years, what actions and measures has your country taken to promote women’s participation in public life and decision-making?

The GoJ through its gender-mainstreaming programme focuses on improving the number of women in decision-making and management positions. The BGA conducted training among several key stakeholders for capacity-building and institutional strengthening. In addition, sensitisation and awareness-raising sessions are conducted on a regular basis among public

sector workers, community members and educational institutions to raise awareness, to empower women and to challenge discriminatory practices that will affect their equal participation.

The National Policy for Gender Equality (NPGE) suggests that Temporary Special Measures (TSMs) are implemented to ensure that women and girls have equal participation in political and public life.

The composition of Jamaica's Parliament reflects an increase in the participation of women in decision-making at the highest levels in Jamaica's history. Since 2020, Jamaica boasts its highest number of women in Parliamentary Leadership (29%) which is higher than the global averages (25.5%). A total of 29% (18 of 63) of candidates elected for the position of member of parliament in the most recent general elections held in Jamaica, on September 3, 2020, were females.

With this achievement, Jamaica was and still is poised to empower women to engage in leadership and decision-making while promoting economic development and gender equality. In December 2022, the House of Representatives approved a Motion for the establishment of a Caucus of Women Parliamentarians from both chambers in the Houses of Parliament and all parties. The motion called for the amendment of the Standing Orders of the House of Representatives to allow the Caucus to be established as a Sessional Select Committee to sit jointly with a similar Committee of the Senate. The establishment of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus aligns with the tenets of the National Policy for Gender Equality and the strategic priority areas of the National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender-based Violence in Jamaica (NSAP-GBV) 2017-2027. It also supports the objectives of the Vision 2030: National Development Plan.

On the recommendation of the Minister with responsibility for Gender, Honourable Minister Olivia Grange, OJ, CD, JP, a Core Group of Parliamentarians has been established with the members drawn from both Chambers and the political parties. The Core Group is tasked with being champions on the initiative to support the functions of the 1st Women's Parliamentary Bicameral Caucus.

Historic all female Parliamentary Sitting

The historic all female sitting of Parliament happened in February 2023 and was one of Jamaica's first activities leading up to the observance of International Women's Day 2023, observed on March 8. The Sitting facilitated the participation of young women between the ages of 18 and 25 years who were nominated by their respective Members of Parliament and were engaged in parliamentary debate on a fictional motion proposing the implementation of a national action plan to prioritize gender equality and women's economic empowerment, focused on the education sector, care sector and digital transformation.

As of August 31, 2020, the GOJ published a list of the appointments to three hundred and twelve (312) Public Sector Boards, Committees, Councils, Commissions, Authorities, Panels, Appeal Tribunals approved by Cabinet. An analysis of the Boards indicates that women have

made significant gains in decision-making and leadership positions. Men accounted for 55 % of Board composition while women accounted for 41%. In 2016, men accounted for 63% and women 37% while men accounted for 69% of Board composition and women accounted for 31 percent in 2012.

The BGA endorsed the UN Women Win-Win: Gender Equality Means Good Business Programme in Jamaica. The programme engages Private Sector Organizations (PSOs) in the Women Economic Empowerment Principles (WEP) and seeks to highlight the importance of ensuring equal pay for work of equal value. It is also aimed at promoting formal and decent work opportunities for women throughout the pipeline including executive leadership and decision-making positions.

23. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to increase women’s access to expression and participation in decision-making in the media, including through information and communication technologies (ICT)?

24. Please describe your country’s current national women’s machinery (government entity exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women) and describe the measures that your country taken over the past five years to establish and/or strengthen it.

The Bureau of Women’s Affairs was renamed the Bureau of Gender Affairs (BGA) in 2016 by Cabinet Decision No. 8/16 on March 21, 2016. The National Machinery has remained a critical mechanism for normative policy and programming support to women’s empowerment despite the shift to and focus on situating its initiatives within the broader gender and development paradigm. Policies and programming remain guided by a National Policy for Gender Equality (NPGE).

The National Policy for Gender Equality (NPGE) was initially approved in 2011 and sets the framework for a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to fully integrate gender in every area of national life, through the strategy of gender mainstreaming. The BGA in partnership with Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF), through support from the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), engaged an International Consulting Firm, the Centre for International Development & Training (CIDT) of the University of Wolverhampton to review and revise the NPGE.

As at June 2024, the review has been completed and the revised NPGE has a draft costing to facilitate the responsiveness and robustness which are required for the effective implementation.

In keeping too with Goal 5 of the Social Development Goals (SDGs), the GoJ has remained steadfast in its commitment its mandate and as such there has been a dedicated effort to expand the human resource and capacity of the BGA. This is being realised through the establishment of new Units within the BGA.

New Units establishment since 2020 include:

- The National Shelter Unit, 2020
- The Sexual Harassment Investigation Unit, 2022
- The Gender-based Violence Unit, 2023
- The Male Empowerment Unit, 2023

The following major initiatives reflect progressive achievements and key milestones in this process:

- Legislative review for equality and non-discrimination under the law and timely access to justice for accelerating progress for women and girls
- A developed Gender Mainstreaming Manual for the Public Sector informed by the National Policy for Gender Equality (NPGE)
- A Gender Advisory Council (GAC) established to oversee the implementation of the National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender-Based Violence (NSAP-GBV) and the NPGE
- The launch of a pilot Gender Ambassadors Programme (GAP) to engage secondary and tertiary level students in an expanded Gender Focal Point Programme (GFP)
- A Resource Guide/Directory of Services for women
- Active social media engagement – Instagram & Facebook pages
- Development of the BGA website supported by handover of an Online GBV Platform
- Increase in Government budgetary allocations for the National Gender Machinery's priority programmes
- An introduction of the Gender Equality Seal Programme for the private sector in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme
- The launch of a National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender-based Violence in Jamaica (NSAP-GBV) 2017-2027
- The launch and implementation of the National Strategy for Shelters and other Safe Spaces for Survivors of GBV in Jamaica along with the accompanying Comprehensive Guidelines and the Comprehensive Guidelines for the Operationalization of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Helplines in Jamaica.
- Human rights education through UNDP and the ratification of conventions such as C189 and ILO's Decent Work Agenda to strengthen policy and legislative frameworks for the empowerment of women and protection of workers
- Sectoral policies are strongly aligned with the SDGs including SDG 5 (Gender equality and the empowerment of women).
- New and Emerging Policy Frameworks – International Migration and Development, Water, Poverty, Social Protection Strategy
- Progressive increase in the number of women in politics and decision-making/Boards and Commissions/Non-traditional sectors

25. In the past five years, what other mechanisms and tools has your country used to mainstream gender equality across sectors?

The Ministry's Gender Focal Point Network received a boost with the addition of thirty-eight (38 - 12 Males; 26 Females) new Gender Focal Points (GFPs) representing twenty (20) organisations. These GFPs will be trained and supported to develop and implement Gender Mainstreaming Action Plans within their respective organizations "ramping-up" the mainstreaming of gender considerations in Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and Public Sector Organisations (PSOs). Overall, a total of sixty-two (62) new GFPs were identified to strengthen gender mainstreaming in MDAs in keeping with and Jamaica's Vision 2030 National Development Plan.

26. If there is a national human rights institution in your country, what measures has it taken to address violations of women's rights and promote gender equality?

In keeping with the GoJ's efforts to protect and promote the human rights of all Jamaicans, Cabinet approved the establishment of a national human rights institution in 2015. The Ministry of Legal and Constitutional Affairs (MLCA) is currently working towards arriving at a policy position regarding the establishment of a national human rights institution.

27. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to build and sustain peace, promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and implement the women, peace and security agenda?

28. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to increase the leadership, representation and participation of women in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, humanitarian action and crisis response, at decision-making levels in situations of armed and other conflicts, and in fragile or crisis settings?

29. In the last five years, what actions has your country taken to enhance judicial and nonjudicial accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and violations of the human rights of women and girls in situations of armed and other conflicts or humanitarian action and crisis response?

30. In the last five years, what actions has your country taken to eliminate discrimination against and violations of the rights of the girl child, including adolescent girls?

31. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to integrate gender perspectives and concerns into environmental policies, including climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity conservation and land degradation?

In 2022, the Climate Change Division (CCD) in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation (MEGJC) and the Bureau of Gender Affairs in the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, (MCGES) finalized and launched the Gender and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (GCCSAP), 2022. The GCCSAP was developed to inform the implementation of the Government of Jamaica's commitment to gender-responsive climate action. In addition, the BGA remains a member of the Climate Change Focal Point Network to ensure gender perspectives and concerns are mainstreamed in all environmental policies including the preparation of National Adaptation Plans (NAP).

The annual GFP Network training workshop also includes a component focused on climate change which not only provides sensitization on climate change and gender nexus but how the Network can support the promotion of the education of women and girls in science, engineering, technology and other disciplines relating to the natural environment.

32. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to integrate gender perspectives into policies and programmes for disaster risk reduction and building environmental and climate resilience?

Section Four: National institutions and processes

33. Please describe your country's national strategy or action plan for gender equality, including its name, the period it covers, its priority, funding and alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the targets under SDG 5.

The National Policy for Gender Equality (NPGE), 2011 (reviewed 2021) outlines Jamaica's commitment towards gender equality, and encourages the Jamaican community to recognize that development, as a multidimensional process, must involve the reduction of gender inequalities as an integral element of achieving equitable growth. It provides an enabling environment for achieving the goals of fairness and socio-economic justice for women and men in keeping with the four goals of Vision 2030: Jamaica- National Development Plan, (Goal 1. Jamaicans are empowered to achieve their fullest potential; 2. Jamaican society is secure, cohesive and just; 3. Jamaica's economy is prosperous; 4. Jamaica has a healthy natural environment). The NPGE (2011) sets the framework for a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to fully integrate gender in every area of national life. It is geared towards achieving equal treatment for women and men through equal visibility, equal opportunity, equal access to all resources, and equal participation in all areas of public and private life.

In support of the NPGE (2011), there was the implementation of the National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender-based Violence (NSAP-GBV), 2017-2027 which addresses, at the national level, the urgent need for a gender strategy to eliminate gender-based violence in Jamaica. The goal of the NSAP is to eliminate GBV in Jamaica, with particular focus on

violence against women and girls (VAWG). The NSAP provides for an integrated, multi-sectoral and structured approach to addressing the key issues and challenges of GBV, as it relates to victims, perpetrators, and witnesses of acts of violence. The NSAP-GBV (2017-2027) acknowledges the need to incorporate a socially inclusive, human rights-centred, diverse approach to tackling this endemic problem by leveraging the linkages and synergies with national legislation, policies and programmes in Jamaica. It recommends public and/or private partnerships to provide adequate services and psychosocial support for survivors. The Plan seeks to address the complex nature of GBV and encourages stakeholders to consider the root causes of GBV. It also seeks to identify areas for improvement in access to and delivery of effective and efficient services. The National Strategic Action Plan has five Strategic Priority Areas:

- 1) Prevention
- 2) Protection
- 3) Investigation, Prosecution and Enforcement of Court Orders
- 4) Enforcement of Victim's Rights to Compensation, Reparation and Redress
- 5) Protocols for Coordination of NSAP and Data Management Systems.

The NSAP-GBV (2017-2027) outlines initiatives and programmes necessary to counter GBV and to improve the implementation of laws and services for victims of GBV. Both the NPGE (2011) and the NSAP-GBV (2017-2027) aligns with the development goals of Jamaica, Vision 2030, and the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically SDG Goal 5, which is focused on Achieving gender equality and the empowerment all women and girls.

34. Please describe your country's system for tracking the proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting), including the approximate proportion of the national budget that is invested in this area.

35. What formal mechanisms are in place for different stakeholders to participate in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

The GOJ operates within a 'Whole of Government Framework' which means all Ministries, Departments and Agencies are included in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The National Policy for Gender Equality represents Jamaica's commitment to advancing gender equality, emphasizing the need for decreasing gender disparities to achieve inclusive and equitable growth and represents the policy justification for gender mainstreaming. It underlines that development is a multifaceted process involving both men and women and incorporates their concerns into all governmental development policies, plans, and programmes.

36. Please describe how stakeholders have contributed to the preparation of the present national report.

In keeping with the GoJ's consultative approach, the compilation of this report was led by the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport through the Bureau of Gender Affairs with guidance and support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade. Consultation workshops were held and inputs were submitted which were collated to produce this report. Stakeholders involved in preparing the report include:

- Members of the Gender Focal Point Network from the Ministries, Departments and Agencies
- Caribbean Vulnerabilities Community Coalition
- Treasure Beach Women's Group
- YARD Empire
- Jamaica Society for the Blind
- JASL (Jamaica AIDS Support for Life)
- Jamaica Household Workers Union (JHWU)
- Village Academy School of Agriculture
- Yaad Vibes Development & Entrepreneur Network
- 19 Miles CDC
- North Cockpit Local Forest Management Committee Benevolent Society

37. Please describe your country's action plan and timeline for implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (if a State party), or of the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review or other United Nations human rights mechanisms that address gender inequality/discrimination against women.

In accordance with our international reporting requirements, the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport prepared and submitted the Eighth Periodic Report of Jamaica on the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in July 2023. The final report was successfully defended on October 12, 2023, to the CEDAW Committee. The Jamaica delegation was headed by Mr. Denzil Thorpe, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, and included representatives from the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, the Ministry of Legal and Constitutional Affairs, the Women's Centre of Jamaica Foundation, and representatives of the Permanent Mission of Jamaica to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva. The CEDAW Committee expressed appreciation for the the constructive dialogue that took place between the delegation and the members of the Committee and outlined concluding observations to be addressed, within two years on the steps taken to implement the recommendations.

Jamaica remains committed to the implementation of the CEDAW and the recommendations and will continue to implement targeted plans and actions to address inequality and discrimination against women. The NPGE and NSAP-GBV are aligned with some of the recommendations and as such the GoJ will continue to work towards achieving gender equality, social justice and women's socio-economic empowerment.

Section Five: Data and Statistics

38. What are the most important areas in which your country has made most progress over the past five years when it comes to gender statistics at the national level?

The following major initiatives reflect progressive achievements and key milestones in this process:

- Legislative review for equality and non-discrimination under the law and timely access to justice for accelerating progress for women and girls
- A developed Gender Mainstreaming Manual for the Public Sector informed by the National Policy for Gender Equality (NPGE)
- A Gender Advisory Council (GAC) established to oversee the implementation of the National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender-Based Violence (NSAP-GBV) and the NPGE
- The launch of a pilot Gender Ambassadors Programme (GAP) to engage secondary and tertiary level students in an expanded Gender Focal Point Programme (GFP)
- A Resource Guide/Directory of Services for women
- Active social media engagement – Instagram & Facebook pages
- Development of the BGA website supported by handover of an Online GBV Platform
- Increase in Government budgetary allocations for the National Gender Machinery's priority programmes
- An introduction of the Gender Equality Seal Programme for the private sector in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme
- The launch of a National Strategic Action Plan to eliminate Gender-based Violence in Jamaica (NSAP-GBV) 2017-2027
- The launch and implementation of the National Strategy for Shelters and other Safe Spaces for Survivors of GBV in Jamaica along with the accompanying Comprehensive Guidelines and the Comprehensive Guidelines for the Operationalization of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Helplines in Jamaica.

- Human rights education through UNDP and the ratification of conventions such as C189 and ILO's Decent Work Agenda to strengthen policy and legislative frameworks for the empowerment of women and protection of workers
- Sectoral policies are strongly aligned with the SDGs including SDG 5 (Gender equality and the empowerment of women).
- New and Emerging Policy Frameworks – International Migration and Development, Water, Poverty, Social Protection Strategy
- Progressive increase in the number of women in politics and decision-making/Boards and Commissions/Non-traditional sectors

39. Over the next five years, what are your country's priorities for strengthening national gender statistics?

The Government of Jamaica recognizes the importance of strengthening national gender statistics, Notwithstanding the efforts, there are still gaps in the use of data for sound policy-making due to technical and financial constraints, disharmonised data collection and dissemination amongst other factors. Nonetheless, the GoJ is striving to ensure that the agencies responsible for planning national censuses and other forms of data collection are standardised to include sex-disaggregation of data. In addition, the GoJ continues to improve efforts to collect administrative data to inform regional and local statistics agencies to produce accurate regional and national evidence and gender sensitive analysis as necessary.

Strategic Area Five (5) of the NSAP-GBV (Protocols for Coordination and Data Management Systems) will focus on the standardization and collection of sex-disaggregated data through the use of protocols. These protocols are data tools that will be used to capture an understanding of the magnitude and trends of GBV to improve future planning and programming. When operationalized, the NSAP-GBV will create an efficient data management system to provide a fulsome strategy to collect, report, and train key stakeholders to combat GBV.

As part of the GoJ's strategic drive for an evidence-based approach in reducing crime, the Jamaica Crime Observatory Integrated Crime and Violence Information System (JCO-ICVIS) was established in 2011. The JCO-ICVIS is a publicly accessible web-based crime and violence statistics databank that collects and compiles comprehensive data on homicides, sexual assaults and suicides, including the relationships between victims and perpetrators. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed in 2013 between eighteen (18) key stakeholders (including the BGA and the JCO-IVIS) to provide statistical data and/or technical advice to analyse the data and integrate results in government policies, plans and programmes. A data sharing protocol has been established to facilitate the sharing of standardised and disaggregated data based on the variables of gender, age, location, and incident.

Additionally, the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) established a Statistical Information Management Unit that collects data on crime and violence. Data is disaggregated based on request by sex and incident context.

40. What gender-specific indicators has your country prioritized for monitoring progress on the SDGs?

41. Which data disaggregations are routinely provided by major surveys in your country?

Section Six: Conclusion and next steps

Since the Beijing 1995 Conference, significant gains have been derived through utilising the BPFA towards the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Some of the major initiatives that reflect a progressive commitment to this process include the following:

- The appointment of a Gender Advisory Council (GAC) with a mandate of specific activities, which includes but is not limited to, advising the Government and the National Machinery on strategic policy directions for the gender portfolio and the establishment of GFPs in key MDAs. Through the implementation of approved action plans, GFPs are to ensure that gender is integrated in all national policies, plans, programmes and operations using a gender equality framework. The GFPs also contribute data to inform both regional and international reporting processes;
- The design and development of a Gender Analysis Checklist to increase the capacity to incorporate a gender perspective. The Checklist is designed to ensure that government policies and programmes are responsive to the gender differential needs in keeping with commitments outlined in the BPFA;
- The Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) formed a National Gender Task Force to integrate the vision of gender equality into the National Development Plan Vision 2030;

- The adoption of a NPGE, which promotes a vision of “a society in which women and men have equal access to socially valued goods and are able to contribute to national development”, towards the achievement of gender equality.

Over the past five years, the GoJ has continued strengthening the legislative framework, enhanced the capacity of the national gender machinery and strengthened partnerships and collaborations to support the work on GBV with international development partners such as the United Nations, UNWOMEN, United Nations Population Development Fund, the European Union, the Embassies in Jamaica among others and hopes to continue this.

Gender-based violence, patriarchy and discrimination continue to impact the Government’s efforts to achieve gender equality. As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), Jamaica’s fiscal space is limited and so gender-responsive budgeting remains a challenge; however, the Government remains committed to achieving gender equality and continues to explore innovative ways to provide the financial resources needed to support the work of the BGA.

In addition, Jamaica continues to engage in global affairs on gender equality and in September 2024, Jamaica will participate in the Summit of the Future High-Level event at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, with a view to bringing world leaders and civil society together to forge a new international consensus on how we deliver a better present and safeguard the future. The Summit places a strong emphasis on gender equality, recognizing it as a cornerstone of global development and peace. The event will provide a unique opportunity for Member States to agree on commitments and proposals for a better future for all that leaves no one behind, especially women and girls in all regions of the world. The summit's gender components address various dimensions of gender rights, equality and empowerment, including, but not limited to, the realization of women’s rights; addressing the gender digital divide; increasing the representation of women and girls in formal political structures; and addressing situations of violations of women’s and girls’ rights including gross and systematic. These components are designed to contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals particularly SDG 5 on gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls.