



STATEMENT BY

**SENATOR THE HONOURABLE KAMINA JOHNSON SMITH, JP
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS & FOREIGN TRADE**

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

THIRD UNITED NATIONS OCEAN CONFERENCE (UNOC3)

NICE, FRANCE

TUESDAY, JUNE 10, 2025

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

I thank the Governments and people of France and Costa Rica, for arranging this important meeting, and for the warm hospitality shown to me and my delegation.

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Jamaica aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of AOSIS and the G77 and China.

The Third UN Ocean Conference is being held at a critical juncture as the world grapples with a range of global challenges. Sea level rise, ocean acidification, bio-diversity loss and marine pollution are just a few that threaten the sustainability of our ocean, and the lives and livelihoods of Small Island Developing States. It is of great concern therefore, that this year we face the reality that global progress on SDG 14 continues to be slow, and financing, woefully inadequate.

As a country given to outsized ambition and hope however, Jamaica joins all countries and stakeholders committed to working to make this conference and this year, only 5 years away from 2030, a turning point. In this context, we look forward to delivery on the pledges made at the Blue Economy and Finance meetings last weekend in Monaco, and indeed to hearing more about equitable and affordable access to these new resources announced.

Excellencies,

Jamaica's dedication to the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and its marine resources is longstanding.

Our historic role in the negotiation of the UNCLOS;

Our service as host country for the International Seabed Authority and the Secretariat of the Cartagena Convention;

Our championing of ocean governance in multilateral fora and;

Our membership in the Ocean Leaders Panel - ALL are affirmations of our commitment to working across the five pillars of the Ocean Panel's Transformations Agenda.

In this context, Jamaica is proud to have been among the countries which yesterday deposited Instruments of Ratification of the BBNJ Treaty.

Excellencies,

We all share similar concerns in relation to the degradation of our marine environment. As home to several freshwater systems and the seventh largest natural harbour in the world, the reduction and elimination of marine pollution are among Jamaica's top priorities. These, as we seek to preserve the biodiversity, commercial activity and aesthetics of the entire harbour ecosystem and our wetlands.

Jamaica also faces challenges with recurrent influxes of sargassum onto the country's coastline. We have, therefore, developed a National Sargassum Response Strategy under which we are undertaking research to identify safe commercial uses of sargassum, and are engaged in regional discussions looking at preventative measures and early warning systems for sargassum.

Excellencies, ladies and Gentlemen,

Jamaica's ocean agenda is informed by the engagement of key stakeholders, including the private sector, women, young people and artisanal fishers.

At the policy and legislative levels, the Government of Jamaica has prepared a roadmap towards a blue economy. Our pledge is to finalise our Overarching Protected Areas Policy by July 2025, which will replace the 1997 Protected Areas Policy; to finalise the Cays Management Policy by March 2026; and by 2027, to develop the National Wetlands and Freshwater Policy for Jamaica the National Policy for the environmentally sound management of single use plastic products.

The Government is also working towards the promulgation of Overarching Protected Areas legislation, and Climate Change legislation by March 2028. Other Ocean Conservation Programmes being undertaken by the Government include, integrated coastal zone management, coastal and marine ecosystem restoration including mangrove and coral reef preservation and restoration – promotion of the blue economy, and the designation of new sites as marine protected areas.

Regarding the latter, we are proud that just over 15 per cent of the country’s archipelagic waters are now legally protected. We continue to advance towards our 30 by 30 target.

While we have made progress in a number of key areas, we reiterate our call for an increase in climate and biodiversity financing in keeping with global finance targets as established under the Paris Agreement and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. We also call for the finalisation of an ambitious legally binding treaty on plastic pollution. One in which the special circumstances of SIDS are mainstreamed throughout the text and the full life-cycle of plastics is covered.

Excellences,

In order to further strengthen our environmental resilience, Jamaica would welcome collaboration in:

- the generation , collection, storage and use of data to drive environmental policy development and implementation;
- the development of tools such as remote sensing techniques;
- the development of marine spatial plans;
- access to finance by MSMEs , to participate in and support the blue economy; AND capacity building to key sectors within the blue economy, including the fisheries sector.

Finally, Excellencies, I could not close without mentioning that Jamaica has submitted its candidature for re-election to Category C of the Council of the International Maritime Organisation, at elections to be held in December 2025.

Jamaica continues to play an active and valuable role in the international maritime sector both as a trusted partner of the IMO and of our international partners. Jamaica has been an active participant in the promulgation of important IMO regulations and has successfully implemented many global projects aimed at preserving and protecting our oceans. Jamaica has also been producing competent seafarers for the global shipping industry since 1980, through the Caribbean Maritime University (CMU) which is the only IMO accredited institution in the English-speaking Caribbean, recognized for training of seafarers and officers. Jamaica is also host of the Women in Maritime Caribbean Secretariat, and is proudly increasing the number of women trained and leading in all aspects of the maritime industry. We sincerely hope to have your support in continuing to contribute to oceans advocacy and the work of the IMO Council.

In closing, let me extend very best wishes for continued success at this important Conference as we seek to **“Accelerate action and mobilise all actors to conserve and sustainably use the ocean”**.

I thank you.