

Update to the 2015 Climate Change Framework for Jamaica

1.0 Cabinet by Decision No. 7/21, dated February 15, 2021, gave approval for the tabling of the update of the *Climate Change Policy Framework for Jamaica* (attached as **Appendix 1**) as a Green Paper in The Houses of Parliament.

2.0 Background

2.1 In February 2015, Cabinet gave its approval for the tabling of the Climate Change Policy Framework for Jamaica as a White Paper in The Houses of Parliament by Decision No. 8/15. The document was subsequently tabled in November 2015 by the then Ministry of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change, which was the Ministry with portfolio responsibility for the climate change.

2.2 The Climate Change Policy Framework, the first of its kind for Jamaica, was developed through extensive multistakeholder consultations which included stakeholders in key economic sectors including agriculture and fisheries, tourism, forestry, infrastructure development, environmental management, energy as well as gender affairs, the disabled community, academia, and civil society. The 2015 Climate Change Policy Framework for Jamaica was formulated to respond to the numerous, complex, existing and emerging challenges posed by climate change in Jamaica. The Policy Framework had a strong focus on strengthening the institutional framework for climate action in Jamaica, as well as the development of strategies to address Jamaica's priority climate change-related issues.

2.3 Since its finalization, the Policy Framework has guided the work of a Climate Change Advisory Board, the establishment of an active Climate Change Focal Point Network, the pursuit of numerous activities related to climate financing for the country, guided the work of the Climate Change Division of the Ministry with responsibility for climate change and its partnerships with key stakeholders and has broadly set out the priorities for the national climate change agenda for all partners.

2.4 Since 2015 however, there have been a number of significant developments in the international, regional, and national climate change agenda. Notwithstanding the ongoing work in climate action at the national level, these developments have necessitated an update of the Climate Change Policy Framework to address new commitments, targets, technologies, and national policy priorities. In this regard, the Government of Jamaica, through the then Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, undertook a revision and update of the Policy

Framework with the support of the Government of Canada's Improved Access to Justice in the Caribbean (IMPACT Justice) Project.

2.5 Cabinet, by Decision No. 24/19, dated July 22, 2019, approved the updating of the Climate Change Policy Framework for Jamaica (CCPF). The Policy Framework was updated to respond to developments referred to in paragraph 2.4 above, as well as most notably, Jamaica's ratification of the Paris Agreement to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in April 2017 as well as the subsequent submission of Jamaica's first Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) as well as most recently its updated NDC. Implementation of the Paris Agreement has/will significantly change the international context for climate change.

3.0 Issues

Developments in National Priorities

3.1 There have been several developments in the national policy and legislative agenda that have changed the landscape for climate action in Jamaica. These include the following:

Natural Resources and the Built Environment

3.1.1 Jamaica has finalized its Forest Policy for Jamaica (2017). Goal 1a of the Forest Policy is to "Improve the legal and institutional frameworks for development, management and conservation of all forests in Jamaica to achieve no net loss of forest cover." In addition to the facilitation of soil retention and water production, forest strands act as sinks for carbon emissions. The provisions of this Policy, as well as those of the National Forest Management Conservation Plan (2016 – 2021) will re-define the context in which the Climate Change Policy Framework should be implemented, as these documents set out priorities related to climate finance and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

3.1.2 The water sector is among those sectors most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The National Water Sector Policy and Implementation Plan was finalized in 2019. This Policy includes climate change adaptation actions such as rainwater harvesting, and pursues as an overarching principle, efforts to ensure that the sector is climate resilient.

3.1.3 The 2015 Climate Change Policy Framework also does not make reference to a number of key national policies which have been advanced in their preparation since its tabling. These include:

- a) The draft National Land Policy - The draft Policy is currently being updated by the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation. Climate action also underpins the provisions outlined in the draft Policy; and

- b) The draft National Housing Policy - This draft Policy is being revised by the Ministry of Housing, Urban Renewal, Environment and Climate Change and mainstreams climate consideration as a key element in building resilience within the housing sector.

3.1.4 Current and pending changes in national legislation will also change the landscape of climate change response in Jamaica and the Climate Change Policy Framework must respond to such developments. A new Fisheries Act has been promulgated and the Government is presently undertaking amendments to key environmental legislation, including the Forest Act, 1996 and the Forest Regulations, 2001, the Natural Resources Conservation Act, 1991, and the Watersheds Protection Act. Such amendments will also include provisions that will impact the legal framework for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Transport and Air Quality

3.1.5 Changes to the policy and legislative agenda for transportation have also been instituted since the tabling of the 2015 Climate Change Policy Framework. The Ministry of Transport and Mining has commenced the revision of the National Transport Policy (2007) and has also facilitated the passage of the Road Traffic Act in 2018. Regulations have also been prepared for the Road Traffic Act which will facilitate motor vehicle emissions testing, commonly known as tail-pipe testing, to be incorporated into the fitness regime for the island's vehicular fleet. These developments have significant implications for the implementation of the Climate Change Policy Framework.

3.1.6 Additionally, significant work is being undertaken with the public and private sectors to advance the country's electric mobility (e-mobility) agenda. One such example is the financial support being provided to the Government of Jamaica, through the Ministry of Housing, Urban Renewal, Environment and Climate Change, by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to undertake a project on electric mobility titled 'Supporting Sustainable Transportation through the Shift to Electric Mobility in Jamaica'. This Project seeks to develop resilient and low emission public and private transportation systems in Jamaica through a focus on strengthened policies, regulations, capacities, and investments in a demonstration pilot to advance low-carbon electric mobility. A total of UD\$1.78 million (grant) has been approved by the GEF to support Project implementation. The Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology has also established a multistakeholder Electric Vehicle Council to provide oversight and to, *inter alia*, (i) review policies, legislation and regulations related to the deployment of EVs in Jamaica; and (ii) advise the Minister with responsibility for energy, on matters related to the implementation of the strategic framework on e-mobility.

3.1.7 The Cabinet by Decision No. 7/21, dated February 15, 2021, also approved the tabling of the Emissions Policy Framework for Jamaica as a Green Paper in The Houses. This Emissions

Policy Framework will further underscore the importance of climate action in Jamaica, towards, among other objectives, improved air quality for the citizenry.

Establishment of the Institutional Framework - Re-defining Policy Goals, Objectives, Strategies, and the Action Plan

3.2 Given emerging priorities as well as the achievement of a number of elements in the 2015 Climate Change Policy Framework, there is a need to re-define the existing overarching Policy Goal, strategies, objectives as well as the Action Plan.

3.2.1 The Goal of the 2015 Policy Framework is to “... create a sustainable institutional mechanism to facilitate the development, coordination and implementation of policies, sectoral plans, programmes, strategies, and legislation to address the impacts of climate change.” In keeping with Jamaica’s clear commitment to tackling climate change issues, this Goal has, to a significant extent, already been met. Jamaica has met the Policy Goal through, *inter alia*, the establishment and operationalization of a coherent and functional institutional mechanism to address climate change. This mechanism includes:

- a. A Climate Change Division within the Ministry with responsibility for climate change: The Division (CCD) has the responsibility to “ensure that systems, institutions, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are in place to address climate change as an inclusive development priority...” In this regard, the CCD has commenced work on sectoral plans and a national adaptation plan. To date, the forest sector plan, that is the National Forest Management and Conservation Plan (2016-2021), has been approved and work has commenced on the development of the transport sector plan. The CCD will, as appropriate, spearhead the development of additional sector plans in the short- to medium-term. These plans will allow for the identification of priority climate change mitigation and adaptation actions and provides guidance on the carrying out of such actions.
- b. A Climate Change Advisory Board which provides guidance to the Ministry with respect to the formulation and implementation of initiatives in climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- c. A Climate Change Focal Point Network (CCFPN) within Ministries, Departments and Agencies: The CCPN, through training and engagement has strengthened the capacity of the public sector to mainstream climate change considerations into national policies, plans, programmes, and projects.

3.2.2 Despite the establishment of the institutional mechanism to address climate change, however, there is need for broader Policy goals which recognize Jamaica’s new international obligations under the Paris Agreement, such as ambitious mitigation efforts that reflect long-term approaches to achieve intended results.

3.2.3 In addition to the reformulation of the Goals for the Policy Framework, the objectives, strategies, and Action Plan must also be re-crafted in keeping with emerging paradigms in climate change fora. The updated Climate Change Policy Framework for Jamaica therefore includes more in-depth consideration of reporting and data sharing, as well as wide-scale, focused mitigation actions to support achievement of Jamaica's commitments under the Paris Agreement as well as the country's development priorities. In accordance with Article 13 of the Paris Agreement, Jamaica, as a Party, is required to regularly report on its GHG emissions based on an enhanced transparency framework which will facilitate accountability, accuracy, and consistency in the communication of climate action. This enhanced framework will assist in more accurately gauging the collective progress towards achievement of the Paris Agreement's goal, the implementation of the current objectives and strategies of the Policy Framework.

4.0 The Updated Climate Change Policy Framework for Jamaica

Policy Goals

4.1 The single Goal of the 2015 Policy Framework which addressed establishment of a sustainable institutional mechanism to coordinate climate action has been met as outlined in paragraph 3.2.1. With the institutional framework in place, the updated CCPF now seeks to address adaptive capacity and the strengthening of the nation's resilience and capacity to pursue low carbon development. The updated Policy Framework therefore now has three (3) Goals as follows: 1) Strengthening of Jamaica's adaptive capacity and resilience to reduce its vulnerability to climate change; 2) Pursuit of low carbon development and enhancement of access to and mobilization of climate finance; and 3) Promotion of research, technology transfer and public education and awareness raising towards ambitious climate action

Objectives, Strategies, and Implementation Plan

4.2 Previously, Jamaica's primary focus in climate action was adapting to the effects of climate change. With the ratification of the Paris Agreement however, Jamaica's international commitments have been expanded to include additional measures and strategies related to climate change mitigation and climate change resilient development. In keeping with these developments, and greater focus on mitigation, research, data collection and technology transfer, the objectives of the Policy Framework have been re-scoped as follows:

Goal 1: Strengthening of Jamaica's adaptive capacity and resilience to reduce its vulnerability to climate change

1.1 Governance: Improve the governance framework for climate action and ensure transparency and accountability.

1.2 Adaptation: Reduce Jamaica's vulnerability and increase Jamaica's capacity to respond to the harmful impacts of climate change

Goal 2: Pursuit of low carbon development and enhancement of access to and mobilization of climate finance

2.1 Mitigation: Reduce Jamaica's overall GHG emissions in support of low carbon development.

2.2 Finance: Facilitate access to and mobilization of climate financing for adaptation and mitigation

Goal 3: Promotion of public education and awareness raising, research and technology transfer towards ambitious climate action

3.1 Public Awareness and Education: Increase public awareness of climate change impacts, climate actions and responses at the national and local levels to facilitate behaviour change.

3.2 Research: Promote research, innovation, data collection, analyses and facilitate projections at the national level on climate change, its impacts, and appropriate adaptation and mitigation measures, to inform decision-making and strategic actions at all levels

3.3 Technology Transfer: Promote the transfer of environmentally sound technologies for mitigating and adapting to climate change with other countries and international organizations and among the public sector, private sector entities, financial institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and research/education institutions

4.3 In addition to the reformulation of the Goals of the Policy Framework, the objectives, strategies, and implementation plan have been re-crafted in keeping with emerging paradigms in climate change fora. The updated CCPF provides greater focus on reporting and data sharing, wide-scale, focused mitigation action and capacity building, including to, *inter alia*, enable the public to participate in a meaningful way, in all matters related to climate action.

4.4 The updated CCPG's five-year implementation plan was developed to take into consideration the broad range of stakeholders necessary to effectively responded to the country's vulnerabilities with respect to climate change. Consequently, the updated CCPF will ensure that the Government of Jamaica can more accurately gauge the collective progress towards achievement of the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement, as well as related targets and initiatives at the national, regional, and international levels including those related to Vision 2030 Jamaica – National Development Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 Implementation of the Climate Change Policy Framework will require, *inter alia*, support from the Government's recurrent budget as well as external financial and technical assistance. It is anticipated that key actions will be included in strategic and operational plans of the

relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). Additionally, civil society and private sector actors that have a role to play in climate action are expected to participate in implementation, as appropriate.

6.0 Consultations

6.1 Several entities were directly engaged in the preparation of the updated Policy Framework, including the Climate Change Division of the Ministry of Housing, Urban Renewal, Environment and Climate Change (MHURECC), academia and select agencies. Additionally, consultations were held in March 2020 with the following entities and groups:

- i. The Ministry of Finance and the Public Service;
- ii. The Forestry Department;
- iii. The National Environment and Planning Agency;
- iv. The Water Resources Authority;
- v. The Planning Institute of Jamaica;
- vi. The Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology;
- vii. The Ministry of Transport and Mining;
- viii. The climate change, land administration, water, and planning portfolios of the MHURECC and Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation;
 - a. The Meteorological Service Jamaica
- ix. The Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries;
- x. The Ministry of Tourism;
- xi. The University of the West Indies (Mona Campus);
- xii. Private sector stakeholders; and
- xiii. Civil society, including the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme.

7.0 Next Steps

7.1 Once the draft updated Climate Change Policy Framework is tabled as a Green Paper in The Houses, the MHURECC will commence public consultations on the draft Policy Framework. The comments received from these consultations will inform the revision of the updated CCPF. Thereafter, the revised Policy will be submitted to Cabinet, and once approved, will be tabled in the Houses as a White Paper.



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Appendix 1: Updated Climate Change Policy Framework for Jamaica