

The Emissions Policy Framework for Jamaica

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

2.0 Background

2.1 Cabinet by Decision No. 05/17, dated 6 February 2017, instructed the then Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation (MEGJC), as the Ministry with portfolio responsibility for environment and climate change, to develop a Greenhouse Emissions Policy for Jamaica in response to the need for a more cohesive and effective management regime for emissions. The Policy was to be developed in collaboration with the Ministries of Transport and Mining (MTM), Science and Technology (MSET) and Tourism (MoT). Decision No. 05/17 also established a Monitoring Committee to be chaired by the then Minister without Portfolio in the MEGJC, Hon. Daryl Vaz, and comprising the Ministers of Transport and Mining, Science, Energy and Technology and Tourism to oversee the development of the draft Emissions Policy. In addition, Cabinet by Decision No. 23/17, dated 5 June 2017, approved the inclusion of the Minister of Health as a member of the Monitoring Committee.

2.2 Cabinet by Decision No. 23/17, dated 5 June 2017, approved the development of the *Emissions Policy Framework for Jamaica*. This Policy Framework was developed in keeping with Cabinet's directives as outlined in paragraph 2.1 above, against the background of several emerging priorities and trends in the international, regional, and national arena. These include, *inter alia*, the movement towards wide scale roll out of electric vehicles into the global fleet, the trend towards increasing the share of renewables in the country's energy mix, pursuit of greening the economy and Jamaica's commitments as a Party to the Paris Agreement to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The draft Policy Framework also seeks to assist in addressing other international agreements for the management of ozone depleting substances, mercury and, broadly, Jamaica's sustainable development efforts.

2.3 The Emissions Policy Framework (hereafter referred to as "The Policy Framework") identifies the major sources of emissions that impact Jamaica's air quality. It also seeks to identify synergies between approaches to emissions reductions and climate change mitigation, given that the gases, sources, and sectors involved are in many cases, the same. The Policy Framework provides the overarching direction for the regulation of the various sources of anthropogenic emissions in the country. It should be noted that the Policy Framework does not cover indoor air quality, radioactive emissions, and natural sources of air pollution such as sea spray or emissions from wildfires and volcanoes. Indoor air pollutants, including biological contaminants such as

bacteria, moulds and mildew are primarily addressed by the MoHW in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.

3.0 Issues

The Effect of Emissions on Public Health and the Environment

3.1 Emissions occurring within and over Jamaica's territorial marine and air space are derived from multiple anthropogenic sources including land, air and sea transportation, power generation, industrial facilities (bauxite/alumina production, electricity and steam generation, cement and lime manufacturing, chemical processing and petroleum refining), agricultural burning (including the burning of sugar cane), residential fires, charcoal production and use, solid waste disposal, and open burning. Emissions from these sources have increased exponentially since the 1990s as the country's productive sector expanded and the motor vehicle fleet doubled.

3.2 Emissions from both natural and anthropogenic processes enter the atmosphere daily. These emissions include air pollutants such as carbon dioxide (CO₂), sulfur oxides (SO_x), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), ozone (O₃), heavy metals and respirable particulate matter (PM) such as PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ (fine and coarse particles respectively, which can negatively impact the eyes, nose, lungs and throat). Many of these pollutants are also greenhouse gases (GHGs) which contribute significantly to climate change. Other pollutants are classified as persistent organic pollutants (POPs) which are known carcinogens.

3.3 Exposure to the abovementioned air pollutants contribute to both acute and chronic illnesses. Such illnesses include cancers, heart diseases, asthma and other respiratory diseases, as well as premature death. This reduces the well-being of the population, increases cost to the health system and loss in productivity.

3.4 Air emissions also adversely impact the environment. Such environmental degradation includes reduced visibility, corrosion of infrastructure such as cultural monuments and buildings, trapping of the earth's heat thereby contributing to global warming, inhibition of plant growth and damage to forests. The reproductive, respiratory, immune, and neurological systems of animals within ecosystems are also negatively impacted by these air pollutants.

Air Quality in Jamaica's Urban Centres

3.5 The air quality in many of the Jamaica's urban centres and corridors has declined over the years. Poor air quality is particularly evident in those communities sited in or within the environs of specific industrial facilities, waste disposal sites and along major roadways.

3.6 Over the years, the KMA region has been impacted by large fires at the Riverton City disposal site. The last major fire occurred in March 2015. Since then, the Government has

instituted several measures, including the installation of fire suppression equipment, to ensure that fires are minimized at the site. However, within the environs of the disposal site, there is a growing informal sector involved in the illegal burning of tyres and other materials for the production of metals for export. This type of open burning has contributed to the poor air quality in communities within the environs of these types of activities.

3.7 The steady increase in the country's motor vehicle fleet has also contributed to the poor air quality in urban centres. In some cases, poorly maintained vehicles, including those utilized in the public transportation sector, as well as aged vehicles have resulted in incomplete burning of fuels and resultant black smoke being emitted from these vehicles.

3.8 There are multiple initiatives at the national level aimed at addressing the management of air quality. These include the development and/or amendment of legislation such as the Natural Resources Conservation (Ambient Air Quality Standards) Regulations, 1996, and its Air Quality Regulations, 2006; various Orders promulgated under The Trade Act to regulate ozone depleting substances; the integration of air quality into policies, programmes and plans such as the National Energy Policy, 2009-2030 and Jamaica's Nationally Determined Contribution to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In acknowledging the variety of actions already underway in emissions control, the Emissions Policy Framework will address the need for a more synergistic response across both the public and private sectors including the energy, industry and transport sectors actors in the areas of environment and climate change. In this regard, the Policy Framework will facilitate strategic collaboration in data sharing and other actions and establish common but differentiated responsibilities, resulting in co-benefits across sectors. These co-benefits include, but are not limited to:

- reduction in harmful emissions, including GHGs and ozone;
- improved air quality;
- improved public health, particularly as it relates to reduced incidences of respiratory illnesses and exposure to carcinogens and the attendant decrease in the burden to the country's health and various productive sectors;
- healthy ecosystems; and
- awareness raising, development planning in terms of transport, settlements, and other key elements in long term nation building.

4.0 The Emissions Policy Framework for Jamaica

Vision and Goal

4.1 The Vision of the draft Policy Framework is: *'A healthy and productive Jamaica with clean air in keeping with a low carbon development pathway in support of economic growth, social well-being and environmental sustainability.'* The Goal of the Policy Framework is *"Effective and*

coordinated systems for the reduction of emissions from key pollutant sources and maintenance of good air quality throughout Jamaica.”

Objectives

4.2 Guided by the principles of best science, accountability and transparency, adherence to global commitments, the public right to information and public participation, coherence and collaboration and the precautionary approach, among others, this Policy Framework has outlined several objectives, strategies and actions to improve the mechanisms that govern emissions management. These mechanisms include, *inter alia*, measure towards strengthening of institutional frameworks, improved reporting processes and research and enhanced public participation. The Policy objectives are as follows:

1. To coordinate approaches to the reduction of emissions;
2. To strengthen the mechanisms for the effective management of emissions that affect human health and the environment;
3. To increase education and awareness on air quality issues to facilitate public participation in the protection of their health and the natural and built environment;
4. To increase advocacy for the reduction of emissions in regional and international fora;
5. To identify and pursue opportunities for funding and technical assistance for the management of air quality; and
6. To establish effective systems for research and data collection

Strategies

4.3 Strategies were developed in alignment with each objective as follows:

Strategies for Objective 1: To coordinate approaches to the reduction of emissions

- 1.1 Improve communication among the public agencies that guide policies that may have a direct or indirect impact on emissions;
- 1.2 Establish institutional arrangements for coordinated approaches to the prevention and reduction of emissions;
- 1.3 Enhance policy coherence through the consultative process including the active engagement of the private sector and local communities;
- 1.4 Further identify and implement critical actions for reducing emissions including the use of incentives related to environmentally friendly equipment and practices; and
- 1.5 Active engagement of non-State actors in approaches to reduce emissions.

4.4 Strategies for Objective 2: To strengthen the mechanisms for the effective management of emissions that affect human health and the environment

- 2.1 Review existing laws and promulgate, as necessary, new or amended legislation to address the sources of emissions of air pollutants;

- 2.2 Develop and implement strategies, action plans and medium-term programmes that focus on reducing the emission of air pollutants taking into account the impact on natural resources and human health; and
- 2.3 Update and effectively implement the Air Quality Management Programme.

4.5 Strategies for Objective 3: To increase education and awareness on air quality issues to facilitate public participation in the protection of their health and the natural and built environment

- 3.1 Increase public education and awareness of the impacts of emissions on human health and the natural and built environment; and
- 3.2 Provide and make available data and information on emissions of air pollutants including the annual ambient air quality reports.

4.6 Strategies for Objective 4: To increase advocacy for the reduction of emissions in regional and international fora

- 4.1 Provide support to regional institutions and civil society for enhanced advocacy.

4.7 Strategies for Objective 5: To identify and pursue opportunities for funding and technical assistance for the management of air quality

- 5.1 Develop a framework for identifying funding opportunities for reduction of emissions.

4.8 Strategies for Objective 6: To establish effective systems for research and data collection

- 6.1 Improve and maintain the national air quality database; and
- 6.2 Strengthen the National Environment and Planning Agency's capacity to collect data to facilitate, *inter alia*, reporting under environmental agreements, including on greenhouse gas emissions.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 Implementation of the Emissions 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 are rooted in the strategic and operational plans of the relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). Indicative costs are assigned to several actions, as outlined in the Action Plan to the Policy Framework.

6.0 Consultations

6.1 Since the preparation of the first draft of the Policy Framework in 2017, the document has benefitted from Inter-Ministerial guidance at both the technical and ministerial levels. An Emissions Policy Steering Committee (EPSC), led by the then Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, was convened. The members of the EPSC included representatives from the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA) as well as the Ministries of Transport and Mining, Science, Energy and Technology, Tourism, Health and Wellness and the then Ministry of Local Government and Community Development. At the Ministerial level, the draft Policy Framework was presented to the then Ministers of Transport and Mining, Science, Energy and Technology, Tourism and Health. Additionally, written comments were sought and received from the MTM, NEPA, the AGC, the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service and MSET. The draft Policy Framework approved by the Cabinet in February 2021 has taken into consideration the comments received in the Cabinet Decision as well as the comments of the aforementioned MDAs.

7.0 Next Steps

7.1 Once the draft Policy Framework is tabled as a Green Paper in The Houses, the Ministry of Housing, Urban Renewal, Environment and Climate Change will commence public consultations on the draft Policy Framework. The comments received from these consultations will inform the revision of the document. 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: Emissions Policy Framework for Jamaica