

Address
by
The Hon. Robert Pickersgill
Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change
at the
2nd Global Conference on Land-Ocean Connections (GLOC-2)

Hilton Rose Hall Hotel, October 2, 2013

Mayor of Montego Bay, His Worship Glendon Harris, Ms. Elizabeth Mrema, Officer in Charge and Deputy Director of the United Nation Environment Programme's Division of Environmental Policy Impementation (DEPI), my colleague Ministers, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Government and people of Jamaica, let me extend a warm welcome to you to our island and to this important 2nd Global Conference on Land-Ocean Connections.

(HM to choose one of these sayings)

- **It was the Roman Philosopher Cicero, who said..”Brevity is a great praise of eloquence”,....**
- **It is said that “Good things, when short, are twice as good”....**
- **It was the late great Orator and Prime Minister of England, Sir Winston Churchill who said... “A good speech should be like a woman's skirt: long enough to cover the subject and short enough to create interest”.....**
- **It is said that "A good speech should be like a comet: Dazzling, eye-opening and over before you know it"....**

...and so I will keep my remarks this morning brief.

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished delegates and guests, it is indeed an honour for the Government of Jamaica to host this Conference under the theme **‘Building Partnerships’**.

In this regard, the Government would like to express its appreciation to the UNEP for its kind support on this occasion.

We would also like to take this opportunity to request that Ms. Mrema communicate to the Executive Director of the UNEP, Jamaica's appreciation for the work that the UNEP has been undertaking, particularly through its Regional Coordinating Unit, in support of our efforts to address land-ocean issues. Indeed, this is an example of a successful working partnership.

Historically, the approach to protect the environment has separated terrestrial and marine ecosystems. However, there is a growing recognition by many stakeholders, including scientists, that the terrestrial and marine ecosystems are intimately connected. Hence, any approach to successfully manage our environment must recognize and take into account the strong, yet complex, link between activities on land, including land use and planning, and the marine and coastal environments. It is the complex nature of this relationship which makes the theme “**Building Bridges through Partnerships**”, for this Conference appropriate and relevant.

I would like to highlight the three Global Partnerships established under the Global Programme of Action on marine litter, nutrients and wastewater.

The importance of partnerships in the achievement of sustainable development cannot be discounted. While we continue to nurture and enhance existing partnership arrangements on land-ocean issues, we welcome new and innovative partnerships between and among governments, the private sector, the inter-governmental, non-governmental and scientific communities and most importantly the people.

As American Industrialist Henry Ford said, “**Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success**”.

There is greater need for networking and the sharing of experiences at all levels, so that countries and indeed communities can learn from each other in identifying and applying best practices which are applicable to their own situations. Indeed, one of the key objectives of this Conference is to serve as a Partnership Forum for three Global Partnerships.

In fact, the word TEAM in both its original form, and as an acronym, has the same meaning and indeed, **Together, Everyone Achieves More.**

Ladies and gentlemen, as you are aware, the United Nations has designated 2014 as the ‘International Year of Small Island Developing States’.

The 3rd International Conference on Small Island Developing States will be held in Samoa in September 2014 under the proposed theme of “*The sustainable development of Small Island Developing States through genuine and durable partnerships*”.

Indeed, the Bridgetown Outcome document recognizes that a shared common vision among Small Island Developing States can only be realized through “**....inclusive dialogue anchoredand empowered partnerships based on mutual trust, equality, respect and accountability.**”

The document further highlighted the fact that the economic foundation of many SIDs is ocean-based. The health of our coastal and marine environments is therefore paramount in ensuring food security and in ensuring, where possible, increased employment opportunities in key ocean-based sectors such as tourism and fisheries. Hence, pollution from land-based activities can have detrimental effects on the economic growth and development of these States.

There is therefore, an urgent need to strengthen the existing regional instruments that relate to land-based sources of pollution and institute such agreements where none exist.

In this regard, let me take this opportunity to inform you that a Submission will be sent to the Cabinet in the coming weeks relating to Jamaica's accession to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities (the LBS Protocol), under the Cartagena Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in the Wider Caribbean Region.

Jamaica's accession to the LBS Protocol is now being contemplated, based on the fact that Wastewater and Sludge Regulations have now been promulgated under our principal environmental legislation. These Regulations came into effect in April of this year, and they address sewage and trade effluent, industrial and sewage sludge, and they also provide the regulatory means to manage wastewater releases from human activities in Jamaica.

The regulations will allow for the provisions of the LBS Protocol to be effectively implemented at the national level.

We look forward to sharing additional information on these Regulations with you during the Conference.

The Government of Jamaica has demonstrated its recognition of land-ocean connections and the need to address these impacts, through “Ridge-to-Reef” activities undertaken across the island, including the recently concluded **“Drivers River Watershed project”**, which was supported by the UNEP, in conjunction with our principal environmental management agency, the **National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA)**, and other stakeholders.

Meaningful interventions have been achieved under that Project, most importantly the paradigm shifts that have been created and the strong partnerships that have been forged. Community members have been empowered to sustainably manage their watershed and coastal zones. As a result of these activities, the Driver’s River Watershed is now visibly cleaner. The communities have identified the solutions necessary to improve the watershed and have become key players in the implementation of these solutions.

This Project was an excellent example of a genuine and sustained partnership involving twenty organizations, fourteen communities and NGOs with the support of the UNEP to address the major issues that have plagued the Drivers River Watershed.

This Conference will therefore complement the earlier work carried out, and will provide an opportunity for Jamaica to showcase its experiences.

Another success story involving land-ocean issues is the rehabilitation of the Kingston Harbour, which is one of the largest well protected natural harbours in the world.

The Kingston Harbour is located on the southeastern coast of Jamaica and borders Kingston, the capital city. It is the country's major port.

The Harbour is a valuable resource for the people of Jamaica, and provides port and airport facilities. It is also home to hundreds of industrial and commercial enterprises and hundreds of thousands of Jamaicans have made their homes in the area. Direct uses of the Harbour include fishing, recreation and transportation.

Indirect uses include coastal protection of mangroves and waste assimilation as well as economic production. The present day value of the Kingston Harbour has been estimated to be US\$510.31 million per annum.

However, the rich biodiversity of the Harbour is threatened by pollution, in part from the discharge of trade effluent and sewage from facilities in the Kingston Metropolitan Region. Trade effluent accounts for between 24% and 44% of the organic pollution in Kingston Harbour while sewage contributes between 29% and 53%.

Based on the deterioration of the water quality of the Harbour, it was essential that the Government took the necessary steps to arrest or reverse the damage caused by pollution from land-based activities. These measures required a reduction in the quantity of untreated sewage, trade effluent and industrial sludge that was discharged, thereby contaminating water basins. Therefore in 2009, the National Environment and Planning Agency commenced a Kingston Harbour Environmental Management Programme.

The aim of this programme was to identify facilities with effluent discharges or operational practices that could have a negative impact on the Kingston Harbour, and to bring all facilities, inclusive of public and private sector entities, which are potential or actual polluters of the Kingston Harbour into compliance with the requisite environmental regulations, standards and guidelines.

Overall, significant progress is being made in achieving the objectives of the Programme. To date, fifty six per cent (56%) of the companies that border the Harbour are now in full compliance with the regulatory requirements while another twenty six percent (26%) of these facilities is at an advanced stage of being compliant.

The improvement in the water quality of the Harbour, has been aided significantly by the commissioning in 2008, of the Soapberry Wastewater Treatment Plant, which serves the Kingston Metropolitan Area. The plant has the capacity to treat of 18 million gallons or 75 thousand cubic meters of wastewater per day. It is currently treating approximately 13 million gallons or just over 49,210 cubic meters of wastewater per day. The Soapberry Wastewater Treatment Plant is a major plank in the expansion of sewerage services for the city of Kingston.

Ladies and gentlemen, at the regional level, the Government was pleased to participate in the Summit of Caribbean Political and Business Leaders under the Caribbean Challenge Initiative (CCI) in the Bahamas in May 2013.

Under the CCI, regional governments have committed to, *inter alia*, conserve at least 20% of their near shore marine and coastal environments in national marine protected areas systems by the year 2020. The CCI is a true example of a multi-stakeholder partnership involving regional governments, Chief Executive Officers and the private sector working collaboratively to manage and protect the Caribbean region's marine and coastal resources.

Colleagues, I have shared with you a snapshot of the activities being undertaken in Jamaica and the region on land-ocean connected issues. As we work towards achieving the Vision 2030 National Development Goal of making “**Jamaica, the place of choice to live, work, raise families and do business**”, I look forward to sharing our experiences, knowledge and best practices with you, and to hearing from you, the initiatives that are being undertaken by your respective governments and organizations which will redound to the benefit of us all.

I hope that through our deliberations during these three days we will see the further strengthening of existing Partnerships as well as the development of new and innovative partnerships that are inter-regional and multi-sectoral in character, that will address the land-ocean issues that affect us all.

I wish for you a productive Conference. Once again, welcome to Jamaica and I do hope you will find some time to enjoy our beautiful island.