

## **Statement on the official mission to Jamaica**

### **Winnie Byanyima, UN Under-Secretary-General and UNAIDS Executive Director**

**14 November 2022**

A high-level delegation led by Winnie Byanyima, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), accompanied by Luisa Cabal, Director, UNAIDS Regional Support Team for Latin America and the Caribbean, visited Jamaica from 6-13 November 2022.

At the conclusion of the visit, Under-Secretary-General Winnie Byanyima issued the following statement:

“As I conclude my first visit to this beautiful country, I thank you for your warm hospitality and for the excellent support I received from the Government of Jamaica, our partners and activists at the frontlines fighting the HIV epidemic.

I have observed strong political commitment and country ownership of the HIV response as was agreed in the 2021 UN General Assembly Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS. I also witnessed the active contribution and engagement of civil society and communities living with or affected by HIV. Your dedication and commitment give me hope that Jamaica and the wider Caribbean can end AIDS. Jamaica’s HIV response is moving in the right direction. New HIV infections have declined by 12% since 2010 (2021=1,400; 2010=1,600), and AIDS related deaths have declined by 16% since 2010 (2021=770; 2010=920). But Jamaica can move faster and reach the 15,000 people living with HIV currently not accessing treatment services or not identified. Jamaica can find and treat two-thirds of the 500 children living with HIV who are not yet on treatment.

In all my engagements with government officials, civil society and international development partners, I have shared four vital recommendations to reduce inequalities and ensure a sustainable HIV response:

- Getting the data right and ensuring access to services for everyone who needs those services, free of stigma and discrimination.
- Improving governance and coordination of a truly multisectoral and multidisciplinary HIV response
- Ending violence – and especially sexual violence.
- Increasing fiscal space and efficiently investing in what works

I encourage Jamaica to invest more in ending persistent structural barriers and developing anti-discrimination legislation. Broader implementation of social contracting schemes with civil society will be transformational in delivering community-level services. Within the context of its well-managed fiscal policy, Jamaica is encouraged to increase health spending and to continue seeking efficiency gains. I take the opportunity to reaffirm the commitment of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) to strengthen the HIV response in the

Caribbean in its central pillars: prevention, treatment and ensuring an enabling environment. I further commit to increase the human and resource capacity of the Jamaica multi-country office to enable governments and civil society actors to respond to inequalities which drive new HIV infections and keep people away from services. UNAIDS will support the integration of HIV into other health services, especially at the primary health care level, and help to ensure that best practices from dedicated HIV services are carried forward. Together with the President's Emergency Programme for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, and the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), we will continue to build evidence for action and to strengthen data systems. Finally, UNAIDS will continue to work with the and civil society to mobilize international resources to support Jamaica's efforts to fight HIV and AIDS.

My final message to Jamaica and the Caribbean is that we will not end the HIV pandemic until everyone enjoys their human rights and can access prevention and treatment services. We can and we will end AIDS in Jamaica and the Caribbean.

I thank the government, civil society and international partners of Jamaica for my visit.”