



**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
YOUTH AND INFORMATION**

# **REVISED NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY**

**2017-2030**



*“No youth must be underserved, no youth must be unattached”*

# **National Youth Policy 2017 - 2030**

**Revised Draft September 2017**

**Government of Jamaica**

## Message from the Minister of Education, Youth and Information, the Hon. Ruel Reid



The Honourable Minister Ruel Reid

After extensive discussion and consultation among stakeholders spanning several years, I am pleased that the National Youth Policy has been able to reach a stage of approval for execution. The National Youth Policy 2017-2030 provides a framework within which youth can be supported in pursuit of their goals, and contribute to the success of their local community and the nation as a whole. The issues long identified by our youth as being important to them include, increased access to training and employment opportunities; having access to participation in framing national policies; and increased access to sexual, reproductive and mental health care services, among other concerns.

Through this policy, the Government of Jamaica has moved to empower our youth through hands-on training in public policy decision-making, so as to allow them to make meaningful contributions to national development. The enforcement of this policy has already propelled the establishment of the Youth Advisory Council of Jamaica and revived the National Youth Parliament as mechanisms to encourage youth participation in the decision-making process - we recognise that there are many platforms and avenues through which concerns and aspirations may be addressed. Our youth are also being given the opportunity to provide support and analysis in decision-making and assist in the coordination and monitoring of initiatives across Ministries, Departments and Agencies.

Undoubtedly, we have ensured that this policy is aimed at securing a place for youth at the table for nation building. We have recognised that when youth are provided with the opportunity they repeatedly demonstrate and bring their creativity and innovation to national discourse and policy formulation. This policy allows for a much richer and meaningful input by ensuring youth mainstreaming as an underlying principle. In essence, the National Youth Policy therefore, represents a truly national effort transcending political, social status and cultural barriers.

The overarching aim of this National Youth Policy 2017-2030 is to outline the rights, responsibilities, and privileges entitled to our youth. It is imperative that we recognise that our youth are not a monolithic group, but rather a diverse population with varying interests and aspirations, perspectives and attitudes.

Collectively, as a nation, we must all work to ensure that youth are given every opportunity and provided with the means through which they can make their fullest contribution to nation building.

I commend this document for full appraisal, assessment and constructive feedback with the ultimate aim of early implementation for the benefit of Jamaica's present and future youth.

## Message from Minister of State, the Hon. Floyd Green



Minister of State, the Honourable Floyd Green

The Revised National Youth Policy 2017 -2030 outlines the vision, policy priorities, associated goals, and strategic objectives of the Government of Jamaica for our Youth. I am happy that I was mandated by Prime Minister Holness and Minister Reid to lead this charge of providing the framework to transform the tremendous potential of our youth into the reality of a better Jamaica.

This policy takes into account the dynamic nature of our environment with the use of a pluralistic and positive developmental approach to youth development. We have identified critical areas pertinent to youth development which focus on *education and training, health and well-being, employment and entrepreneurship, youth participation and involvement, social inclusion and reintegration.*

Undeniably, youth participation is a central plank to this new policy direction on matters affecting them. The voices of our youth must be heard at every level, irrespective of their social or circumstantial status.

The issue of access to training and employment remain high on the list of concerns to our youth, and this policy framework outlines a number of avenues through which these can be more effectively addressed including a realignment of remedial education, skills training and entrepreneurship.

Salient among the principles to support the implementation of this policy are *commitment, partnership and collaboration* among the contributing Ministries, Department, Agencies and other entities. Likewise, imperative to the implementation is the recognition and support of the *rights of youth* as a critical enabling principle to ensure that youth are protected and their needs and interests are met through the programmes being used to aid in youth development. We believe that gender equality plays an operative role in mitigating imbalance in the society, more so, among our youth.

We accept and acknowledge that youth are essential assets to our nation, and agents of change. Intrinsicly, it is critical that a timely implementation of our actions be enforced. Only through empowered and engaged youth will we be able to make Jamaica the place to live, work, raise families do business and retire.

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## Message from Permanent Secretary, Mr. Dean-Roy Bernard



Mr. Dean-Roy Bernard, Permanent Secretary

Our Youth are a major source of human capital and key agents for social, cultural, economic, and political development. Their imagination, energies, vision and creativity are therefore essential for the continuing development of our society. Their hopes and aspirations must therefore be central to national socio-economic development efforts.

This will of necessity involve the creation of an enabling environment to equip the youth with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to contribute to their economic, social, and cultural advancement, that of their families, and the society as a whole.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Information is therefore pleased to be associated with the formulation of this National Youth Policy which provides the opportunity for the Government to engage the youth and other stakeholders in meaningful partnership in developing appropriate interventions and services for our youth.

If youth are not empowered to participate in the developmental of national goals then our efforts will be of little effect. We must therefore provide opportunities for learning and acquiring life-long skills; afford them an appreciation of decision making processes and how these decisions affect them and instill in them the spirit of public service and volunteerism.

The remit of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information is essentially to formulate policies that affect the lives our children and youth to ensure their rights are known and respected, and that the pertinent opportunities are afford for youth resilience and growth.

The overall vision of this National Youth Policy is therefore to empower each Jamaican youth develop their full potential and holistic development, that will enable our national goal.

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## **Preamble**

By 2030, Jamaica intends to become “The place of choice to live, work, do business and raise families”. Jamaica’s youth are intelligent, ambitious and eager to succeed in life. Altogether, as a country in our differing but complementary roles, we must meaningfully engage our youth in all aspects of development – otherwise, we all stand to lose and leave the Vision unrealised.

The intention of this Revised Policy is to present for discussion, what has emerged from a wide range of youth, technical, policy level consultations and review of pertinent studies as to the key issues relating to youth. In particular, the ongoing and current situation of youth, the lived experiences of our youth and their expectations have driven the development of the Vision, Goals and Strategies that are presented in the document. The strategic framework proposed, is intended to facilitate the collaboration necessary to advance the changes needed in the youth development sector. It is expected that this Policy will allow for the formalization and establishment of relevant programmes and intervention as well as other policies that will promote positive youth development within Jamaica.

The Revised Policy presents the importance of youth and youth development, a situational analysis of youth, guiding principles, the national commitments, the policy priorities, goals and strategic objectives. This is followed by the analysis of the policy and legislative environments, and the general implementation strategies. The document concludes an outline of the implementation and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

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The initiation of the revision of this policy was led by the instrumental and valuable contribution of the Technical Policy Oversight Committee (Annex 1) under the former Minister of Youth and Culture, Lisa Hanna. The committee consisted of varying representing entities both from the Private and Public Sectors. With further assistance and funding from the Inter-Development Bank, the UWI Consultancy Inc. was contracted to lead on the revision process. Special gratitude is expressed for the invaluable contribution of these Entities.

Appreciation is extended to all the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) that added information on legislations and programmes related to youth development. An extraordinary stretch of appreciation is made to the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) for their continuous effort in ensuring the revision process was in alignment with the National Development Plan and the Medium Term Socio-economic Framework on which the prosperity of the nation resides.

Special thanks to Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Community-Based Youth Organisations (CBYOs), Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs), civil society, Academia, and Youth Clubs/Groups which participated in the consultation processes. Those specific youth groups which participated in the editing and the finalization of the actual Policy are acknowledged for their stalwart contribution and for recognizing their place in society, to make their voices be heard at the highest level (Annex 1).

Gratitude is expressed to staff of the Cabinet Office and the Houses of Parliament for providing the relevant policy guidelines and information relevant from the successful fulfilment of the revision of this policy. Special acknowledgement to those on the Human Resource Development Committee of Cabinet for their input addressing pertinent aspects of youth development.

Finally, and certainly not the least, sincere gratitude is expressed to the staff of the Youth and Adolescents Policy Division for their contribution in ensuring that a positive youth development approach was employed throughout the Policy and ensuring that the salient priority areas and pertinent aspects of youth development were met in the formulation and the finalization process policy, also for their timeliness in ensuring its successful completion.

## YOUTH LEXICON

**Adolescence:** A period of developmental transition characterised by physical, biological and psychological development. It is a period of “critical opportunities for growth and development and where many of the skills necessary to lead a productive life and to overcome adverse situations are acquired. This period lasts typically from age 10 to 19.

**Advocacy:** To exhibit public support for a particular cause. Trying to convince other people because you are convinced yourself.

**Behaviour change:** Process of improving or influencing a positive change in attitudes, and lifestyle.

**Childhood:** The period between birth and eighteen years. This is marked by physical, mental and psychological changes and marks the critical period for preparation for adulthood

**Decent jobs:** This involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men. (*International Labour Organisation*)

**Disabled (Varied Abilities):** Mentally, physically or psychologically challenged.

**Empowerment:** The process of increasing the capacity to influence behaviour, emotions, lifestyle. It is the process of magnifying ability by whatever means (e.g. equipping with the knowledge, skills and competencies to survive in the social or physical environment).

**Gifted Youth:** Youth who demonstrate outstanding levels of aptitude or competence in one or more domains

**Incarcerated:** Youth in prisons or remand centres, whose freedom of movement is circumscribed by law.

**In-School:** Youth who are enrolled in an institution of learning.

**Institutionalized:** Youth in places of safety and children homes. This group includes youth who are wards of the state.

**Life Cycle Approach:** A recognition and application of the environmental, economic and social domains, as well as the antecedents of the other stages and inter-related behaviors.

**Out-of-School:** Youth who are not enrolled in any institution of learning.

**Privileged Youth:** Youth belonging to a class that enjoys special privileges or favored; has the privilege of education and/or employment opportunities granted to them through aid of family or other sources.

**Parenting:** This is the process of being responsible for offspring; their maintenance and development.

**Participation:** The full involvement of youth in decision-making, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes and activities. It is **not tokenism**.

**Pluralistic Approach:** This refers to a multi-stakeholder approach to collaborative governance and decision-making that promotes fair and balanced distribution of power and resources among all interest groups.

**Positive Youth Development:** The process of addressing the broad developmental needs of youth that are linked to cognitive, social, physical, emotional and moral growth. The process through which youths are assisted in building assets and competencies to ease their transition into adulthood. Youth development should only be positive!

**Street People:** Persons who live, or make their home on the streets. Such persons carry out all activities on the streets such as bathing, sleeping, eating and being. This group can be sub-divided as follows:

Street person 25 years and older

Street youth 15-24 year olds

Street children (kids) 0-18 years old

**Unattached:** Not affiliated with an organization (youth group, service club, church etc.), place of employment, institution of training or learning.

**Underserved Youth:** Individuals who receive inadequate service and interventions from the formal social institutions.

**Urban/Rural Youth:** Those individuals who reside in rural areas are referred to as rural youth and those who reside in urban areas are known as urban youth.

**Youth-at-Promise:** Youth who are capable of using their inherent assets, gifts, skills, potential and talents when treated with promise.

**Youth-at-risk (of):** This popular term should **ALWAYS** be followed by “of”. Whereas all people are at risk, some youth are at risk of or vulnerable to particular circumstances or situations because of their lifestyle and/or living conditions.

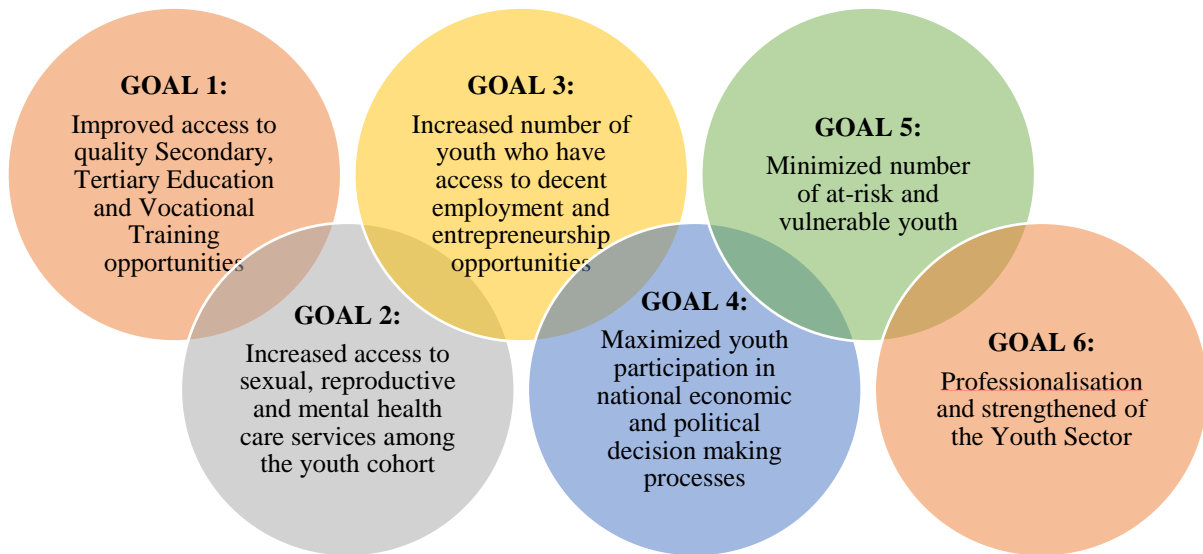
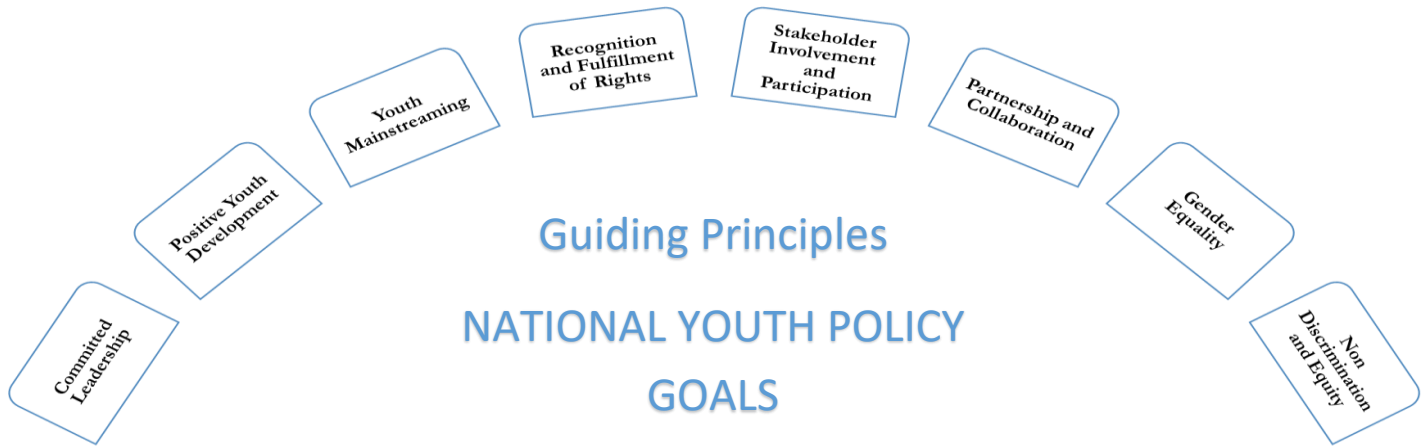
*Our Youth Represent Vibrant Possibilities*

*For development*

***NOW and in the FUTURE***

***“No youth must be underserved, no youth must be unattached”***

## JAMAICA NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY 2016 – 2030



# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

Jamaica has made commitments to youth development dating back to the 1980s when the first youth policy was drafted. Subsequently, the National Youth Service was established in 1994<sup>1</sup>, to further reinforce the government's commitment to youth, as well as understanding that youth are important agents for social and economic development and change, and technological innovation and advancement. Further to this, the National Centre for Youth Development (NCYD) was established in September 2000 as the Youth Division of the then Ministry of Local Government, Youth and Community Development and was transferred to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture in May 2001. As indicated by the National Youth Policy 2004, the NCYD was created to facilitate youth development in Jamaica by serving as an institutional focal point to ensure coordination of and collaboration on youth related programmes and research, and for the dissemination of relevant youth related information, while recommending and designing programmes to enhance and propel youth development in Jamaica.

Upon revision in 2004, the National Youth Policy sought to define a common vision and framework for youth development. The 2004 Policy called for a review every five years, to ensure that the goals of the Policy remain relevant to the situation of young people. Upon review, it is evident that despite investment, there is still need for additional/new programming and a coordinated approach to policy implementation to ensure a positive youth development approach. Accordingly, the government has committed to the development of a revised National Youth Policy.

The process to revise the National Youth Policy (NYP) incorporates a significant contribution and involvement from youth as agents of their own development, reinforcing

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<sup>1</sup> This was legislated in the National Youth Service Act of 1999.

the importance of their individual responsibility and accountability. The Policy review process was guided by a Technical Oversight Committee and also benefited from consultations with policy makers and service providers in the youth development sector (Annex 1).

### 1.1 Policy Rationale and Purpose

Numerous studies have shown that high incidence of crime and violence occurring around and among youth, poor family structures, intergenerational inequities, poverty, injustice, unequal educational opportunities, limited job opportunities and high health risks associated with the spread of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) continue to hinder a holistic development of Jamaica's youth.

The GOJ has identified that some of these challenges and environmental changes can be capitalized on as opportunities for renewal, transformation, and the forging of long-term solutions for socio-economic development. For this reason, the GOJ prioritizes policy development and programming for youth development to:

- Ensure youth participation and engagement into the mainstream of government policies, programming actions and decision making;
- Expand and utilize the creative and innovative skills and talents of our youth for the development of commercial and social enterprises;
- Promote greater educational benefits at the Secondary and Tertiary levels
- Secure greater consciousness of health and well-being and access to provide health services to ensure a healthier population
- Create an atmosphere of inclusiveness and acceptance.

Given the critical value placed on youth, the National Youth Policy (NYP) has adopted the *Positive Development Model* that recognizes youth as having the characteristics, talents and potential relevant to be the architects of their own lives. With this model, the

National Youth Policy asserts that youth personify the vibrant hope and potential of the society, and as such should be acknowledged and treated accordingly.

In recognition of the diversity of the youth population, the NYP is adaptive to the needs and aspirations of every youth inclusive of all groups and categories. With this in mind, the NYP seeks to address the salient needs of youth in all categories, without any prejudicial attitude. The NYP will ensure gaps are filled in the following areas, inter alia:

1. the inadequate development and implementation of strategies for the mainstreaming of solution based proposals to youth development issues across a range of social policy areas;
2. the need to develop a data-driven culture, relevant and timely data collection systems to support the professionalization of the Youth Sector;
3. the need to improve the implementation of critical policy decisions pertaining to youth participation in national development;
4. the need to develop institutional capacity at the local and national levels that will be able to lead and drive the execution of the policy and related programmes.

In summary, the purpose of the NYP is to:

1. Provide a national framework within which youth development programmes can be designed, funded, implemented and monitored.
2. Facilitate a shared vision for all stakeholders and identify goals and actions needed to position positive youth development as a key component of the national development agenda.
3. Address key gaps which currently exist in youth development approaches, coordination, policy and legislation.
4. Strengthen coordinating mechanisms to ensure that policy intent is ultimately translated into programming action to the benefit of Jamaica's youth.



## 1.2 Policy Planning Framework

The revised National Youth Policy is developed against the background of three international and regional strategies for youth development: *The World Programme of Action for Youth Development, CARICOM Youth Development Action Plan and the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment.*

The National Youth Policy (NYP) forms the basis for collaboration and coordinated actions for advancing strengths and embracing diversity in Jamaica’s youth by key partners - government agencies, the business community, civil society and development partners. The NYP establishes a framework within which each young person can be supported to pursue and achieve his or her goals, and contribute to the success of their local environment, country and the world. By establishing goals and areas for actions that are transformational and achievable, the revised National Youth Policy builds on the groundwork laid by previous National Youth Policies and seeks to advance the overall development of Jamaican youth.

The revised National Youth Policy sits on the premise of the National Development Plan, through the national goal, *“Jamaicans are empowered to achieve their fullest potential”*. With this aspiration, the National Youth Policy provides the channels for positive youth development that will promote a *“healthy and stable”* youth population.

Policy Framework	Priority
National Development Plan – Vision 2030	<b><u>National Goal #1:</u></b> Jamaicans Are Empowered To Achieve Their Fullest Potential
Medium Term Socio-Economic Policy Framework (MTF) 2015-2018	<b><u>National Outcome # 1:</u></b> A Healthy and Stable Population (Youth)
National Youth Policy 2016-2030	Complete and Implement the National Youth Policy to ensure <i>positive youth development</i>

**Figure 1: Policy Framework**

## 2 IMPORTANCE OF YOUTH AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

### 2.1 Youth

Although, the term “youth” is commonly used, there is no universally accepted definition, as in most cases, the definition or age range is dependent on the socioeconomic or political context of a country. The Commonwealth’s definition for youth is 15 to 29 years, and given the socio-economic condition of Jamaica, this definition of youth is adopted.

The youth population of Jamaica comprises approximately 28 per cent of the country’s overall population which amounts to approximately 759,757<sup>2</sup>. The relative size in the youth population and the role of youth in the development of the society and economy, call for greater focus to be placed on investing in youth development to ensure the sustainability of the society and broad-based prosperity.

Although, an age range is used to denote the category of youth, from a developmental perspective youth is considered as the time of puberty into early adulthood. Arguably, youth is considered the most vulnerable stage of human existence. Taking into account the life cycle model, youth is categorically divided into two stages - the period of *adolescence* where habits and identities are formed, and the period of *early adulthood* where capacities are cemented and independent thinking becomes a ‘rule of thumb’.

Essentially, youth is seen as a transitory period where identity and autonomy are sought. However, this transitory period is denoted by a myriad of socio-emotional and economic challenges, which can work or for or against adequate holistic development. Effective transition in most, if not all cases are dependent on support from parents/caregivers, social institutions and or the State. Nonetheless, the transitory period may vary depending on the

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<sup>2</sup> [http://statinja.gov.jm/demo\\_socialstats/newMidYearPopulationbyAgeandSex2008.aspx](http://statinja.gov.jm/demo_socialstats/newMidYearPopulationbyAgeandSex2008.aspx)

socio-economic and political context of a country, as the support provided will determine the period of time taken to transition into a state of independence.

## 2.2 Youth Development

Given the myriad of socio-emotional and economic challenges faced by youth, it is imperative that each country provides adequate institutional support to mitigate these challenges in order to ameliorate positive growth and development for the youth. Accordingly, the Commonwealth Secretariat (2016), defined youth development as being

*“...linked to sociological insights, focuses on young people’s experiences and the ways in which these experiences provide opportunities for life management and distinct, culturally-shaped, perspectives on the world and their place within it.”*

This approach to youth development shares the responsibility of the youth as critical agents to their life outcomes, but also identifies the experiences during this stage as a vital part to shaping outcomes.

Youth Development is conceptualized not only as an approach which is employed for engaging and empowering youth to thrive in society, but it is a science, that informs the sociopolitical, physiological, psychosexual nature of adolescents and youth. The scientific information presents a certain set of principles that determine the process necessary to empower youth within a macro population. Youth Development also is a practice which is an intentional professional set of principles and practices being used by a practitioner to address the holistic development of the youth.

The dynamic nature of youth development and that of the youth population warrant greater sensitivity and thrust into how the matters are addressed. Accordingly, much effort has been made over the years to establish global, regional and local opportunities to provide positive youth development. Collectively, these efforts have provided a youth development framework which focuses on social and economic empowerment activities, youth protection, youth leadership, governance and participation, and youth health and reproductive rights. Further, youth participation is recognized as critical avenue for decision-making processes and

resolution of major national, regional and international challenges. A greater sensitivity to youth development issues is therefore evident regionally and internationally, underscored by a paradigm shift which embraces the importance of youth as assets for national development.

The critical nature of youth and youth development, has been accepted by the GOJ and it is recognized that our youth are relevant input to national development. The GOJ has also recognized that a pluralistic approach to youth development is imperative in order to allow for establishing partnership with key stakeholders. This approach will lend to addressing youth matters from a *Positive Youth Development* perspective, and as a means of connecting and reinforcing the various policy support measures in a coherent manner, the *Life Cycle Approach* to youth development has been adopted which allows for cognizance of the previous issues and interrelated behaviours and antecedents of the individual. It is on this basis that the GOJ makes an effort to ensure a continued policy environment for our youth and youth development programming actions.

### 3 SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

The salient nature of youth development to a nation or a society's overall development has increased international attention to the needs of youth, and has led to an increased commitment to youth development through national public policy initiatives. This bears evidence in the development of the many policies aimed at guiding the youth development agenda at the international and regional levels. Noted in April 2014, compared to 2013, there was a 50 percent increase in the number of countries having a youth policy, with over 60 per cent of all countries having a national youth policy<sup>3</sup>.

Notwithstanding, youth across the world continue to face obstacles which negatively impact their capacity to successfully transition into adulthood and the workforce. In developing countries, youth are confronted with limited opportunities for education and training, and

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<sup>3</sup>Youth Policy Press, *The State of Youth Policy in 2014*

inadequate opportunities for decent employment and health and social services<sup>4</sup>. A Commonwealth Secretariat survey indicated that up to 60 per cent of youth in developing countries are not working, or not in school, or have only irregular employment<sup>5</sup>. Similarly, the Survey of Commonwealth governments and Youth (2007), indicates that unemployment is the most severe issue affecting youth in all regions<sup>6</sup>. Other challenges reported include violence, crime, lack of youth participation, HIV/AIDS prevalence, substance abuse and inadequate access to education and training.

National (Jamaica) surveys coupled with the actual lived experiences of youth living in Jamaica reflect similar trends and challenges being experienced. Education and unemployment were noted as two key issues that mostly affect youth outcomes. Other issues noted were crime and violence, health, poverty, inadequate social protection, unstable family environment and lack of access to services. Whilst these challenges may directly affect some youth, there are those that are considered gifted and non-poor who reported feeling alienated from society and neglected by policy and programme interventions<sup>7</sup>. This was largely attributed to the perception that they are doing well, not overtly engaging in antisocial behaviours and seemingly pose no immediate threat to social harmony. The reality is that, these groups of youth reported facing emotional issues and social challenges such as sexual assault and suicidal tendencies resulting from domestic and personal issues that they often feel they cannot express.

Despite the structural constraints being experienced by youth, some are still hopeful for a better future, and aspire to attain their dreams and achieve their goals through their own actions and drive. The School to Work Transition Survey conducted in 2013, revealed that sixty-one per cent (61%) of the youth surveyed listed career and personal success as their most important aspirations. This desire was corroborated by an increase in enrolment in post-secondary education or training of the 19-24 age group from 7.5 per cent in 2000 to 28.3 per

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<sup>4</sup>UNFPA, *State of World Population* (2014)

<sup>5</sup>United Nations [UN], *World Programme of Action for Youth* (2010)

<sup>6</sup>Commonwealth Youth Programme, *The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment*, (2007)

<sup>7</sup> Moncrieffe, J. 2012. Situational Analysis of Jamaican Youth: "A Suh di ting set".

cent of the cohort in 2015. Additionally, gross secondary enrolment has increased from 84.6 per cent in 2001 to 91.9 percent per cent in 2013, demonstrating an almost-universal enrolment (ESSJ, 2013). The most notable aspect of this increase has been the doubling of enrolment of youth (15-16 years old) from the poorest households over the last decade, from 21.7 per cent in 2001 to 42 per cent in 2010 (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2010).

Youth in Jamaica have also started making better decisions about their reproductive health. There has been a significant fall in the global rate of teenage pregnancies from 112/1000 in 1997 to 72/1000 in 2012<sup>8</sup>. The National Family Planning Board<sup>9</sup> attributes this to a combination of delay in first sex and the responsible use of contraceptives by sexually active adolescents, supported significantly by the HIV awareness and behaviour change campaign. Although reduced, this rate remains comparatively high in Latin America and the Caribbean and disguises the variations across the country.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned challenges youth face, studies<sup>10</sup> have shown that some 67.9 per cent of youth were happy most of the time. It was reported that 84 per cent of households had adults who had high expectations of the youth and 53 per cent of households had adults who were perceived as providing a caring relationship within the home.

To examine closer the challenges and realities of youth in Jamaica, the following sections provide deeper analysis of the state of youth in respect of crime, violence, education, health and well-being, employment and opportunity and participation. This analysis is being used to inform the development of the policy priority, key goals and strategic objectives for the Policy.

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<sup>8</sup>State of the World Population Report 2014, published by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

<sup>9</sup>See Reducing Adolescents' Fertility rates and incidence of STI by the Promotion of abstinence by Harriett M. Clarke in The Health Provider published by Jamaica's National Family Planning Board last retrieved from <http://www.jnfpb.org/pdf/newsletter/HealthProviderVol2No3.pdf> on August 24, 2013.

<sup>10</sup> Wilks and Younger et al, (2006),

### 3.1 Crime and Violence

Youth are the main cohort of the population that are most affected by crime and violence, both as victims and perpetrators. Research shows that in the Caribbean, crime and violence are among the main concerns of adolescents and youth<sup>11</sup>. The Caribbean noted the highest homicide rates in the world, with the homicide rate for male 15-29 years being more than three times the global average<sup>12</sup>. Estimates also suggest that young men between 15-35 years commit 80 per cent of crime in this region. It is reported that violence, primarily from gang activities and civil conflict claims the lives of most young males across the world; on the other hand young women, are disproportionately affected by domestic violence – by family members and or intimate partners.

Jamaica currently has one of the highest per capita levels of violent crime in the world<sup>13</sup>. This extremely high rate of crime has been attributed, in part, to the poor economic performance over the last 30-40 years. Adding to this claim, it is alleged that poor parenting practices or lack thereof have led to the resultant conditions of criminal activities among our youth.<sup>14</sup> Noting from a recent study, much of these criminal activities are driven by gangs of youth involved in extortion, contract killing, money laundering and transnational organized crimes such as lottery scamming, identify theft and fraud<sup>15</sup> Data for 2015, indicated that murders increased, while other serious violent crimes decreased. This increase was in part attributed to the violence perpetrated by gangs involved in lottery scamming<sup>16</sup>.

Studies have shown that crime and violence are related to a number of socio-economic factors, such as high level of unemployment, high rate of poverty, inequality in wealth, educational opportunities and social exclusion. In the National Youth Survey (Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2010), 96 per cent of young people felt that the only way to reduce crime is through

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<sup>11</sup> CCYD, 2010

<sup>12</sup> UN & World Bank, 2007

<sup>13</sup> Ministry of National Security, 2012; OSAC, 2016

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/Poor-parenting-blamed-for-children-s-behavioural-problems\\_19236550](http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/Poor-parenting-blamed-for-children-s-behavioural-problems_19236550)

<http://jis.gov.jm/poor-parenting-contributing-to-social-problems-in-schools-education-minister/>

<sup>15</sup> Ministry of National Security, 2013.

<sup>16</sup> Jamaica 2016 Crime and Safety Report, OSAC

the creation of more jobs and an improved education system. This view is underscored by UNDP, 2012<sup>17</sup>, that youth involvement in crime is largely linked to the other development deficits such as poor education, lack of employment, which is the result of inadequate attention to youth development and youth empowerment.

Primarily, these issues are barriers to youth development which stymied the progress of youth, for this reason, the pairing of socio-economic interventions with security initiatives in support of adequate youth development is imperative to tackling crime.

### **3.2 Education and Training**

The Caribbean has seen improvements in the quality of education at the early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Illiteracy is lower among youth than previous generations, and youth typically have higher levels of education than their parents. Despite this, the CARICOM Commission on Youth Development (CCYD) suggests that education systems across the Caribbean are underperforming. As a result, youth are often ill-equipped for the world of work and there is the need to ease the transition between education and employment.

Notwithstanding high rates of expenditure across CARICOM, the relatively high attrition rates from the education system still present cause for concern. High attrition rates are attributed to poverty and unemployment, teenage pregnancy and lack of motivation among male. Additional concerns expressed by the CCYD include a fall in the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) passes in Mathematics and English, and a low male to female ratio at tertiary institutions.

Youth across the Caribbean have similarly expressed that they have limited access to education and training due to poverty, and the inadequate number and enrolment capacity of schools and training institutions. Youth have also noted that curriculum options and delivery systems

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<sup>17</sup> Caribbean Human Development Report 2012



are not ideally geared towards their talents and interests and the needs of the labour market. Security issues in schools, as evidenced by increased gang activity are also a concern of Caribbean youth.

The Jamaican education system, while delivering on the promise of universal access, has yet to bridge the quality gaps that have historically characterized the sector<sup>18</sup>. The result has been an education system that provides universal access to education of a widely variable quality and the perpetuation of what has been described in the 2012 Situation Assessment of Youth as “historical injustices” that reinforce intergenerational social and economic exclusion and poverty<sup>19</sup>. Based on the recommendations from the Situation Assessment of Youth, the education system needs to produce young people who are academically equipped to access existing tertiary education and post-secondary training opportunities. The assessment further suggests that there is a need for the education system to provide parallel, equally regarded, paths to success, considering different interests, gifts, abilities and aspirations of Jamaica’s youth.

Low levels of achievement at the primary level have serious implications for the quality of input to the secondary schools which ultimately influences performance in the Caribbean Secondary Examinations Council (CSEC) exams usually taken at the end of five years of secondary school. Despite the narrowness of this measure, solid secondary education achievements evidenced by the number of CSEC subjects obtained by students is considered the basis of a productive and successful professional life in Jamaica. Recognizing this, the Task Force on Education Reform 2004 established a target of 60 per cent of Jamaican students achieving at least five subjects inclusive of Mathematics and English Language by 2015. The data shows that for the five years 2010-2014, an average of 17 per cent of students in the Grade 11 cohort passed five CSEC subjects including Mathematics and English Language<sup>20</sup>. Less than approximately one-third of students passed five subjects including Mathematics or

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<sup>18</sup> Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2009

<sup>19</sup> Moncrieffe, J. 2012. Situational Analysis of Jamaican Youth: “A Suh di ting set”.

<sup>20</sup> Planning and Development Division, Ministry of Education 2015

English Language or both. Almost two-thirds of the cohort failed to gain sufficient qualifications to move on to any post-secondary academic institution, which also compromises their ability to obtain sustainable employment.

Unequal access to educational opportunities is a major challenge at the secondary level. This is evident in the CSEC participation rate and in the process used by schools to determine which students are able to sit the exam despite having attended school for five years. In 2014, some 57.4 per cent of the Grade 11 cohort was entered to sit Mathematics and 64.9 per cent entered to sit English Language, highlighting the variation of opportunities open to young people based on the type of secondary school they attend and the internal policy of the schools. This substantively determines the course of their employment opportunities and future educational opportunities. Students attending most of the traditional secondary high schools are more than twice as likely as their counterparts in other schools to meet the tertiary level matriculation standards<sup>21</sup>. As noted above, these issues reflect a combination of inadequate student preparation for secondary school as well as variation in the quality of secondary level education.

Poor performance at the secondary level as well as lack of economic opportunities has hindered the natural progression of some youth to tertiary education, and subsequently the workforce. The Transition of Jamaican Youth from School to the World of Work 2013<sup>22</sup> revealed that at the time of the survey, in spite of 58.4 per cent of youth aspiring to complete tertiary education, approximately 65 per cent or 491,200 youth were not enrolled in a school or training programme and less than 9 per cent had tertiary or higher education. Economic reasons were posited as the primary response for not completing education or training.

Overall, the underperformance of students in the education system is the result of a complex mix of, school, family and socio-economic factors. An analysis of data collected by the National Education Inspectorate (2012), points to school leadership, quality of teaching and

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<sup>21</sup>Ministry of Education, Planning and Development Division, 2013.

<sup>22</sup>STATIN, PIOJ and ILO, 2013

learning as the most decisive elements in school performance. Other research has shown that nutritional status of children<sup>23</sup>, parental involvement<sup>24</sup> and socio-economic status<sup>25</sup>, all influence students' educational achievement. In some areas, issues such as overcrowding, fewer contact teaching hours for students attending schools on the shift system and inadequate physical plants that preclude access to laboratories and technical education space, continue to compromise the quality of education to which students have access.

### 3.3 Health and Well-Being

Some of the major health issues plaguing youth across the world are sexual and reproductive health, substance abuse, mental health problems, intentional and unintentional injuries, nutritional problems and chronic diseases. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the three leading causes of death among young people aged 15-29 years are external causes (homicides and traffic accidents), degenerative diseases, and communicable disease (HIV/AIDS, pneumonia among others)<sup>26</sup>.

HIV/AIDS is the second leading cause of death among adolescents (10-19) in the world (UNICEF, 2015). In the Caribbean, HIV/AIDS is high among youth, especially young women and girls from a poorer socioeconomic background, who have limited access to quality sexual and reproductive health services. Data shows that the number of young women living with HIV is 1.2 times higher than young men living with the disease. Although there has been an increase in HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns and sexual and reproductive health education in the region, the relatively high rate of HIV/AIDS has persisted among the youth cohort of the population. The 2013 WHO Global School-Based Student Health Survey (GSHS) revealed that 56 percent of girls and 79 percent of boys have sex before the age of 14, and on average 38 percent of adolescents (13-15) did not use a condom the last time they had sex<sup>27</sup>. This survey suggests that fewer young persons are endorsing correct preventive practices. The

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<sup>23</sup> Walker et. al, 1998

<sup>24</sup> Munroe, 2009

<sup>25</sup> Samms-Vaughan, 2005

<sup>26</sup>UNICEF, *Adolescents and Youth in Latin America and the Caribbean*

<sup>27</sup>AVERT, *HIV and AIDS in the Caribbean*, 2016

Knowledge, Attitudes and Behaviour Survey conducted in Jamaica in 2010 also reveals a noticeable decline in the number of young males who endorse having one faithful partner. The number of females who endorse condom use as a HIV/AIDS preventive practice has also declined. These results indicate that awareness, though necessary, is not a sufficient condition to prevent infection.

Although contraceptive knowledge is high among Caribbean youth, teenage pregnancy rates remain high in comparison to other regions of the world. Notably, Latin America and the Caribbean record the second highest aged 15-19 fertility rate in the world at 70.5 births per 1000 women within that age cohort, second only to Africa<sup>28</sup>. Overall the rate of teenage pregnancy has slightly declined in Jamaica, but nevertheless remains a constant issue among youth.

Youth in cases of adolescents have a relatively high level of dependence on adults, and a high limitation to accessing reproductive health services, youth are highly vulnerable to factors that promote negative reproductive health outcomes including early initiation to sexual activities, forced sexual relations, and insufficient protection during sexual relations. It is estimated that up to 80 per cent of first pregnancies among youth aged 15-24 are mistimed, unplanned or unwanted. Girls that are poor, less-educated, or live in rural and remote areas are most at risk. This condition bears as a contributory factor to low birth weight, preterm births and developmental delays. Additionally, emanating from these and other causes, are the complications experienced during pregnancy and childbirth. These issues unfortunately, continue to be the second leading cause of death among females aged 15-29 years, with suicide being the first leading cause.

The global proliferation of mental health issues among youth is a cause for major concern. In the Caribbean, the CCYD reported a decline in mental health indicators, with high levels of anger, hostility, depression, and suicide among youth ages 15-29 (CCYD, 2010). Underscoring this condition in the Caribbean, Moncrieffe (2012) reported that an increasing number of

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<sup>28</sup>UN, *Regional Overview: Latin America and the Caribbean*, 2013

young people within the adolescence category are referred to Child Guidance Clinics for mental health and behavioural issues. These problems were traced back to factors such as exposure or victims of crime and violence within and/or outside of their families, illicit drug abuse, loss of one or two parents to violence or disease, child-headed households and lack of adequate psychosocial and remedial support.

Research further asserts that other health challenges experienced by youth are related to maternal health, lifestyle diseases, intentional and unintentional injuries<sup>29</sup>. Details on intentional and unintentional injuries show that young males account for more than 60 per cent of intentional and unintentional injury cases seen in Accident and Emergency Units of Public Hospitals. Incidences of falls, accidental lacerations and motor vehicle accidents are the most prevalent categories of unintentional injuries treated. With respect to intentional injuries, males accounted for the majority of stab wounds, gunshot and blunt injury cases. Adolescents accounted for 67 per cent of all sexual assault cases seen in public hospitals, with females being treated for the vast majority of these cases. Females also accounted for the majority of attempted suicide cases<sup>30</sup>.

The sexual and reproductive health of young people and emerging mental health problems are both issues that will be given keen attention under the Health and Well-being goal of this policy.

### **3.4 Employment and Opportunities**

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates that more than 100 million new jobs will need to be created over the next 20 years in order to provide suitable employment for the growing number of young persons in developing countries. In comparison: global unemployment is set to worsen further, albeit gradually, reaching more than 215 million jobseekers by 2018. During this period, around 40 million net new jobs would be created every year, which is less than the 42.6 million people that are expected to enter the labour

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<sup>29</sup> Moncrieffe J. (2012). . Situational Analysis of Jamaican Youth: “A Suh di ting set”.

<sup>30</sup>PIOJ, *Economic and Social Survey 2013*

market every year. The global unemployment rate would remain broadly constant during the next five years, at half a percentage point higher than before the crisis. Young people continue to be particularly affected by the weak and uneven recovery. It is estimated that some 74.5 million young people – aged 15–24 – were unemployed in 2013, that is, almost one million more than in the year before. The global youth unemployment rate has reached 13.1 per cent, which is almost three times as high as the adult unemployment rate. Indeed, the youth-to-adult unemployment ratio has reached a historical peak. It is particularly high in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as in parts of Latin America and the Caribbean and Southern Europe (Global Employment Trend, 2014).

More than half of CARICOM nations have youth unemployment rates above 30 per cent. In keeping with global trends, female youth unemployment rates in the Caribbean are higher than the male youth unemployment rates. The availability of decent employment is also a challenge, with more than 30 per cent of Caribbean youth being employed in the informal sector. High unemployment is one of the primary reasons why more than 85 per cent of Caribbean nationals between the ages 15-29 years posit that they would migrate to more developed countries if the opportunity arises.

Data in Jamaica shows that as at October 2016, of all persons in the unemployed labour force, 36 percent fell within the age group 14-24 years. The rate of unemployment within this cohort, 32.4 percent was more than twice higher than the national rate of 12.9 percent. Females in this youth cohort were also more likely to be unemployed with a rate of 40.7.6 percent compared to 25.5 percent for males<sup>31</sup>. This trend dates back to data from 2002 that reveals the situation was particularly pronounced among young women, whose average rate of unemployment was more than three times the rate for the total labour force, and consistently approximately 40 percent higher than male youth. Youth in the rural areas are also likely to be unemployed and to have fewer opportunities to secure employment than young people in the urban areas.

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<sup>31</sup>Statistical Institute of Jamaica, July 2016

**Table 1: National and Youth Unemployment Rates by Gender 2006-2015:**

Average											
2006- 2015	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	
%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	Unemployment rate
12.3	13.5	13.7	15.2	13.9	12.6	12.4	11.4	10.6	9.8	10.3	Total
8.9	9.9	10.1	11.0	10.5	9.3	9.2	8.6	7.3	6.1	7	Male
16.5	17.8	18.1	20.0	18.1	16.7	16.2	14.8	14.6	14.3	14.5	Female
29.9	32.8	34.2	37.7	33.4	30.1	30.8	27.1	25.9	23.7	23.6	Youth
23.6	26.6	27.0	30.0	26.5	23.9	25.2	22.5	19.8	17	17.4	Male Youth
38.2	41.2	44.1	48.0	42.5	37.9	37.8	33.2	33.6	32	31.6	Female Youth
36.1	36.8	37.2	38.4	36.8	32.6	32.1	32.4	36.3	39.8	38.6	Unemployed

Source: Calculated from Labour Force Survey, 2006 - 2015.

Table 1 illustrates the trend in youth unemployment over the last decade. It shows that on average, the share of the youth in the unemployed pool was 36.1 per cent. The unemployment rate fluctuated over the period moving from 38.6 per cent in 2006 to 36.8 per cent in 2015. Female youth had a disproportionately high share of the unemployed pool, compared to their male cohorts. The disproportionate burden of unemployment borne by youth is seen in the average youth unemployment rate which is much higher than their average share of the population for the past decade.

The 2013 School to Work Transition Survey indicates that employed youth worked primarily in the services sector (75%) of the economy as “Service workers and shop and market sales workers” (28%). Approximately 25 per cent of youth were entrepreneurs, with 23.1 per cent being own account workers, and 1.7 per cent being employers. Beyond traditional employment, approximately 27 per cent of young people responding in the STATIN (2010) in a National Youth Survey reported that youth expressed an interest in establishing their own small businesses and 13 per cent had attempted to do so (Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2010). Ultimately, the major obstacles to young persons’ establishing businesses are their low level of training, particularly in entrepreneurship, inadequate access to capital, lack of knowledge

and low levels of collateral. The policy seeks to address this issue as a means of economic viability and development.

### 3.5 Youth Participation

Increasingly, countries across the world are making efforts to increase the economic, social and political participation of youth. Caribbean youth typically express involvement and participation at a community level, while at the same time expressing alienation from national and regional political processes. Though internationally, young people are generally excluded from decision-making processes, the evidence also suggests that youth do not always take advantage of opportunities for civic participation.

#### *Political Engagement*

Most countries are experiencing low youth participation in electoral politics (voting and active political party membership). Whilst there has been a general decline in electoral politics over the past two decades, youth participation has remained much lower than adult participation. Data from the World Values Survey conducted among 33 countries indicated that 47.7 per cent of respondents aged 18-29 participated in electoral politics compared to 64.1 per cent of respondents over 18 years<sup>32</sup>. This phenomenon is further reinforced in a 2010 study on Jamaica's voters' behaviour. Youth respondents (34%) recorded the highest level of non-interest in voting compared to middle-aged adults (19.8%) and elderly (10%)<sup>33</sup>. Feelings of disconnection, distrust, disillusionment and despondency with the traditional political process are often times cited as reasons for this level of youth apathy.

Correspondingly, some political cultures stifle the space for youth participation in the political process. The political arena is disproportionately dominated by older people, especially men. Young people are under-represented in political parties, parliaments and public administration. International data shows that the average age of parliamentarians is 53(50 female); 1.65 per

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<sup>32</sup>2010-2014 World Values Survey, UN World Youth Report, 2016

<sup>33</sup> Bourne et al, The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Voters in Jamaica, 2010



cent of parliamentarians are in their 20s; and 11.87 per cent are in their 30s<sup>34</sup>. Although there is marked increase in the establishment of political parties' youth arm, they are still heavily influenced by longstanding party stalwarts.

### *Civic Participation*

Whereas youth involvement in the political process is low, they are actively engaged at the community level in mostly sports, musical and religious groups. These social spaces engender a nurturing environment which enables young people to develop valuable leadership, advocacy, interpersonal and life skills. Sport in particular, is a very useful transformational tool for youth participation and empowerment, as it can strengthen physical, psychological, emotional and social well-being and development. Despite sustained youth participation in various sports locally, regionally and internationally, sufficient emphasis was not placed on sports as a mechanism for youth development. Nonetheless, an appreciation has emerged, as there is now growing understanding around the world that sports programmes are powerful avenues for achieving youth development, and broader national development goals.

Youth have not been as visible in cultural and environmental causes which are priority areas in Jamaica's sustainable development agenda. Youth awareness and interest in culture are very low or non-existent. They do not have a full appreciation of the country's rich history nor its extensive tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Outside of the formal school curriculum in which history and civics are taught, not many interventions have been made to stimulate interest in cultural pursuits or promote cultural awareness among the youth.

Youth response to the environment bears much similarity to their cultural attitude. Some young people do have an understanding of the adverse effects of environmental destruction and global warming on sustainable livelihoods, and some are aware of the importance of protecting the environment for the benefit of present and future generations. However, more intervention is needed to sufficiently educate and motivate the majority of the youth

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<sup>34</sup> UNDP & UNDESA, Youth and Political Participation, 2013

population to participate in efforts to reduce environmental degradation and devise effective mitigating and adaptive strategies for survival.

The challenges that threaten the development outcomes of Jamaica's youth have spurred the Government of Jamaica to formulate policies and programmes that will empower youth, build their resiliency and improve their quality of life. This finding underscores the need for a policy focus on the provision of support to youth in order to foster an environment that supports their positive development. Programmatic support in particular needs to be unconditional and, while responsive to their observed backgrounds, not designed to reinforce existing limitations.

The complex nature of issues faced by youth indicate the critical need for application of the positive youth development approach in designing programmes. This allows for inclusion and broad-based approach in offering emotional and psychosocial support across the wide cross-section of youth.

### **3.6 Institutional and Youth Sector Arrangements**

Youth development programmes are implemented nationally via a network of agencies – public, private and non-government organisations, and through partnerships with International Development Partners and Faith-based organisations. The MOEYI plays an active role in coordinating the efforts of the sector; however, whilst the MOEYI develops, reviews and monitors policy implementation, the partnership with International Development Partners, non-governmental and faith-based organizations plays a key role in the implementation of the youth programmes.

The consultative process identified that one of the main weaknesses in implementing previous policies was the weak coordination and low levels of capacity in the youth sector. Additionally, although there are numerous programmes being implemented by various MDAs for youth, the platform to sustain strong partnership and synergy is lacking. This was compounded by the absence of a suitably resourced lead entity to drive the process. The analysis and consultations have indicated the absence of a legally constituted mechanism that has the

authority, capacity and resources to: a) coordinate the sector; b) monitor and evaluate progress in relation to the targets and; c) garner resources for the implementation of the policy. These findings are also confirmed in the Youth Mainstreaming Strategy and point to the need to strengthen the mechanisms via which youth development initiatives are coordinated.

## 4 ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENT

### 4.1 Economic Context

Perhaps the single most important and most studied characteristic over the past 4 decades is the Jamaican economy and the low rate of growth, which presently averages slightly less than 1 percent per annum. The rate of growth of the population has also been slow – 0.36 percent per annum, according to the 2011 population census<sup>35</sup> – which has kept the average per capita rate of growth from falling. The weak growth is one factor explaining the lack of employment opportunities for both the youth and the “adult” components of the labour force. The most commonly cited reasons for the poor economic performance have been:

- The burden of debt that has tended to force up the rate of interest and force down public investment, especially in physical infrastructure
- Monetary policies have not been sufficient to stimulate economic growth, due to the poor market conditions associated with the slow global recovery
- Low labour productivity has also frequently been cited as a principal factor in the lack of competitiveness of Jamaican producers, and that in turn has often been attributed to the high share of unskilled persons, upwards of 70 percent<sup>36</sup>, in the labour force

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<sup>35</sup> See National Census Report (2011).

<sup>36</sup> See National Report of Jamaica on Millennium Development Goals for the UNECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review (2009) pp. 14 last retrieved from <http://www.jm.undp.org/files/GOJ%20National%20Report%20to%20UNAMR-Final.pdf> on August 24, 2013.

- Crime drove up the cost to businesses that had to make greater provisions for security, discouraged multiple work shifts, and undermined the confidence of potential investors, especially from overseas.

## 4.2 Policy Environment

The Youth Development Agenda is being implemented in an evolving policy environment where much of social and economic policy provisioning in the last decade has been concerned with improving the lives of the youth.

Vision 2030 Jamaica National Development Plan, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the National Education Strategic Plan (2011-2020), the Programme for Advancement through Health and Education (PATH), the Social Protection Strategy for Jamaica (2014), the Justice Reform Policy Agenda Framework (2009), the National Sports Policy (2013) and the establishment of the National Parenting Commission and National Parenting Support Policy (2011) are some of the major interventions which identify youth as central to national development. The Growth Inducement Strategy (2012), outlines a framework for short to medium term economic growth that acknowledges that all underutilized human resources (youth being a major focus) must be mobilized to make productive contributions to the economy. The Strategy further recommends the provision of additional funding to cater to at-risk youth populations, and promote the expansion of training in high-demand, skilled areas and for entrepreneurship.

Vision 2030 Jamaica speaks to the development of a globally competitive workforce that can meet the country's development needs. Issues pertinent to youth are addressed in the Population Sector Goal 3 in the National Development Plan:

***‘Empowerment and protection of adolescents and youth to enable them to fully realize their social, cultural and human rights and fulfill their physical, economic and social aspirations’.***

The specific targets/ desired outcomes of this goal for 2030 are:

1. Adolescents and youth are numerate and literate by age 19;

2. Programmes exist to identify, treat and rehabilitate adolescents and youth at risk of abuse and neglect;
3. Existing institutions are strengthened to more effectively coordinate adolescents and youth development programmes;
4. Human and infrastructural capacities for programme delivery are strengthened.
5. Access to services and skills training are provided for adolescents and youth with special needs;
6. Employment opportunities are provided for youth including those with special needs.

To accomplish these outcomes, the Vision 2030 Jamaica – National Development Plan outlines the following strategies:

1. Educate and sensitize adolescents and youth about their rights and responsibilities, and provide awareness for social development, self-expression and involvement in national development;
2. Strengthen programmes that provide for the reproductive health and rights of adolescents and youth;
3. Provide adequate funding for youth programmes;
4. Target adolescents and youth for social development, entrepreneurial, education and training opportunities;
5. Promote work in youth development as a viable career choice;
6. Increase availability and access to services for adolescents and youth development;
7. Increase opportunities for recreational activities including sports and culture by establishing green spaces, and adolescents and youth facilities;
8. Build awareness of existing training opportunities.

Vision 2030 Jamaica also addresses youth development in both the Education Sector Plan and Training and Workforce Development Plan. The Education Sector Plan envisages that the average beneficiary of “our education and training system will have completed the secondary level education, acquired a vocational skill, gained proficiency in the English Language, a

foreign language, Mathematics, a science subject, Information Technology, participated in sports and the arts, gained awareness and pride in our local culture and possess excellent interpersonal skills and workplace attitudes”.<sup>37</sup>

Additionally, the training plan is built on the understanding that the country’s most important investment is building the skills and knowledge of the human capital in a changing in global economy. Shifts in production modalities, products and services and the impact of these changes on competitiveness, essentially dictate the focus of Jamaica’s workforce development and training strategies. Young people are key to these changes and the country’s ability to grow its economy and compete globally. Further, the Medium Term Socio-economic Policy Framework (MTF) 2015-2018, includes a specific set of strategies and actions for youth under National Outcome No. 1.

It is apparent that there now exists a fertile environment to support this policy on youth, as there is significant focus on some of the key issues identified as critical to positive youth development. The recent policy and programmes direction dictating the merger of the HEART Trust/NTA, the National Youth Services (NYS) and the Jamaica Foundation for Lifelong Learning (JFLL), as well as the development of the umbrella youth programme LEGS (Learn, Earn, Gain, Save) to incorporate the Housing, Opportunity, Production Employment, along with the ‘We Transform Programme’ through the Ministry of National Security among others have created further support for youth development in the sector.

This revised policy through its guiding and instructive mechanisms provides a cohesive framework within which the national combined goals and strategies which foster youth development will be pursued and implemented.

### **4.3 Legal and Governance Environment**

The National Youth Policy (2004) adopted a rights-based approach consistent with international conventions to which Jamaica is a signatory. The United Nations, World Bank

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<sup>37</sup> Vision 2030 Jamaica Education Sector Plan (2009) pp.4.

and the Commonwealth are main sources of these international instruments, and have therefore contributed to the development of international standards for youth development policies.

Subsequent to the National Youth Policy (2004), Jamaica has enacted the Child Care and Protection Act (CCPA) 2004, which strengthened the legislative/regulatory framework for the care and protection of children by introducing new standards for their treatment while removing the fragmentation of legislation relating to their welfare. The Act brings under one umbrella, measures concerning children previously embedded in the Juvenile Act (which was effectively repealed with the enactment of the CCPA), as well as provisions in over 20 other laws. It also draws on provisions applicable to children under the Offences of the Person Act. The Child Development Agency (an Executive Agency) was established to amalgamate the Children's Services Division, the Adoption Board and the Child Support Unit of the Ministry of Health with the objective to coordinate and regulate childcare bodies and services within a single entity. The CDA presently sits under the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information.

Apart from the CCPA 2004 there is no single legislation for youth (15-29) in Jamaica. Neither is there a specific legislation to streamline youth development as an important component of the national development agenda, requiring special focus, regulation, planning and oversight in the same way that housing or education is treated as important platforms or pillars. However, there are several domestic pieces of legislation and policies that impact youth development and serve to outline the nation's approach to youth and their issues. These must be duly considered in planning for the development of Jamaica's youth. Several subsidiary pieces of legislation (Regulations) also impact youth development programmes across Ministries, Departments and Agencies of Government. The key legislative frameworks include:

1. The Child Care and Protection Act (2004), which consolidated approximately twenty pieces of legislation, related to children;
2. Domestic Violence Act (amended 2004);
3. Status of Children Act (1976) (amended 2005);

4. Children Guardianship and Custody Act (1957);
5. Criminal Records (Rehabilitation of Offenders) Act (1988);
6. Adoption of Children Act (1958);
7. Education Act (1980);
8. Maternity Leave Act (1979);
9. Inheritance Provisions for Family and Dependents Act (1930);
10. Offences Against the Person Act (1864);
11. Incest Punishment Act (1948);
12. Sexual Offences Act (2009);
13. Criminal Justice (Reform) Act (1978);
14. National Youth Service (NYS) Act. (1999);
15. National Parent Support Commission Act (2012)
16. Age of Majority Act (1979)
17. The Women (Employment) Act

Since the development of the National Youth Policy 2004, there has been progress in reforming the legal environment in which youth development programmes are implemented. However, there are notable gaps to be addressed. The Justice Reform Policy Agenda Framework of 2009, indicated that “the legal framework in Jamaica requires extensive law reform to bring the system into compliance with various human rights and international legal norms and standards. Specifically, changes are required to deal with new and emerging forms of crime, to adopt, with necessary modifications, the United Nations Rules for the Protection of Children Deprived of their Liberty (1990), to make legislation gender neutral, change current sexual offences legislation that recognizes only male offenders and female victims in sex-related crimes, and to harmonize national legislation with international standards so as to facilitate internal cooperation in fighting various forms of transnational crime”.

The main legal reforms proposed in the Justice Reform Policy Agenda framework will impact the youth sector and in fact, outline a number of measures directly and indirectly influencing youth development and youth rights. The proposed framework for legal reforms has seven



output areas with a number of key activities identified for implementation in the short, medium and long terms. These seven output areas are:

- 1) Fair and Timely Case Resolution.
- 2) Improved Access to Justice.
- 3) A strong Judiciary and Workforce.
- 4) Strengthened linkages between justice sector institutions.
- 5) Establishing a sound court infrastructure.
- 6) Implementing a social component to the delivery of justice; and
- 7) Strengthened public trust and confidence.

In addition, since the Justice Reform Task Force Report of 2007, a wide range of contemplated legislative interventions that will have an impact on the justice system is in train at this time. Some of these legislative interventions are:

1. Coroners (Amendment) Bill;
2. Corruption Prevention (Special Prosecutor) Bill;
3. Independent Investigative Commission;
4. The Jury (Amendment) Bill;
5. The Bail (Amendment) Act;
6. The Bail (Interim Provisions for Specified Offences) Act; and
7. The Offences against the Person (Amendment) Act.
8. The Dangerous Drugs (Amendment) Act

Added to the above lists are other new or relatively new legislation including:

1. **Disabilities Act (2014):** The Disabilities Act seeks to protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment by persons with disabilities of privileges, interests, benefits and treatment, on equal basis with others. The Act seeks to ensure the full and effective participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities in society, through achievement of the main objectives: reinforcing and promoting the recognition and

acceptance, within Jamaica, of the principle that a person with a disability has the same fundamental rights as any other person; and promoting individual dignity and autonomy, including the freedom of choice and independence of a person with a disability.

2. **Charter of Rights and Freedom Act (2011)** - There is a new Charter of Rights Act that has repealed and replaced Chapter III of the Jamaica Constitution and came into effect in 2011. Clause 13(3) (h) of the Bill essentially recognizes a right to freedom from discrimination on a number of specified grounds, including sex. In the future, therefore, constitutional redress could be sought where there has been an infringement of a person's right to freedom from discrimination on the basis of sex.
3. **The Maintenance Act (2005)** obliges spouses or partners in a common-law union to maintain each other and also obliges parents or guardians to maintain the child.
4. **The Domestic Violence Act (2004)** provides protection for women and children who are victims of domestic violence, enables a third party to initiate proceedings on behalf of the woman, and stipulates that damage to property is also a form of domestic violence.
5. **The Children's Home Regulations (2007)** gives power to the responsible government agency to monitor private children's homes and places of safety and bring action when they fail to meet designated standards for childcare and protection.
6. **The Sexual Offences Act (2009)** establishes a legal definition of rape and stipulates that a boy under 14 years is capable of rape and other forms of sexual abuse. The Act deals with 'sexual grooming, touching or interference' between an adult and child or among children. It defines the responsibilities of household heads to children (under 16 years) who are in their charge and addresses child abduction and provides for a Sexual Offenders Register (Section 29).

7. **The Trafficking in Persons: (Prevention, Suppression & Punishment) Act (2007)** stipulates that trafficking in persons is illegal and makes provisions for preventing and punishing the crime and its connected offences.
8. **National Parenting Support Commission Act (2012):** The legislation has established a National Parenting Support Commission that will assist parents by increasing their access to quality information and services. Parents will also learn about their responsibilities under the law and the consequences of not fulfilling them, particularly as it relates to abuse or neglect. The Commission will oversee the implementation and operation of the National Parenting Policy, which defines effective parenting from a Jamaican perspective and sets out the Government's approach to supporting and strengthening positive parenting practices.
9. **Criminal Justice Suppression of Criminal Organizations Act (2014):** The Act seeks to prohibit persons from establishing a criminal organisation; taking part in, or participating in a criminal organisation; providing or obtaining a benefit from a criminal organisation; and harboring or concealing a participant in a criminal organisation. The Act also stipulates the recruitment of a child to be a part of a criminal organization as an offence.

#### 4.4 Key Legal Constraints

The Situation Assessment of Youth in Jamaica (2012) proposed that youth development requires a purposeful agenda that is underpinned by principles of equality, equity, rights, corrective justice and accountability and governed by commitments to (a) address the underlying and root causes that differing groups of youth are encountering (b) advance the fundamental rights and equality of all categories of youth (c) correct historic injustices (d) stem harmful emerging practices among youth; and (e) tackle ways of working that are inimical to the development of all categories of youth.

On the basis of an objective analysis, the report lists a number of legislative actions which are deemed necessary to address the critical issues affecting youth. These legislative actions span a fairly wide area including education, housing, domestic violence, employment among others. These together with other proposed legislative actions are reproduced at Annex 2.

It should be noted that the bulk of the recommendations concerns the enforcement of existing laws and support the widely-held view that the major concern is not the absence of laws but the fact that many of these are not properly enforced to have their intended impacts. The list is not exhaustive of all the potential problems and issues that may arise in the future. Cognizance must be taken of the fact that the legal reforms process is often exhaustive and lengthy especially given the large legislative agenda of the government. To the extent that there will be new legislation in the future that may impact youth, it ought to be embraced through an ongoing, consultative policy review process and reflected in the action plans, operational mandates of the key institutions and the mechanisms for coordinating the activities of the agencies.

## 5 THE NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY

### 5.1 Guiding Principles

**The Youth policy is guided by the following principles:**

1. **Committed Leadership:** Strong leadership and solid commitment at all levels and in all sectors, are essential to create and maintain a society safe and secure for the nation's youth and for enhancing democratic processes.
2. **Positive Youth Development:** This approach promotes the identification and recognition of youth's talents, interests, characteristics, skills and abilities, which can be used to enhance their competences and achieve positive outcomes.
3. **Youth Mainstreaming:** Youth mainstreaming is a strategy for ensuring that the needs and interests of the youth are considered in the development of all national policies, programmes, plans and legislation. It is posited that these programmes are most likely to happen where there is full participation and inclusion of the youth in decision making. In keeping with the National Youth Mainstreaming Strategy, this policy requires that all Ministries, Departments and Agencies assess their policies, plans and programmes to ensure that issues affecting the youth are explicitly considered and integrated.
4. **Recognition and Fulfillment of Rights:** Positive youth development is threatened when child and human rights are not recognized and upheld. Duty bearers such as the state, parents and service providers are responsible for the upholding the rights of youth and are accountable when these rights are infringed. Inherent in this principle is the premise that while the State and duty bearers have responsibilities to ensure that all rights of youth are upheld, young people have responsibilities also. Namely, they should, take their rights seriously, do not abuse them or infringe on the rights of others,

use their opportunities responsibly, and contribute to and participate in family, community, school and society.

5. **Stakeholders Involvement and Participation:** This is both a principle and a key strategy. The participation of youth is a right, but is also a critical success factor in the design, development, delivery and evaluation of programmes for youth as well as a necessary step for youth to mature and become active citizens. The involvement and participation of other key stakeholders, such as parents, schools, NGOs, the church, service providers and the media is also critical for the successful implementation of the policy.
6. **Partnership and Collaboration:** Every person and every sector of society needs to be actively involved in ensuring the development of a socio-economic environment that supports our youth. The creation of this environment involves building on existing opportunities for synergies in service provision, creating effective partnerships, collaborations, consultations and coordination with all stakeholders in the design, implementation, in monitoring and evaluation of youth-focused services.
7. **Gender Equality:** Programmes and projects developed under this Policy should take into account a gender balance across all categories of youth.
8. **Non-Discrimination and Equity:** All programmes and projects developed and implemented should take into account the different circumstances, and therefore the different needs of youth. In keeping with the non-discriminatory position of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, no young person or group should be excluded from accessing services as a result of race, gender, age, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, religious or other beliefs, socio-economic status, and geographic location, level of literacy or capacity to understand.

## 5.2 National Commitments

Led by these guiding principles, the Government of Jamaica commits through its Ministries, Departments and Agencies to:

1. Make youth development a national priority and ensure the allocation of sufficient resources and services to support key sector goals.
2. Ensure that outcome of the National Youth Policy is achieved through the MDAs
3. Focus on achieving economic growth in a manner that includes opportunities for meaningful youth participation, employment, and income generation activities.
4. Provide support for parents and caregivers, helping them to create an environment where children and youth feel loved, respected and valued.
5. Continue to work towards improving and equalising the quality of education and training across all institutions so that all youth can benefit.
6. Improve the accountability of national institutions that provide an environment within which youth can progress on the basis of merit as opposed to access to networks of influence and privilege.
7. Pursue policies and programmes which can correct historical injustices, and break the inter-generational cycles of exclusion and disadvantage which deny youth opportunities for advancement.
8. Take all necessary steps to build a society that is just, with safe and secure communities, where young people are free from violence and abuse.
9. Preserve the natural and cultural environments for current and future generations.
10. Continue to provide services to promote good health and healthy lifestyles, ensuring that young people have non-discriminatory access to all such services.

11. Create mechanisms for reviewing and re-aligning relevant support services based on the needs, expectations and aspirations of young people.
12. Respect the potential and contribution of youth.

In keeping with these national commitments, the government through the policy priorities of this policy, provides an environment that is adaptive, accommodating and supportive of youth surviving, thriving and achieving their dreams and aspirations.

## **6 LESSONS LEARNED**

There have been several lessons learned from the experience with the development, implementation, and coordination of the previous National Youth Policies. An evaluation has highlighted the following, inter alia:

1. Ensure adequate coordination and buy-in at the Ministerial and Institutional levels
2. Avoid duplication and overlap of youth services and programmes offered within the Youth Sector
3. Establish mechanisms for management and implementation of the youth programmes coordination processes should be adequately discussed with the stakeholders.
4. Undertake evidence-based approach involving stakeholders' consultation on the execution of programmes and services
5. Ensure more efficient and cost-effective use of available resources
6. Adopt best practices that maximize the likelihood of attaining the desired positive results
7. Develop robust data collection mechanism to inform the implementation of programmes and interventions
8. Utilise a Results-Based Management approach to implement, monitor and evaluate the Policy
9. Ensure institutional arrangement for monitoring and evaluate the national youth programmes



10. Provide adequate programme budget support to delivery on programme objectives, least the overall outcome of the policy be compromised.

## 7 VISION STATEMENT AND POLICY GOALS

In order to achieve the national goal and its outcomes - ***“Jamaicans Are Empowered To Achieve Their Fullest Potential”***, and by creating ***“A Healthy and Stable Population (Youth)”*** -, it is imperative that the positive youth development and life cycle approaches be used in the development and delivery of all youth programmes; maximizing on youth’s talents, potential and assets, while addressing needs of all youth at each developmental stage.

In crafting the National Youth Policy Vision, the National Vision 2030 and the Vision for Children (overlap ages 15-18) were taken into account:

### **National Vision 2030:**

*“Jamaica, the place of choice to live, work, raise families, and do business”*,

### **Vision for Children:**

*“Jamaican children realizing their full potential, with their rights to survival, protection, development and participation guaranteed in a peaceful, nurturing, protective and child-friendly environment.”*

On account of these visions, the youth articulated the vision for the National Youth Policy as:

***“All Jamaican youth achieve their full potential and as responsible citizens contribute to sustainable national development.”***

## 7.1 Policy Priorities & Goals

Based on the issues highlighted in the Situational Analysis of youth in Jamaica, the following priority areas and goals were identified as salient factors to achieve the aspired outcome and vision of the policy.

The National Youth Policy has identified six priority areas:

1. Education and Training
2. Health & Well-Being
3. Employment and Entrepreneurship
4. Youth Participation
5. Social Inclusion and Re-integration
6. Institutional and Youth Sector Arrangements.

### 7.1.1 Education and Training

***Goal: Improved access to quality Secondary, Tertiary Education and Vocational Training Opportunities***

Education remains a key mechanism to youth development and a means of unlocking the future for nation building. The findings from the Situational Analysis categorical outlines the challenges affecting the youth at secondary school level. The NYP priority for education and training will work in tandem with the National Strategic Plan for Education. Accordingly, the NYP promotes the need for focus on equality of educational resources, access to education at secondary level, gender equality, second chance opportunities given to those who have dropped out of school, and greater opportunities provided to those with varied abilities (to name a few). Moreover, the number of unattached youth and those who were unfortunate in not being able to complete secondary school are at risk of becoming national liabilities. The NYP encourages the implementation of programmes that will allow for second chance opportunities. Also, the NYP recommends the provision of programmes that will cater to 'gifted youth' allowing them greater input and involvement in the design of programmes which will utilize and strengthen their talents and gifts.

Research shows that there is a direct relationship with youth's learning ability and their well-being. The social ills occurring within some communities, homes and schools are likely to place school aged youth at risk of experiencing psychosocial issues. The NYP supports mainstreaming of psychosocial support within the education system which will help schools to respond to the psychosocial needs of students which will translate into positive educational outcomes as well as the psychosocial and mental well-being.

Educating youth on their cultural heritage and history is essential as they build self-identity and awareness. Accordingly, the NYP promotes the need for greater emphasis on building cultural awareness through the secondary school curriculum.

Training is also an essential mechanism for building vocational competencies required for the effectiveness on any job. The trends in the labour market both locally and globally have indicated a need for strengthening vocational training and matching training needs to that of the labour market. For this reason, the NYP recommends the need for greater Public Private Partnership enabling better synergy between training and the job market. The NYP also calls for focus on the vocational training as an essential means to build the skills of those youth who are not inclined to academic learning or training, and also those having a desire to acquire vocational skills. The NYP supports the need to provide adequate access and affordability of vocational training to the unattached youth and also those without employability skills. Accounting for the holistic development of youth, the NYP also promotes the need for youth empowerment through the initial development of soft skills and the building of self-efficacy, self-confidence self-capacity relevant to enable engagement at a higher cognitive level of learning.

Entrepreneurship training is also promoted as being integral to providing support to youth who desire to establish new and creative businesses, but do not have the knowledge and skills to do so on their own. The advance in technology has also called for the need to train youth in fourth generation industry technology to meet industry's demands; but also to expand on their technological creativity.

The NYP will therefore focus on the cohort of youth that are largely affected by these challenges, (but not limited to) namely:

1. Out-of-school youth
2. Teen mothers
3. Youth with disabilities (varied ability)
4. Youth in poor rural areas (in particular boys)
5. Youth at secondary school level
6. Privileged Youth
7. Youth-at promise
8. Gifted youth

**To achieve the goal for this policy priority, the following strategic objectives should be met:**

1. Improve the quality of education and training across institutions;
2. Promotion of universal access to quality secondary education;
3. Promote gender equality at the secondary level;
4. Improve male academic performance at the secondary level;
5. Expand second chance opportunities for out-of-school youth;
6. Provide vocational training to unattached youth/youth in rural and remote areas to acquire marketable and employability skills;
7. Provide greater opportunities to youth with disability at secondary and tertiary institutions;
8. Provide greater access to vocational training and certification to youth, particularly unattached youth;
9. Improve vocational training to be responsive to the changing demand for skills in the labour and global market;
10. Strengthen psychosocial care programmes for students at the secondary level;
11. Strengthen educational and training programmes to use a holistic approach (community, school, family and youth) that will allow for self-resilience.

### 7.1.2 Health and Wellbeing

***Goal: Increased access to sexual, reproductive and mental health care services among youth cohort***

Youth is a critical period for establishing positive health and social behaviours. The emotional, physiological and intellectual changes that are occurring during this period, require timely and full access to accurate and comprehensive information, social support and services required for healthy practices and life style conducts.

However, there are several health and wellbeing challenges that face youth, which by all means should be addressed. There are social factors that exist within the realm of the society that act as hindrance to good health and wellbeing. The living environment is the first determinant of health and as such, a deliberate attempt should be taken to ensure minimal pollution and preservation of a healthy environment. Accordingly, the NYP recommends the continued effort in implementing programmes and interventions that will build environmental awareness and youth involvement in sustaining a healthy environment.

The high rate of teenage pregnancy has also affected the health and wellbeing of female youth who become engaged in such practices; HIV/AIDS and substance abuse still remain a threat to the health and wellbeing of youth. For this reason, the NYP supports the need that adequate preparation should be made to mitigate these incidences by strengthening the platform for additional information and education on these salient issues. It is assumed, that this will increase awareness and inadvertently promote behaviour change and practices. The NYP supports the proposition that youth at the secondary level should be encouraged to do physical education beyond the ninth grade in order to adapt a practice of healthy living.

A number of youth at all levels of the society is being affected and thus the policy emphasizes that greater focus be placed on the following cohorts:

1. Youth at risk for early pregnancy, substance misuse, HIV and other STIs;
2. Underserved youth (particularly those in rural areas);
3. Youth in institutional care;

4. Youth with varied Abilities (Disability);
5. Youth at Secondary School Level;
6. Privileged Youth;

The NYP will guide the efforts for the design of health and wellness programmes through a multi-sectoral approach to address the health and wellbeing needs of youth at all levels of the society. Primarily, all youth should have access to basic youth friendly and appropriate health services to maintain their physical, mental and emotional well-being.

**To achieve the goal for this policy priority the following strategic objectives should be met:**

1. Maximize the number of youth gaining access to basic youth friendly, gender sensitive and appropriate health services;
2. Create through advocacy networks, a supportive policy environment that fosters positive health outcomes;
3. Promote development of policies and programmes which focus on mental well-being in secondary schools
4. Promote health education programmes to inform physical, mental and emotional well-being;
5. Increase access to health resources and interventions to youth with special needs (e.g. disabled, mentally challenged);
6. Increase awareness and understanding of sexual reproductive health choices
7. Increase awareness of mental health issues and consequences
8. Support active youth involvement in the design, implementation of services and information geared towards their health and well-being.

### 7.1.3 **Employment & Entrepreneurship**

***Goal: Increased number of youth who have access to decent employment and entrepreneurship opportunities***

Economic participation is a critical national process for engaging youth to contribute productively in an effort to reduce poverty and ameliorate economic conditions. The high rate of unemployment among the working age youth calls for concern. The situational

analysis indicates a high of 32.4 percent of youth unemployment. Many youth leave both secondary and tertiary institutions without being able to secure decent jobs. Particularly, youth leaving tertiary institutions having the requisite qualification, encounter difficulties in obtaining jobs due to inexperience in the field of desired career advancement and employment.

As indicated in the situational analysis, there is a correlation between unemployment and crime, - crime being a social menace being faced by the Jamaican populace. To tackle these issues, the government has employed a multi-sectoral approach and has called for synergism between existing programmes that embark on crime and career advancement for which this NYP supports. The NYP also promotes the need for greater Public Private Partnership to enable secure job placements. The government is encouraged to continue and expand its national apprenticeship and work experience programmes to afford youth greater access to decent jobs after completion of education and training.

Another potential way of integrating youth into the labour market and to enhance economic growth is to increase youth entrepreneurship. Youth are encouraged to tap into their creative and innovative skills to develop viable businesses for greater economic productivity. The NYP notes that many youth may have the desire to create their own jobs by starting businesses, but often struggle to find the requisite capital or access to loans due to limited or absent resources. The government has in the past formed the necessary partnership(s) that afforded this undertaking. With this, the NYP recommends the revitalization of these efforts that will provide the essential resources and tools for establishing new and creative business ventures among youth.

The NYP also promotes a culture of entrepreneurship within the sport and agricultural sectors, that will be guided by the proposed Cultural and Creative Industries Policy and Youth in Agriculture Policy. The NYP endorses the need for gender equality and youth of vulnerable groups (youth of varied abilities and other defined youth-at-risk) in the agriculture sector. Many youth with varied abilities have been kept out of jobs or not integrated into entrepreneurial ventures particularly because of their 'disability' in one way or another.

However, the policy calls attention for technological and structural changes which are required for easier usability and accessibility to infrastructure.

In light of the high unemployment rate among young women, the policy recommends that special focus be placed on creating a gender balance across the sectors.

The NYP emphasizes the need for special focus to be placed on the following cohort of youth:

1. Rural Youth
2. Unemployed youth
3. Young women
4. Youth with disabilities (Varied abilities)
5. Youth infected and affected by HIV/AIDS
6. Youth working on the streets
7. Youth with certification from HEART/NTA and other training agencies
8. Youth-at-Promise
9. Privileged Youth

**To achieve the desired goal, the following strategic objectives will be met by the policy:**

1. Promote skills development for youth employment in the context of globalization and technological innovation;
2. Promote designation of funds to enable employment among vulnerable groups including youth with disabilities, young women and street youth;
3. Promote through policy formulation an enabling environment for employment of youth and youth with special needs – youth with varied abilities
4. Promote the Decent Work Agenda to ensure employability of the youth;
5. Promote professionalization of youth workers
6. Increase access to and the availability of labour market information;
7. Improve monitoring mechanisms to ensure that education and vocational training are responsive to the changing demand for skills in the labour market.



8. Provide expanded training programmes in priority growth-related industries - to include, logistics, business process outsourcing, information and communication technologies, cultural and creative industries, agribusiness and energy;
9. Strengthen avenues for providing work experience/apprenticeship for youth
10. Establish an enabling environment for youth entrepreneurship, especially in agricultural and sport.

#### 7.1.4 Youth Participation

***Goal: Maximize youth participation in national and political decision making processes***

Youth participation is a critical element in a country's sustainable development process. It engenders the positive development of our youth and ensures their equal representation and contribution to decisions on issues of national importance.

The Situational Analysis posits that youth are actively involved in recreational activities such as sport and music, but in an unstructured manner which does not add much value to the youth development agenda. Youth also have a high level of ignorance and apathy to critical areas of nation building such as politics, culture and the environment. It is for these reasons, the NYP advocates that youth have a responsibility to inform themselves about national developmental concerns, efforts and the right to equally partake in the decision making processes, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes concerning these issues. The NYP recognizes the need for greater youth engagement on matters concerning holistic health, environmental protection and preservation, national governance and cultural awareness and enterprise. The NYP also encourages youth participation through the creation or expansion of platforms for them to assert their ideas or recommendations to address identified challenges. These policy recommendations reflect the current approach being taken by the government toward youth development. Through the Ministry with responsibility for youth development, emphasis is placed on youth participation at the local, national, regional and international levels of governance through existing programmes such as the National Youth Council (NYC), National Secondary Students Council (NSSC), Jamaica Union of Tertiary Students (JUTS), Jamaica Youth Ambassadors

Programme (JaYAP), Youth Advisory Council of Jamaica (YACJ) and the National Youth Parliament (NYP).

The NYP recognizes that the participation of all youth in the governance process is important. However for this goal, more focus will be placed on empowering the following categories of youth:

1. Privileged Youth
2. Unattached Youth
3. Youth with Varied Abilities (disability)
4. Youth infected and affected by HIV/AIDS and others.

**The following strategic objectives will be met by the policy:**

1. Increase youth awareness of their responsibilities to self, family, community, school and country;
2. Promote active youth contribution and participation to their own development and to societal change at community, national and regional levels;
3. Support the mechanisms that support youth participatory rights on all relevant platforms;
4. Expand structures that facilitate youth participation in formal governance structures and processes;
5. Increase awareness of youth of their rights to nation building and development;
6. Foster and create a platforms for youth engagement and participation in decision-making, and as partners in democracy and development;
7. Strengthen student governance and participation in their respective institutions
8. Foster youth involvement in designing educational programmes and skill-based training.

**7.1.5 Social Inclusion and Reintegration**

***Goal: Minimize the number of at-risk and vulnerable youth***

A sizeable proportion of the youth population currently falls within at-risk and extremely vulnerable groups. These youth are consistently confronted with experiences of extreme poverty, crime and violence, neglect, abuse and abandonment, which inhibit their psychological, educational and professional development. Naturally, these experiences heighten the likelihood of them becoming detached from the formal social systems, with some ultimately finding themselves in conflict with the law, as wards of the state, or living on the streets. A World Bank study indicated that during the period 2014-2015, approximately 30 percent of the youth population was unattached. In 2012, the Department of Correctional Services recorded a high of over 400 adolescents in juvenile correctional facilities. This reality reinforces the urgent need to devise solutions that will channel this cohort of youth to uplifting pathways.

The NYP recognizes the importance of exposing these vulnerable youth to nurturing environments in an effort to redirect their outlook on life and set them on transformational and restorative paths toward growth and development. As such, the NYP promotes the strengthening of the State's institutional capacity to ensure that these youth are provided appropriate care and interventions that will sufficiently help them to navigate their challenges and ensure their seamless reintegration into mainstream society.

The NYP focuses on the vulnerable youth and those at-risk of sustained poverty, abuse, ill-health, academic failure, etc. Specifically, these are:

1. Youth in Rural Areas
2. Youth with varied abilities (Disability)
3. Youth in state care
4. Youth in correctional facilities

The following strategic objectives will be pursued:

1. Improve programming and provide nurturing environments for youth in state care;
2. Improve case management approach to address issues affecting youth in need of care and protection;

3. Improve programming to facilitate the needs of rural youth;
4. Improve facilitation for educational and recreational activities for continued development of youth in conflict with the law;
5. Develop mechanisms to reintegrate youth existing the correctional facilities into mainstream society;
6. Support the prioritization of preventative policies and programmes aimed at ‘juvenile offending’;
7. Develop and implement a family reintegration strategy, which will focus on strengthening families to provide in-family care and protection for vulnerable youth;
8. Strengthen the Social Protection System in its ability to identify and intervene on behalf of vulnerable youth;
9. Promote equality and equity within the social institutions and care facilities.
10. Promote restorative justice practices and interventions for youth who come in conflict with the law

#### 7.1.6 Institutional and Youth Sector Arrangements

##### ***Goal: Professionalization and strengthening of the Youth Sector***

A robust and synergized youth sector with efficient institutions and a qualified corps of youth workers is essential in pursuing the aforementioned goals and fast-tracking the youth development agenda. Currently, the sector is at a great disadvantage. It functions in an unsystematic manner without any guiding legislation or regulations, without an effective monitoring and evaluation system, without sufficient resources and lacking an effective coordinated approach among stakeholders. Additionally, whilst youth workers are usually highly qualified, and display unquestionable commitment to their work, they are not given the professional recognition and respect that they deserve. Additionally, a standardized approach to youth work has not been established within the sector and among youth workers.

The NYP therefore promotes a strengthening of the sector by way of bolstering institutional capacities to provide optimal service to youth. It also recognizes the necessity of laying the framework to achieve effective monitoring and regulation of the sector, and greater

coordination among state, private and international stakeholders. Equally important are the efforts to professionalize youth work and promote it as a viable field of study at the tertiary level.

The youth service providers will be the primary target group under this goal. These include:

1. Youth Workers
2. Youth Serving Organizations
3. Faith-Based Organizations
4. Youth Related MDAs

**The policy will seek to ensure that the following strategic objectives are met:**

1. Strengthen the internal capacity of the Youth & Adolescents Policy Division within the MOEYI;
2. Strengthen the operational relationship between all Ministries, Departments and Agencies which impact youth development;
3. Strengthen institutional arrangement to coordinate and monitor youth related programme;
4. Promote partnerships and regular consultations with and between state and non-state agencies, and the private sector;
5. Incrementally develop the cadre of professional youth workers to promote youth development and strengthen interventions/programmes.

Instituting these goals and objectives the policy will capitalize on strengthen existing programmes and initiatives while building out new programmes that will address the existing youth needs.

## 7.2 The National Youth Policy Outcome

The desired outcome of the above stated policy goals is to produce:

*A nurturing and secure environment in which youth thrive and become empowered, achieve their full potential and understand their roles and responsibilities in making meaningful contribution to national development.*

## 8 KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND THEIR ROLES

The National Youth Policy is based on the philosophy that all youth should be empowered to achieve their fullest potential. This philosophy is driven through the positive youth development framework that links five key characteristics:

1. Competence
2. Confidence
3. Character
4. Connection and
5. Caring

### 8.1 Youth's Rights and Responsibility

The government's recognition of Youth Rights aligns with the internationally defined rights of young people as presented in the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. These Rights are accepted and reinforced by youth, as being critical for their participation as citizens. The rights of youth are as follows:

All Jamaican youth have the right to -

1. Life
2. Freedom from discrimination
3. An identity, name and nationality
4. Freedom of expression, culture and religion
5. Basic healthcare and education
6. Protection from abuse – physical and psychological

7. Participation in decision making that affects their wellbeing
8. Opportunities to optimize their growth and development
9. Access to services and information that will enhance their development.

Every effort will be made to promote these rights through the enactment of this policy to ensure greater understanding by the populace, and to foster advocacy for legal and social initiatives needed to promote positive youth development.

The Responsibilities of Youth are critical in promoting and achieving the rights as there is an inextricable relationship between rights and responsibilities. The responsibilities of all Jamaica's youth are as follows:

1. Take ownership of their future and decision making that affects their well-being;
2. Take advantage of opportunities to grow and develop
3. Acquire the best education possible;
4. Respect self, others and the environment;
5. Be good citizens and contribute to social and economic development;
6. Care for, support and protect those less fortunate or vulnerable;
7. Advocate for their development.

These responsibilities shall be promoted by all agencies and individuals involved in the process of youth development, and it is incumbent on the government to facilitate the provision of support to youth, to ensure they understand and accept their responsibilities.

## 8.2 The Youth and Adolescents Policy Division within the MOEYI:

The Division will primarily focus on sector policy development, and related activities such as strategic programme development, standards development, research, monitoring and evaluation. This function is in accordance with the modernisation thrust of the Government of Jamaica to create policy focused Ministries. It is expected that this Division will be technically competent and have the appropriate level staff to provide leadership for the youth sector.

### Priorities for the Division

1. Leadership of the Youth Sector;
2. Through a *Youth Development Act*, establish a legal framework for planning, action, coordination, regulation, management and oversight of the youth sector;
3. Policy and Specific programme development and guidelines for programme implementation through the agencies of the MOEYI;
4. Monitor and evaluate implementation of the National Youth Policy;
5. Develop formal partnerships with other MDAs, the private sector, NGOs and international partners to ensure effective youth development and promote synergistic actions;
6. Conduct specialised research to guide policy development and programmatic response and become a research and knowledge management centre for the sector;
7. Develop and maintain a database for all youth serving entities nationally;
8. Mapping the youth population to understand the current needs, priorities and position of youth in relation to their development goals, and to identify and address systemic exclusion of groups of young people;
9. Identify and disseminate national and international best practices for youth development;
10. Promote understanding of and adherence to the guiding principles for national youth development;



11. Lead on the creation of a national environment that is ‘youth conscious’, ‘youth friendly’ and responsive to changing historical injustices that affect youth and their development;
12. Promote the understanding and rights of youth to participate in their development and their right to be treated with respect and dignity by all individuals and organisations;
13. Conduct monitoring and evaluation of the programmes being implemented through the national youth development entities;
14. Develop and conduct monitoring and evaluation activities to assess the status of achievement of planned activities in adherence to standards and agreements with partners;
15. Develop relationships with national regional and international partners and stakeholder to advance youth development priorities
16. Develop accountability frameworks for programme implementation by agencies and youth serving entities
17. Ensure good governance and professionalism (by standard development and monitoring) of the youth sector
18. Ensure on-going capacity building of youth workers in the sector in accordance with best practices and international standards.

### **8.3 Entity(ies) Responsible for Youth Development through Empowerment and Participation**

Address the changes within the youth agenda to a positive youth development approach.

Highlighted functions will be, but not limited to, the following:

1. Management of the Youth Information Centres as Innovation Hubs;
2. Dissemination of youth relevant information;
3. Provision of youth related services (Counselling, Empowerment Sessions, IT Services - Cyber space, Community Outreach etc.);
4. Customization of programmes for youth in all categories by parishes;
5. Facilitation of youth participation through volunteerism at the local and national;

6. Provide a safe space for emotional, psychological strengthening and self-development;
7. Provision of non-formal education and training sessions with youth in all categories;
8. Facilitation of the re-integration of Unattached Youth into the formal educational and social system;
9. Management of all youth governance and leadership programmes.

#### **8.4 Entity(ies) Responsible for Youth Development through Technical and Vocational Training**

Address the formal education and training aspect of youth development: The specific responsibilities to ensure, inter alia,

1. Specialized training for the youth population who are outside the regular school system;
2. Be the driving force to ensure innovative training in new and emerging areas for the local and global labour markets;
3. Ensure formalized training for Unattached Youth and provision for on the job experience;
4. Provide accreditation for its training programmes and ensure continued upgrading of the programmes offered to youth;
5. Work closely with the private sector to ensure that changes in the labour market are being met in respect of its target groups.

#### **8.5 Ministries, Departments, Agencies (MDAs):**

1. Under each MDA's mandate, and in fulfillment of the goals of the Revised National Youth Policy, it is expected that relevant policies and programmes will be established to support positive youth development;
2. Ensure that youth matters are placed as a Strategic Objective within each Strategic Plan of MDAs;
3. Partner with the MOEYI to support the establishment and execution of programmes and projects that will enable positive youth development;

4. Develop and implement relevant programme and activities to ensure accomplishment of National Youth Policy goals;
5. Liaise with the MOEYI through its Youth and Adolescents Policy Division to ensure the adherence of programme standards and execution.

#### 8.6 **Human Resource Committee of Cabinet:**

1. Ensure policy coherence for youth development across the relevant portfolio Ministries and advice the Cabinet on such matters.
2. Provide oversight to ensure national youth development is in accordance with national priorities, regional and international obligations
3. Review proposed linkages and relationships with private sector, universities, NGOs, international bodies and faith-based organisations involved in youth development initiatives.

## 9 **IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING STRUCTURES**

As noted in the situation analysis, “weak coordination and low levels of capacity in the youth sector” proved a challenge. The issue of how the youth sector is to be coordinated and monitored is critical to the success of the National Youth Policy. The coordinating mechanism needs to be robust, respected, and responsive to emerging needs based on accurate data, and positioned to offer recommendations for change to high level decision makers.

The National Youth Policy facilitates a multi-sectoral approach to youth development, including the strengthening of mechanisms for coordination and collaboration among youth-serving organizations. This approach recognizes that the issues affecting youth cut across several sectors and thus a multi-sectoral response becomes necessary. The National Youth Policy accepts that a coordinated and collaborative response represents the most suitable strategic response in order to effect positive youth development, while fostering the active participation of the nation’s youth in the process.

## 9.1 Implementation of the National Youth Policy

The implementation of the revised National Youth Policy will occur within **ministries and agencies** of the public sector, and will require the involvement of a **wide range of stakeholders**, including the **private sector, local and international development partners, non-governmental organizations**, communities and the media.

The Policy therefore requires:

1. Through a comprehensive Stakeholder Analysis an **Inter-Ministerial Committee** that will be established through the Ministry responsible for Youth Development led by the Minister. The Committee will consist of key stakeholders within the Youth Sector. The Committee will provide oversight for the implementation of the National Youth Policy through a monitoring and evaluation mechanism aligned to the Strategic Action Plan. The committee will also ensure that the various governance, accountability, transparency, performance management, monitoring, evaluation and service delivery frameworks are incorporated within the various Ministries, Agencies and Departments addressing youth development matters
2. Establishment of a **Youth Development Act** that will also stipulate that the Ministry responsible for Youth Development, under the direction of the Minister of Youth will be responsible to ensure the overall development of youth within Jamaica.<sup>38</sup> In this respect, youth development issues will be strengthened with appropriate support and positioned within the national development landscape as a priority of the Government of Jamaica.
3. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Information, through its **Youth and Adolescents Policy Division** will provide monitoring and evaluation of the sector, setting standards and registration of youth serving entities, while providing empirical data through research for the development of strategic policies and programmes.

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<sup>38</sup> The Act will be supported by appropriate legislation developed to ensure the legal framework to support the thrust for youth development.

4. The ***entity charged with delivering vocational and technical training*** will be responsible for the implementation of technical and vocational training programmes, coordinating job placement and apprenticeship schemes, developing a youth volunteer corp.
5. The ***entity charged with empowerment and participation*** will ensure that all youth leadership and governance programmes are executed/implemented, see to the expansion of youth participation, and will be responsible for the provision of relevant information that will bolster youth awareness on relevant areas for development.
6. The Agency charged with Child Development will ensure the implementation of programmes related to youth in state care between the ages of 15-17 years.
7. The ***entity responsible for the professional association of youth workers*** in conjunction with the Youth and Adolescents Division will ensure the strengthening of the Youth Sector through capacity building of youth workers.

Organisations noted above are expected to work synergistically together to ensure a holistic approach to youth development, while applying the positive youth development methodology in order to fulfill the goals under the revised National Youth Policy.

## 9.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

The dynamic nature of youth development requires continuous assessment of the current trends and issues being experienced by our youth, as such, the Revised National Youth Policy recommends that key issues for youth development be subject to a systematic review. These reviews should be conducted in an effort to evaluate the Policy's effectiveness and take note of new initiatives concerning youth development that may emerge. The reviews will take different forms at different levels, and will be outlined in the Monitoring and Evaluation strategy to include:

1. Annual reviews leading to the development of the annual operational plans
2. Planned comprehensive evaluations resulting in the development of a new strategic plan
3. Evaluation of pilots to recommend next actions

4. Monitoring of short-term and long-term indicators of all partner agencies to ensure programme objectives are being achieved and to explore and agree corrective actions.

The Youth and Adolescents Division of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information will be tasked with the responsibility to continuously monitor and oversee the periodic evaluation of the implementation of the National Youth Policy and provide strategic reports for corrective actions.

### 9.3 Policy Review

The vision for the revised Policy extends to 2030, but requires review every five years. The implementation of the revised Policy will be supported by an Inter-Ministerial Committee that will ensure the development of a Strategic Plan, which will be aligned with the government's National Development Plan and medium term socioeconomic planning frameworks. The policy will also be reviewed, monitored and evaluated by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information (MOEYI) through its Youth Division to ensure the relevance of the strategies and programmes being executed by the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), with defined responsibilities in the implementation of the revised NYP.

## 10 ACTION PLAN

There are key activities that should be executed to ensure the effectiveness of the National Youth Policy. The listed key actions are operative in the initial stage of the implementation of the Policy.

### Proposed Timelines for Implementation March 2017 – March 2020:

KEY ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME	KEY ACTORS
1. Build out and strengthen the capacity of the Youth and Adolescents Policy Division (MOEYI)	Year 1 – 2	MOEYI/MFP <sup>39</sup>
2. Table the National Youth Policy in Parliament	Year 1	Minister, MOEYI
3. Development of an Action Plan Implementation Plan & Monitoring and Evaluation Framework	Year 1	Youth and Adolescents Policy Division
4. Strengthen the Vocational and Technical Training entity to incorporate related Youth Services	Year 1	MOEYI/HEART/NYS
5. Develop a Youth Development Act and Supporting Legislation	Year 1 - 3	MOEYI/Office of the Parliamentary Council
6. *Re-establishment an operational arm of the Youth and Adolescents Policy Division	Year 1 - 2	MOEYI/MFP
7. Formulate a Youth Professional Workers Policy	Year 1 - 3	MOEYI/MLSS/ JPYWA <sup>40</sup>
8. Legislative Changes completed	Year 1 - 4	MOEYI

<sup>39</sup> Ministry of Finance and Planning

<sup>40</sup> Jamaica Professional Youth Workers Association (JPYWA)

## 11 CONCLUSION

The Government of Jamaica is committed to supporting the development of the country's youth. It recognizes that the translation of this commitment into action is a key national development strategy. The government considers the achievement of the six policy goals outlined above as critical, not only to the development of the country's youth, but also to the development of the country as a whole. Accordingly, it considers the implementation of a revised National Youth Policy one of its main priorities and as a mechanism for ensuring that young people in Jamaica are supported to reach their highest aspirations.

The National Youth Policy therefore seeks to adopt/adapt best practices which maximize the likelihood of attaining the desired positive results. Such best practices emphasize youth development as an enduring, overarching purpose and not a goal that is ever finally achieved. The youth development process involves the creation of a range of contexts or settings, including people and activities that promote youth development. These in turn will be inclusive, sustainable, connected to each other, and connected to the larger macro-system that surrounds them. In this context the youth development policy takes into consideration the important roles of other public policies such as education, justice reform, health, entrepreneurship, labour market development and the Vision 2030 Jamaica: National Development Plan in building the enabling environment for positive youth development.

The revised policy places emphasis on the need for greater coordination of the implementation of youth development programmes to enhance efficiency in service delivery as well as to establish agreed standards for such services. The successful implementation of this policy can only be possible with coordinated effort of multiple stakeholders who are involved in the youth development sector, and those whose work have a significant impact on the environments in which youth thrive.



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## ANNEXES

### Annex 1: Reviewing Bodies

1. **Human Resource Committee of Cabinet (2015 & 2017)**
2. **MOEYI**, Senior Policy Group
3. **MOEYI**, Policy Committee
4. Youth Advisory Council, Jamaica (YACJ)
5. National Secondary Students Council (NSSC)
6. Jamaica Union for Tertiary Students (JUTS)
7. Jamaica Youth Ambassadors (JYA)
8. Technical consultation Group
  - a. Ministries, Departments and Agencies
  - b. International Development Partners
  - c. Civil Society
  - d. Non-Governmental Organisations

### 9. Technical Policy Oversight Committee, 2012

NAME	ORGANISATION
Hon. Lisa Hanna	Ministry of Youth and Culture
Mr. Sydney Bartley	Ministry of Youth and Culture
Ms. Andrene Blackwin	National Centre for Youth Development
Mrs. Hyacinth Blair	Cabinet Office
Mr. Ohene Blake	c/o Ministry of Youth and Culture
Ms. Thompson Bronhil	Youth Entrepreneurs Association
Mr. Courtney Brown	Ministry of National Security

NAME	ORGANISATION
Mr. Alric Campbell	People's National Party (PNP) Youth Organization
Ms. Ruth Carey	Ministry of Justice
Ms. Deidra Coy	Planning Institute of Jamaica
Miss Gloria Goffe	Combined Disabilities Association
Mr. Floyd Green	Generation 2000 (G2K)
Mrs. Mellodene Henry-Davy	Ministry of Education
Dr. Deborah Hickling	Office of the Prime Minister
Mrs. Vivienne Johnson	Ministry of Education
Ms. Simone McKenzie	Ministry of Labour and Social Security
Mr. Owen McKnight	Ministry of Finance
Mr. Randy McLaren	Youth Ambassador, c/o National Centre for Youth Development
Ms. Danielle Moffatt	Cabinet Office
Ms. Yvonne Munroe	Ministry of Health
Ms. Jodian Pantry	Student, c/o National Centre for Youth Development
Mrs. Jodi-Kay Petgrave	Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment

NAME	ORGANISATION
Mrs. Collette Roberts-Risden	Office of the Prime Minister
Mr. Melvin Smith	National Youth Service
Mr. Douglas Webster	Ministry of Industry, Investment & Commerce
Mrs. Tatiana White-Johnson	Jamaica Employers Federation
Mrs. Winsome Wilkins	Council for Voluntary Social Services
Mr. Miguel Williams	National Centre for Youth Development
Mr. Easton Williams	Planning Institute of Jamaica
Mrs. Vivienne Williams-Thompson	IDB/GOJ Youth Development Programme, Ministry of Youth and Culture



## Annex 2: Key Policy and Legislative Actions

Key Legislative Actions	Key Policy Actions for addressing underlying and root causes affecting youth development
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Expand the scope, efficiency and effectiveness of legislation to address varying forms of abuse, ensuring special protection for those least able to protect themselves.</li> <li>2. Enforce the 2000 Victims Charter Strengthen the application of the restorative justice process</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intergenerational Abuse (Emotional, Mental, Physical, Spiritual, Sexual)</li> </ul>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Strengthen and enforce the law (including the Children’s Guardianship and Custody Act) in cases of parental neglect and abuse</li> <li>4. Expand the scope of legislation to ensure that youth currently beyond the reach of the CCPA also have recourse in cases of parental abuse.</li> <li>5. Enforce legislations (Sexual Offences Act), so as to combat the normalization of Incestuous relationships.</li> <li>6. Enforce 1948 Incest (Punishment of) Act Enforce 2005 Maintenance Act</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor/Inadequate Parenting</li> <li>• Family Breakdown</li> </ul>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Ensure the adequacy of laws to protect against stigma and discrimination</li> <li>8. Enforce laws, particularly as those pertain to employment practices, education provision and treatment of youth with disabilities, youth living with or affected by HIV/AIDS etc.</li> <li>9. Enforce legislations against gender based violence, ensuring that these also check female on male violence</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internalized and External Stigma</li> <li>• Skewed Belief Systems and Core Values</li> <li>• Lack of spiritual development</li> </ul>

Key Legislative Actions	Key Policy Actions for addressing underlying and root causes affecting youth development
<p><b>10.</b> Enforce Early Childhood Act – 2004, Early Childhood Regulations 2005, and the Early Childhood Commission Act-2005</p> <p><b>11.</b> Ensure that sanctions are levied where youth in care are denied high quality education comparable to the best in the public system Require (through policy and law) that underage youth who fall pregnant and who are no longer attending their own schools attend an educational facility and are, subsequently, reintegrated within schools. This requires amending the Education Act (See Education Regulations 1980, Page 21, Section 31, paragraph 2 and 3) Consider Act to address specific needs of Dis-advantaged youth.</p> <p><b>12.</b> Stipulations for buildings to allow easy access by the disabled – revision in building codes/standards</p> <p><b>13.</b> Teacher training to be reflective of changing needs within the local and international context. Utilisation of Appropriate technologies to facilitate teaching and learning</p> <p><b>14.</b> The Act does not reflect efforts in transforming the sector- such as rights of children to be treated with respect and be central to the teaching and learning process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Disadvantageous and non-transformative) Education</li> </ul>
<p><b>15.</b> Enforce provisions of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health, mental health</li> </ul>

Key Legislative Actions	Key Policy Actions for addressing underlying and root causes affecting youth development
<p>16. Advocate for full implementation of the provisions of the National Plan of Action for Youth Justice in Jamaica</p> <p>17. Ensure that youth with intellectual disabilities are treated as children, where the intellectual age is consistent with those of a child</p> <p>18. Amend laws to establish standards for male rape</p> <p>19. Increase the age of consent to 18 years</p> <p>20. Consider Youth Care and Protection, such as obtains in New Zealand. Under such an Act, make provisions for disadvantaged youth and their families whose needs cannot be addressed under CCPA</p> <p>21. Enforce 2007 Children’s Home Regulations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● (Non-transformative) Social Protection</li> </ul>
<p>22. Enforce Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act.</p> <p>23. Expand Act to include provisions for male victims of violence.</p> <p>24. Enforce 2002 protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children</p> <p>25. Enforce 2007 Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Suppression and Punishment Act.</p> <p>26. Enforce child labour legislation</p> <p>27. Enforce Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflicts</p> <p>28. Strengthen the 1996 Broadcasting and Radio Re-diffusion Act</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gender Relations and Violence</li> <li>● Substance Abuse</li> <li>● Cultures of Materialism and Quick Gain</li> <li>● Sexual Promiscuity</li> <li>● Allegiance to the Occult</li> <li>● The Burgeoning Underground</li> </ul>

Key Legislative Actions	Key Policy Actions for addressing underlying and root causes affecting youth development
29. Consider appropriate amendments to the Housing Act 1969 to improve both access and affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Access to Housing - Access to financing for young people to purchase homes. Many do not qualify under Housing Trust Scheme</li> </ul>
30. National Youth Service (NYS) Act - to be reviewed in light of the recent merger under HEART Trust.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Relevance of the Youth Service Programme and thrust and the overlap of its functions with those of other agencies</li> </ul>
<p><b>31.</b> Enact a Youth Development Act.</p> <p>32. Establish a Co-Management mechanism to enhance inter-Ministerial Coordination as well as the inclusion of youth organizations and other NGOs in decision making</p>	<p>Institutional Coordination for implementing Youth Policy and adhering to the principles to ensure positive youth development in all areas.</p>

