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INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR: PARTICIPATION, DEVELOPMENT, PEACE

Letter dated 23 May 1985 from the Permanent Representative of Jamaica
to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with the observance of 1985 as International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace, there was held at Kingston, Jamaica, from 6 to 10 April 1985, the International Youth Conference which discussed these themes.

I have the honour to request that the document containing the results of the Conference, which are embodied in The Kingston Declaration of Principles: Affirmation of Participation, Development and Peace in Freedom, be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 89 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) L. M. H. BARNETT
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Jamaica
to the United Nations

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ANNEX

**THE KINGSTON DECLARATION
OF PRINCIPLES:
AFFIRMATION OF PARTICIPATION,
DEVELOPMENT AND
PEACE IN FREEDOM**

**JAMAICA CONFERENCE CENTRE
KINGSTON, JAMAICA.
APRIL 6-9, 1985**

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MESSAGE FROM THE CONFERENCE PRESIDENT

The International Youth Conference was held in Kingston, Jamaica, on 6-9 April, 1985. It provided a historic opportunity for young people from all over the world to meet for discussion and debate. "Historic" because it was the first time in more than thirty years that such a forum was available to young people who share a common belief in the basic principles of democracy. Indeed, the International Secretariat, responsible for arrangements for the Conference, established very definite criteria for the issue of invitations to youth groups. These included the commitment to and practice of free elections and free speech within their own organisations, and the support of a free press, free trade unions and all the other elements of democracy in their societies.

The Conference achieved its objectives, and was generally regarded as a great success. Eleven hundred delegates from some one hundred countries addressed in a meaningful and constructive manner the International Youth Year themes of Peace, Participation and Development, which so concern the youth of today. Delegates rose above political differences, cultural and language barriers, various operational difficulties and the constraints of time to forge a statement of which all can be proud. This Declaration of Kingston appears in the following pages.

It is hoped that this document can become the basis for future action — through discussion, through its influence on government policies and legislation — and so help to achieve the ideals sought by these young people.

Errol Anderson, M.P.
President,
International Youth Conference

THE KINGSTON DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES: AFFIRMATION OF PARTICIPATION, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE IN FREEDOM

1. We, the representatives of democratic youth gathered in Kingston, Jamaica, have come together from every region of the world to meet and declare our fundamental and abiding faith in freedom. It is this affirmation of freedom that binds us together in common cause, now and in future.

2. It is the diversity of our countries of origin — a rich diversity indeed, encompassing many stages of economic and political development, distinctive cultural traditions, and unique national identities — that should be characteristic of a world in which the freedom to pursue the personal and national goals of our choosing would be both recognised and respected. It is a diversity that, with tolerance and goodwill, merges into the common heritage of people everywhere who seek a genuine and lasting peace, and will make any sacrifice to secure that peace — except the sacrifice of freedom itself.

3. There is no contradiction between diversity and the common bonds of shared belief . . . or between free individuals and responsible citizens loyal to democratic nations. Our experience here at the International Youth Conference is proof of that. Our discussions have been spirited. We have engaged in often heated debate. We have resolved many of our disagreements; others remain. Yet in this free and open forum we have been able to forge strong ties of common affirmation.

4. This, then, is the message of the International Youth Conference, and of INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR 1985: that we intend to strive toward the objectives embodied in the IYY themes — PARTICIPATION, DEVELOPMENT and PEACE — in freedom, with freedom, and in the cause of freedom.

5. It is a message of young men and women addressed especially to youth around the world. It is a message of hope . . . idealism . . . aspiration . . . dedication . . . and of responsibility, both as individuals and as one related group, for the future of the world.

PARTICIPATION

6. Full participation in the life of one's own society is the birthright of all, regardless of political persuasion, race, sex, religion, disabilities or ethnic origin. It is also the essential foundation of responsible citizenship. We recognise that full and effective participation is difficult where people are denied or lack personal dignity and/or self-esteem, human rights and civil rights. Accordingly, we declare our support for programmes and other moves aimed at protecting and enhancing the personal dignity, intrinsic worth and self-esteem of all people throughout the world. Basic to this is participation in the economic, social, and political processes that promote the comprehensive democratization of all societies.

7. Our main objective is the total and responsible participation in the life of our nations. Consequently, the right to create and participate in our own organizations, with the guarantee of being able to associate freely, is an inalienable one. If full participation is to be truly achieved, young people must be involved in all decision-making that affects them. It is important also that all institutions focus on the special needs of youth. This is the only effective way that youth's problems and aspirations are truly heard. All major decision-making areas, such as those defined by the International Youth Conference, must be included in this. We should enter fully into the life of our communities. To do this, we should be able to create and take part in our own organizations, having the right to join, to dis-associate from, and to form alternative organizations, free from external domination or the control of the state. All people ought to have the right to join, form and participate in free and democratic unions.

8. We believe that full participation means constructive involvement, not apathetic or forced participation. We should willingly assume all the responsibilities of the institutions of which we are a part. We support the right of workers using the democratic process to withdraw their labour, with due regard to their country's interest and the possibility of disadvantageous consequences. While we have the right to advocate our own views, we must ultimately accept the decisions of the majority of our fellow citizens in the democratic process.

9. Participation in society includes the right to take part in the economic, social, cultural and political process — the right of all people to freely enrol and vote for their representatives in free and fair elections. This necessitates freedom of candidature. We believe that participation in the political process is vitally important, because politics is the vehicle through which a people are able to choose their path to personal, social, national and economic development, to seek protection for their human rights and the maintenance of peace and order. We believe that all people ought, without any form of discrimination, fear, or favour applying, to be free to participate in society in order to improve their own conditions in life. Active and free participation by young people in all aspects of the life of their communities will surely result in the building of a much more free and a better world. Particularly, we draw attention to the disadvantages suffered by disabled youth, and urge special consideration of their needs.

10. It is indispensable to work together in order to create a different international economic system which is based on mutual co-operation between developed and under-developed nations, and on equality of opportunities in international commercial transactions.

11. In this process of participation and mutual exchange, the less-developed should be encouraged to exercise their right to choose among various developmental strategies which will best respond to their national realities and needs and which will be subject to democratic national approval, and additionally their views should be fully taken into account in international forums.

12. The Conference seeks international attention to the following issues of concern to youth across the world:

- (i) The failure of many countries to recognise that, crucial to participation, and a pre-condition to the entire democratic process, is the freedom to express views and to publish and peacefully demonstrate opinion;
- (ii) The non-observance of the basic elements of democratic representation, being:
 - (a) Universal suffrage
 - (b) Freedom of candidature
 - (c) Secret ballots
 - (d) A system which encourages and guarantees full participation of views within society
 - (e) Equal and fair voting systems.

13. We condemn totalitarian and authoritarian regimes of whatever orientation for their opposition to the concept of participation; also we reject practices of political, social, linguistic and religious intolerance, with particular emphasis on racism in whatever form anywhere.

DEVELOPMENT

14. By the term 'Development', we understand growth and advancement in economic, social, political, religious, cultural and other human affairs. We affirm that development is incomplete if it does not involve the full consideration of the needs of the individual. We support the creation of opportunities for growth, and the removal of obstacles in the path of development. We advocate economic relations between nations as that may help to remove social and economic inequality in the world.

The youth of the world are in solidarity in their demand for justice, which requires that general development must be based on the right of each country to democratically choose the economic and social system that is thought to be best adapted to its own development. This integrated development will be centred on the national and inter-regional resources. Each country has the right to permanent sovereignty over its natural resources:

In accordance with the principles of economic and social self-determination, developing countries must be allowed the opportunity to control treatment, commercialisation and distribution of their own products. The prices of these products could be stabilised through measures negotiated between the trading partners. Trade agreements between developing and developed countries should be enlarged and improved to help promote exports of products by the developing to the developed countries. Moreover, the fight against waste of natural resources, from land and sea, will begin in the South and in the North and should be sensitive to preventing the further deterioration of the environmental qualities of life in our world.

15. We also believe that those natural resources located outside the territorial control of individual countries are owned in common by all mankind and form part of the common heritage of development of all mankind.

16. To effectively participate in our societies, we must first achieve development of all persons regardless of race, sex, religion, disabilities or ethnic background. To develop our indi-

To address our special concern at employment opportunities for young people, we call upon all countries of the world to promote the adoption of full employment, job training and continuing educational policies for young people, and adequate protection against age discrimination.

Social development should mean that attention is given to eliminating the vices that warp the minds of young people and remove them from the developmental process — vices like delinquency and drug abuse. We urge governments of the entire world as well as youth organizations to intensify their efforts in the struggle against the consumption, abuse and trafficking of drugs. We believe that all of these conditions are a restraint on the development of youth and their elimination must be given priority.

We proclaim that the compulsory repayment of external debts by the poor countries to industrialised nations constitutes a barrier to the development of the poorer countries of the world, and we call for suitable refinancing conditions which do not adversely affect the socio-economic structures of poorer countries.

In any event, and in accordance with the above-mentioned, these new conditions should take into account the political and economic conditions giving privileges to countries which are not totalitarian.

25. The International Youth Conference encourages all developed countries in the east and west, to increase governmental and non-governmental assistance to nations in the developing world. In this respect, assistance must be increased as a percentage of the GNP, and the basic needs such as food, housing, education and health must be stressed. We further denounce the use of aid for political purposes.

26. We believe that positive development should take place in every sphere of human activity, and the sum of personal expression through participation and development will produce the free, prosperous and peaceful persons, groups and nations.

PEACE

27. Genuine lasting peace is rooted in the re-affirmation and defence of freedom, social justice and mass participation in free and democratic institutions, and the elimination of all forms of discrimination. Peace signifies understanding between peoples and nations — a willingness to resolve differences in a pluralist and participatory atmosphere. Peace today can only be secured if democratic societies throughout the world are willing to pay the price of deterring aggression. In the long term we must, however, develop alternative means of achieving lasting peace all over the world.

28. To speak of peace, we must consciously re-examine all that has been written about it and, having done so, we would realise that it has been subjected to bad usage and manipulation by those sectors that use it as a tool or disguise for maintaining or introducing regimes with systems of a totalitarian nature, with dominant ideological tendencies alien to the idiosyncracies of our peoples. Peace is not simply the absence of war; it is social harmony, respect for human rights, and true freedom without the imposition of attitudes which undermine the dignity of peoples.

29. The existence of arsenals of nuclear weapons, above all those which are not subject to international nuclear non-proliferation treaties, constitutes a threat to peace, freedom and the very survival of our generation.

30. We commend bilateral and verifiable arms control. Agreements based upon false hopes, or which cannot be monitored, can increase tensions and create incentives for the use of force. These agreements must be implemented, monitored and verified to avoid tension and the use of force due to non-compliance.

31. We condemn the production, stockpiling, further development and use of chemical and biological weapons which have been outlawed by international treaties, as they pose a threat to the peoples of the world. We expect that severe sanctions will be imposed to ensure that these treaties are adhered to and respected.

32. In our attempt to achieve lasting peace in freedom, we give the education of young people the highest priority. Education for peace includes the propagation of free and democratic values, such as tolerance and the ability to criticise and fight against prejudice and oppression everywhere.

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33. Our commitment to peace impels us to condemn all dictatorial totalitarian regimes whether of the right or left, or any others that deny freedom and violate human rights, as well as to recognize the right of those oppressed peoples to resist exploitation, tyranny, external aggression and occupation, and to defend their own identity.

This means the recognition of the right of people to resist illegitimate governments. We consider legitimate governments to be those elected by democratic procedures through free elections on universal suffrage with secret ballots, that always guarantee political pluralism, freedom of expression and the separation between the state, the army, and the political party. Therefore we condemn subversive movements that try to destroy legitimately constituted democratic governments.

Likewise, we condemn the disproportionate allocation of the economic resources of our nations for military expenditure which is not necessary for their legitimate defence and the legitimate defence of their democratic allies.

34. One of the most threatening breaches of peace, in terms of personal vulnerability, is terrorism in all its forms. The most outrageous of all is State terrorism. Violent attacks against citizens for political purposes cannot be justified. There are few higher priorities than the enforcement of strong collective sanctions against groups and governments, whether of the right or left, which train, equip, harbour and support those practices.

35. We are also aware that regional wars pose a threat to world peace, and we look forward to more effective efforts by the United Nations and regional organizations in the maintenance of peace.

36. In conclusion, peace should be achieved through direct negotiations, a policy of genuine rapprochement and free and direct discussions between parties, and the recognition that genuine peace implies full observance of the rights of man and of peoples.

This principle involves the mutual recognition of common legal borders by all parties sharing the border.

The struggle for liberation is a duty for all.

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INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR AND BEYOND

37. We, young people from all over the world, believe that the basis of existence must be freedom; freedom of association, speech, worship, movement, and the free flow of information and ideas. Without these freedoms, there can be no lasting participation, development or peace.

38. The establishment of the mechanisms that will give effect to the aspirations set out in this document is the challenge that faces participants in this and future Conferences.

39. We should become ambassadors of this message in the literal sense of carrying these values across national boundaries. Exchange programmes should thus be encouraged, so that we young people may freely discover our mutual interests and common bonds.

40. We call upon all nations to open their frontiers and air-waves to the free flow of ideas and information, so that their populations do not fall victim to fears and misconceptions, so that they may be made fully aware of their common dreams and aspirations — their common humanity.

41. We recognize that, while there are many personal, cultural and national differences among us, that which unites us — the freedom to further our principles — is much more important than any minor issues that may stand in the way of unity.

42. We authorise the International Secretariat, elected democratically, the Jamaican National Organising Committee, and free youth everywhere, to present this Declaration to appropriate national and international bodies, and to explore the possibilities of regional and international institutions to further the bonds of solidarity forged here in the Caribbean in the spring of 1985.

43. The work begun so effectively here in Jamaica should be continued through the creation of a broad-based democratic process, balanced geographically between community groups and between the major elements in the democratic political spectrum, as the foundation for future international activities.
