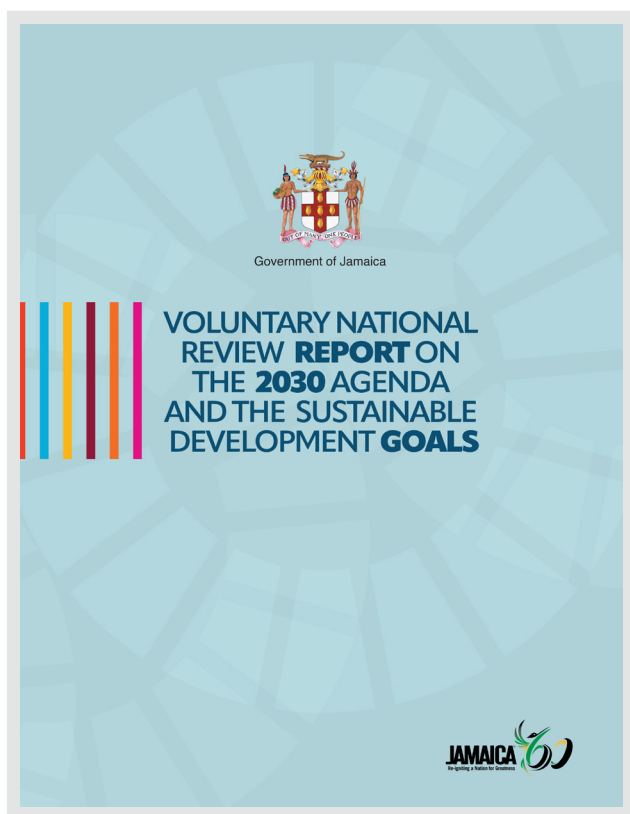


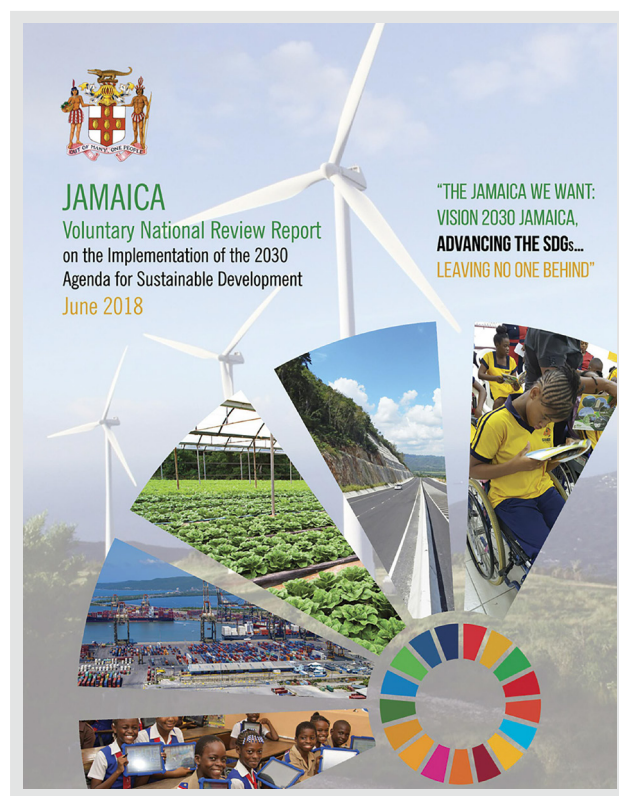
Sustainable Development Goals Tracker

JAMAICA 2026
Voluntary National Review

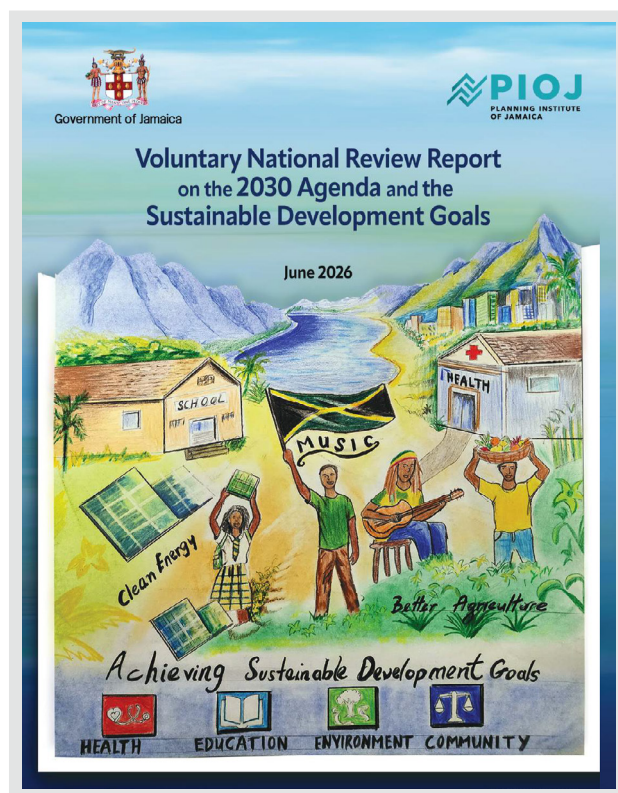




Jamaica VNR 2022
Report



Jamaica VNR 2018
Report



Jamaica VNR 2026
Report



DOI: 10.47556/R.UN-VNRS2026.31

Jamaica

2026

Voluntary National Review (VNR)

VNRs Submitted: 3 (75%)



SDGs Achieved: 0 (0%)

SDGs On-Track: 0 (0%)

SDGs Off-Track: 17 (100%)

SDGs No Progress: 0 (0%)



Introduction

Jamaica's third Voluntary National Review (VNR) in 2026 assesses progress in implementing the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), building on the previous VNRs of 2018 and 2022. The review examines progress, challenges and opportunities across the 17 SDGs, within the framework of Vision 2030 Jamaica – National Development Plan. It was undertaken against a backdrop of overlapping global challenges, including climate change and economic uncertainty, and the impact of Hurricane Melissa in October 2025. The VNR also considers the lessons from 10 years of SDG implementation and the actions required to accelerate progress towards 2030 and beyond (United Nations, 2026a; United Nations, 2026b).



VNR Framework Approach to assess Jamaica's Progress Towards the 2030 Agenda

A VNR is a self-assessment process through which the UN Member States review and report on their progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs. These reviews are voluntary, country-led, and inclusive, allowing each nation to share experiences, identify challenges, and highlight best practices.

VNRs are essential because they promote accountability and transparency in the implementation of the SDGs, allowing countries to demonstrate their commitment and progress openly. They help governments track progress, identify gaps, and strengthen policies, ensuring that national development strategies remain aligned with the **2030 Agenda**. Moreover, VNRs facilitate knowledge sharing among nations by enabling the exchange of experiences, innovations, and lessons learned. They also encourage multi-stakeholder participation, bringing together government institutions, civil society, the private sector, and academia in a collaborative effort to advance sustainable development. Finally, the VNRs serve as the foundation for the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) reviews, providing evidence-based insights that guide global discussions on accelerating progress towards achieving the SDGs.

Objectives of VNRs

- Assess a country's progress towards achieving the SDGs.
- Identify key challenges and barriers to implementation.
- Share lessons learned and innovative approaches.
- Mobilise support, partnerships, and policy coherence for sustainable development.

Methodology to Measure VNRs Progress

VNRs assess development performance using quantitative and qualitative data, aligning national priorities with SDGs targets. Countries use available indicators and national statistics to evaluate whether they are:

- Achieved, on-track, moderately off-track, seriously off-track or no progress.
- Facing data gaps or methodological challenges.

Due to incomplete or inconsistent data, some assessments rely on proxy indicators or qualitative descriptions of progress. Each SDG is rated on a **0–5 scale** to measure Jamaica's progress towards the **2030 Agenda**.

- 0 – No Progress:** No measurable progress or data available.
- 1 – Severely Off-Track:** Very little advancement; major gaps persist.
- 2 – Off-Track:** Limited progress with minimal improvement.
- 3 – Moderately Off-Track:** Some progress achieved, but key challenges remain.
- 4 – On-Track:** Noticeable progress made; close to achieving the target.
- 5 – Achieved:** Goal fully met with sustained performance and monitoring in place.

This scale helps to quantify Jamaica's SDGs performance, showing where strong progress exists and where further policy actions are needed. VNRs are vital tools for evaluating and accelerating progress towards the **2030 Agenda**. They enable countries to reflect on achievements, recognise shortcomings, and strengthen collective action for a more sustainable and equitable world.

Explanation of Analysis (Applied to Jamaica SDG Report)

This analysis applies the *VNR framework* to Jamaica's SDG Report. Initially, the report was processed using an AI tool to extract, summarise, and categorise data related to the **17 SDGs**. The AI provided preliminary insights into Jamaica's progress, challenges, and measurable indicators. Following the

AI review, the information was cross-verified by two independent human experts to ensure factual accuracy, contextual relevance, and alignment with the official UN SDG indicators. This validation step strengthened the reliability of the data interpretation.

Finally, a team of SDG experts conducted an in-depth qualitative and quantitative analysis to identify key challenges, potential solutions, and policy-level recommendations. The comprehensive approach, integrating AI-driven insights with expert validation, provides a balanced, evidence-based assessment of Jamaica’s progress towards achieving economic growth, highlighting strategic areas for improvement, innovation, and sustainability.

Overall Progress

Table 1 presents Jamaica’s progress across the **17 SDGs**, with ratings assigned to each goal based on the report’s findings. The ratings reflect the extent of progress made, highlight areas where challenges have been addressed, and identify those that remain unresolved.

Table 1. SDG Progress Scoring

Score: 3		1 NO POVERTY
Justification	- Jamaica’s social protection system is being modernised to move from fragmented safety nets towards an integrated, adaptive and life-cycle-oriented system. - The national poverty prevalence rate fell to 7.8% in 2024, compared with 16.7% in 2021, the lowest rate recorded since 1989.	
Challenges	- Accessibility remains uneven across groups and geographical areas. - Persons with disabilities face inadequate communication, high unemployment and inaccessible infrastructure, while rural and vulnerable populations, including the unbanked, face barriers to digital payments. - The elderly population aged 65 years and over was estimated at 256,500 in 2024, representing 9.5% of the population.	
Progress/Solutions	- The Government launched the Beryl Cash Assistance Programme in 2024, reaching over 14,000 households, with 97.0% of beneficiaries indicating satisfaction. - Following Hurricane Melissa, over 70,000 damage assessments were conducted and over 1 million persons were affected. PATH had 311,187 beneficiaries as at February 2024; approximately \$8.3 billion had been expended on PATH income-support cash transfers and \$510.0 million on post-secondary/tertiary education support as at December 2024.	
Unsolved Challenges	- Gaps remain for informal workers, the working poor, youth and elderly persons without contributory pensions. - Jamaica also lacks an integrated long-term care system for older persons and persons with disabilities. - Full interoperability of social protection information systems remains incomplete, while benefit adequacy and universal coverage across the life cycle require further progress.	



Score : 3

Justification	- Jamaica faces significant food-security risks because 18.9% of total imports are food imports. - Over the last decade, agricultural losses from droughts, heavy rainfall and storms exceeded US\$360 million. - Since 2020, the consumer price index for food increased by 68.0%.
Challenges	- The agricultural sector faces labour shortages, low productivity, poor infrastructure, limited market access and changing weather patterns. - Challenges include inadequate financing and insurance, insecure land tenure, limited extension services, pest and disease management gaps, and unequal access for women, youth and small-scale farmers.
Progress/ Solutions	- The real value added per agricultural worker increased from \$511,216 in 2015 to \$636,713 in 2024. - In 2024, \$1.2 billion was allocated under the Production Incentive Programme, while approximately \$5.0 billion was expended under the programme during 2022–2025. - In 2025, approximately 8,624 hectares of agricultural land were consistently irrigated, exceeding the revised national target of 8,302 hectares. - Following Hurricane Melissa, 98.0% of National Irrigation Commission customers had their water services restored within five weeks.
Unsolved Challenges	- Persistent constraints include inequity in access to land, capital and credit; inadequate agricultural infrastructure and support services; inadequate human-capacity development; unhealthy food habits and insufficient nutritional awareness; and lack of regulations for food labelling. - The VNR also identifies an acute need for locally sourced seeds and states that domestic capacity in seed production, fertiliser alternatives and locally manufactured agricultural equipment needs to be advanced urgently.



Score: 3

Justification	- Jamaica is undergoing an advanced epidemiological transition, with non-communicable diseases (NCDs) becoming the dominant causes of morbidity and mortality. - NCDs accounted for approximately 77.8% of all deaths in 2019, compared with 72.8% in 2000. - The age-adjusted NCD mortality rate was 454.8 per 100,000 population, compared with 57.6 per 100,000 for communicable diseases.
Challenges	- Jamaica faces a double burden of communicable and NCDs, alongside a triple burden when injuries and violence are included. - Maternal mortality remains above the SDG target: the mortality ratio was estimated at 98.9 deaths per 100,000 live births, against the target of less than 70.0 per 100,000. - Potentially avoidable premature mortality remained high at 284.5 deaths per 100,000 population.

Progress/ Solutions	- Between 2000 and 2019, HIV mortality declined by 46.8%. Measles vaccination coverage reached 91.0% in 2022. - Skilled birth attendance reached approximately 99.0%, while first-trimester antenatal-care uptake increased from 39.0% in 2018 to 47.0% in 2024. - Jamaica also achieved PAHO certification for the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis.
Unsolved Challenges	- Resource limitations, infrastructure gaps, uneven access to specialised care and shortages of critical healthcare workers continue to constrain the health system. - Behavioural and metabolic risks remain significant: 61.1% of the population was overweight or obese in 2022, diabetes prevalence increased from 8.1% in 2000 to 11.9% in 2017, and 32.6% of the population reported insufficient physical activity.



Score: 2	
Justification	- Education is identified in the VNR as an accelerator of progress, with human-capital development expected to have multiplier effects across the development landscape. Jamaica recorded enrolment rates of 96.2% at pre-primary and 100.0% at primary level, although participation declines at higher levels.
Challenges	- Enrolment was 62.8% for ages 17–18, while only 17.3% of 19–24-year-olds were enrolled in tertiary education. - Approximately 10,018 of 27,179 pre-primary students did not meet the minimum standard of foundational literacy and numeracy. - About 62.0% of children aged 7–14 demonstrated foundational reading skills and 50.0% demonstrated foundational numeracy skills. CSEC pass rates in Mathematics and English Language were around 60.0% and 40.0%, respectively.
Progress/ Solutions	- Since 2020, the Government School Digitalisation Project has issued 198,323 tablets, laptops, interactive panels, projectors and specialised equipment. - Approximately 750 schools received Wi-Fi coverage and 720 received internet services. - In the 2023/2024 school year, Sixth-Form Pathways enrolment increased from 14,000 to over 24,000 students. - The Government also launched the Empowering Jamaica's Future: SDG Joint Programme on Digital Transformation for Education in March 2025, projected to impact over 450,000 students.
Unsolved Challenges	- The VNR identifies inconsistent early-childhood education quality, inequity in educational quality, high out-of-school rates, declining teacher numbers, low tertiary enrolment, poor education infrastructure and data-access challenges. - Teacher shortages remain significant: data for 2023 reported a shortage of 7,000 teachers, while up to 30.0% of schools in rural areas were understaffed. - Digital inequality also persists: reliable broadband access was reported for 55.0% of rural students, compared with 85.0% in urban areas, and 40.0% of teachers were integrating technology into lessons up to 2023.



Score: 3

Justification	- Jamaica's 2023 Gender Development Index (GDI) was 1.013, while the Gender Inequality Index (GII) score was 0.358, ranking Jamaica 88th of 172 countries. - In 2023, the national poverty prevalence was 8.2 %, compared with 9.9 % in female-headed households and 6.2 % in male-headed households.
Challenges	- Persistent challenges include income security and labour market participation for women, including women engaged in domestic work and unpaid care services. - Gender-based violence, gender disparities affecting women and girls, and emerging under-achievement among boys and young men also remain concerns.
Progress/Solutions	- The Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act, 2023 came into effect on 22 January 2024. In 2024, 170 GBV training sessions reached 6,106 participants, while the GBV Helpline supported 7,063 persons. - As of December 2025, Parish Coordination Platforms had been established in 13 of 14 parishes.
Unsolved Challenges	- Continued action is required on gender-based violence, unpaid care, income security, labour market participation, and educational outcomes for boys and young men. - The VNR also identifies the need for stronger gender-responsive budgeting, expanded gender focal-point capacity and sex- and age-disaggregated data.



Score: 3

Justification	- According to the Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions 2023, 78.0 % of households nationally reported access to an improved drinking water source. - Access was 99.6 % in the GKMA, 74.5 % in Other Urban Centres and 51.8 % in Rural Areas.
Challenges	- In 2023, only 53.6 % of households nationally had Indoor Tap/Pipe as their main drinking-water source. Among households with piped water, 51.7 % experienced at least one water lock-off during the preceding 30 days. - Rural access was 32.5 %, compared with 78.5 % in the GKMA.
Progress/Solutions	- The Rural Water Supply Improvement Project has \$300 million allocated for the 2025/26 fiscal year to provide reliable potable-water infrastructure in St. Mary, Trelawny, Clarendon, St. Elizabeth and St. Thomas, with completion expected in March 2029. - The RWSL also implemented rainwater-harvesting projects at over 30 schools, institutions and communities.
Unsolved Challenges	- In 2023, 98.5 % of households had access to an improved sanitation facility, but access was 97.8 % in the GKMA, 87.1 % in Other Urban Centres and only 79.6 % in Rural Areas. - Moving from basic sanitation to safely managed sanitation services remains a significant challenge. - Wastewater services are also not provided by the NWC in Manchester and St. Elizabeth.



Score : 2

Justification	- Jamaica's energy consumption remained highly dependent on fossil fuels, with the fossil-fuel share increasing from 96.1 % in 2015 to 97.2 % in 2024. - Energy intensity increased from 3.86 megajoules per unit of GDP in 2015 to 4.03 megajoules in 2022.
Challenges	- Key challenges include high investment costs, limited access to financing and grid-integration constraints. - The Inter-American Development Bank identified a US\$11.9 billion financing gap in water, sanitation, telecommunications and energy infrastructure. - To move from 30.0 % to 50.0 % renewable energy, an estimated US\$1.2 billion investment is required. In September 2025, a blackout following a technical failure affected approximately 95,000 customers.
Progress/Solutions	- The Integrated Resource Plan (IRP-2), approved by Cabinet in 2024, sets a renewable portfolio standard of 50.0 % by 2030, supported by planned investment of US\$1.3 billion in capital and maintenance costs. - Approximately 100 MW of renewable capacity is expected during financial year 2025/26.
Unsolved Challenges	- Jamaica continues to face high dependence on fossil fuels, high renewable-energy investment costs and grid-integration requirements. - The existing grid requires investment in advanced infrastructure, including smart-grid technologies and energy-storage systems, to accommodate higher levels of renewable energy.



Score : 3

Justification	- In October 2023, Jamaica's unemployment rate declined to 4.2 %. - Female labour-force participation increased to 59.6 %, while the youth unemployment rate declined to 12.6 %. However, youth unemployment remained 8.4 percentage points higher than the overall unemployment rate.
Challenges	- Youth unemployment was 11.0 % in October 2024 and 10.6 % in October 2025. - In Quarter 3 of 2025, 25.5 % of youth were not in employment, education or training (NEET), including 27.1 % of female youth and 23.9 % of male youth. - Informality also remains an issue, with 510,000 persons employed informally in July 2022, representing 47.0 % of non-agricultural employment.
Progress/Solutions	- Under the Special Employment Programme, 352 young persons benefited in FY 2023/2024, while education and entrepreneurship grants totalled J\$50.8 million. - The Steps-to-Work Programme continued to provide employment and enterprise support, with total expenditure of J\$69.4 million.
Unsolved Challenges	- Labour productivity remains a challenge. Between 2021 and 2023, labour productivity grew by an average of 0.5 % per year, but declined by 0.4 % in 2023. - Productivity also declined in Construction (6.9 %), Manufacturing (4.2 %) and Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing (4.2 %) in 2023. - The VNR also identifies skills shortages, informality, youth NEET rates and the need for greater female labour-market participation as continuing challenges.



Score: 2

Justification	- The UNCTAD Productive Capacities Index (2022) ranked Jamaica 128th out of 194 countries. - The VNR identifies gaps in structural transformation and diversification, including limited export diversification, low technological adoption, constrained SME access to finance, inadequate rural road and digital infrastructure, and skills mismatches.
Challenges	- Between 2014 and 2023, labour productivity contracted by an average of 0.9 % annually. - Manufacturing accounts for approximately 8.0–9.0 % of GDP and employs approximately 80,000 persons, but faces high energy costs, dependence on imported raw materials and global competition.
Progress/ Solutions	- The MSME & Entrepreneurship Policy, under review in 2024, is being updated with a new implementation plan and strategy. - EXPORTJamaica, a digital platform, was launched in March 2024 to help exporters navigate global markets. - The Productive Inputs Relief Scheme also provides duty-free access to raw materials and capital goods.
Unsolved Challenges	- The VNR identifies continuing gaps in structural transformation, export diversification, technological adoption, SME financing, rural road and digital infrastructure, and alignment between tertiary education and labour-market needs.



Score: 3

Justification	- Jamaica is a net migrant-sending country, with over 20,000 persons emigrating annually. An additional 15,000 workers travel annually through short-term employment programmes in North America. - Migration contributes to remittances, employment opportunities and skills transfer, while the loss of skilled workers also affects human capital.
Challenges	- The VNR identifies the emigration of highly skilled professionals as a major challenge. - In 2025, the Government launched Jamaica's first Health Labour Market Analysis to understand health labour-market dynamics and address workforce shortages. - Over the past decade, an average of 1,019 persons have been returned annually to Jamaica from the three main host countries, creating challenges in reintegration.
Progress/ Solutions	- The Government has adopted measures including the National Migration Database, the National Policy and Plan of Action on Voluntary and Involuntary Migration, community-level reintegration mechanisms, the draft CARICOM Regional Migration Policy Framework, the National Diaspora Policy, expanded bilateral labour agreements and migration-sensitive climate adaptation planning.
Unsolved Challenges	- Persistent challenges include brain drain, stigma and discrimination, service-delivery gaps, limited accommodation, access to identification and services, and limited mental-health services for involuntarily returned migrants.



Score: 2

Justification	- The 2023 National Crime Victimization Survey reported that 89.9 % of persons nationally felt safe walking alone in their community during the day, compared with 69.4 % at night. - Informal settlements remain a national issue requiring a national strategy.
Challenges	- In eight of fourteen parishes covered by the squatter-management survey, there were 407 informal settlements covering 8,642.8 hectares, equivalent to 0.7 % of Jamaica's land mass, with 81.0 % of residents being long-term residents. - Nationally, 57.5 % of persons reside in a home owned by a household member, while 47.3 % own their land.
Progress/Solutions	- The National Housing Policy and Implementation Plan (2023) established a target of 15,000 new units per annum, together with renovation of 2,400 units. - Jamaica has also made significant advances in spatial planning and the use of geospatial technologies, including completion of its national Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF) workshop.
Unsolved Challenges	- The VNR identifies continuing challenges from informal settlements, insecure land tenure, chronic housing shortages, traffic congestion, declining public transport services, water-access inequalities and community-level safety concerns.



Score: 2

Justification	- The VNR identifies the circular economy as an approach to maximise the value of products and reduce resource degradation, pollution and waste. - As at 2024, the Recycling Partners of Jamaica initiative had a 38.0 % recovery rate, equivalent to 385,500,000 plastic bottles, against a target collection rate of 75.0 %.
Challenges	- Plastic accounted for 16.8 % of waste up to 2022. Jamaica's energy consumption remained heavily dependent on fossil fuels, with the fossil-fuel share changing from 96.1 % in 2015 to 97.2 % in 2024. - The VNR also identifies challenges in measuring impacts and maintaining efforts after projects conclude.
Progress/Solutions	- Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are being used to support the circular economy. - The GOJ and Caribbean Cement are using end-of-use pneumatic tyres from landfills as fuel in cement production. - The Trade (Plastic Packaging Materials Prohibition) Order (2018) and Natural Resources Conservation Authority (Plastic Packaging Materials Prohibition) Order (2018) support efforts to reduce plastic pollution.
Unsolved Challenges	- The VNR states that "At the current pace of efforts, SDG 12 will not be achieved by 2030." - Jamaica still lacks a national recycling facility and remanufacturing centres. - The organic recovery potential is 39.5 % from food and garden waste, with an additional 33.4 % from paper, cardboard and other material waste.



Score: 3

Justification	- Jamaica is highly vulnerable to climate change as a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), despite contributing less than 0.02 % of global greenhouse gas emissions. - Jamaica's environmental vulnerability score is 58.2, with an overall Multidimensional Vulnerability Index score of 49.6, which is 3.2 points below the global median of 52.8.
Challenges	- Jamaica faces increasing exposure to hurricanes, droughts, extreme rainfall, sea-level rise and other climate hazards. - On 28 October 2025, Hurricane Melissa generated loss and damage of J\$1 953 billion, equivalent to 56.7 % of 2024 GDP. - This followed Category 4 Hurricane Beryl in July 2024, which generated J\$56.7 billion in damage. - Climate finance remains inadequate relative to the country's vulnerability and needs.
Progress/Solutions	- Jamaica updated its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) and developed a 2050 Long-term Emission Reduction and Climate Resilient Strategy. - The revised NDC targets unconditional emissions reductions of 16.3 % by 2030 and 16.9 % by 2035, excluding forestry; including forestry, the targets are 26.3 % by 2030 and 27.1 % by 2035. - With international support, the targets rise to 30.6 % by 2030 and 41.7 % by 2035, including forestry. - Jamaica also secured a US\$764 million Resilience and Sustainability Facility in 2023 and established the US\$500.0 million Blue Green Facility in 2024.
Unsolved Challenges	- The VNR identifies inadequate climate finance, limited access to Loss and Damage Fund mechanisms, and the need for Climate Resilient Debt Clauses as continuing challenges. - Jamaica also requires strengthened resilience, technology transfer and institutional support to respond to its disproportionate exposure to climate impacts.



Score: 2

Justification	- Jamaica's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) encompasses approximately 266 000 square kilometres, substantially larger than the island's terrestrial landmass of 10 991 square kilometres. - The VNR identifies the Blue Economy as central to achieving SDG 14 while supporting livelihoods, food security and economic activity.
Challenges	- Jamaica's coastal and marine resources face threats from climate change, pollution and illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing. - In 2023, the Coral Reef Health Index recorded an overall average score of 1.8, compared with 2.2 in 2019; 59.0 % of the 29 assessed reef sites were ranked as critical and 41.0 % as poor. - Herbivorous fish biomass declined to 299.45 g/100m², from 610.07 g/100m² in 2019. More than 770 hectares of mangroves were lost between 1996–2016.

Progress/ Solutions	- Jamaica established Special Fishery Conservation Areas and implemented the Pelagic Fisheries Management Plan. - In March 2023, Jamaica declared fifteen Ecologically Sensitive Areas. The National Fisheries Authority has also introduced climate-responsive measures, including a pilot for offshore pelagic fishing, a Recirculating Aquaculture System facility, and capacity development for Sea Moss and Oyster farmers. - Average commercial fish abundance increased to 112.02g/100 m², from 64.66g/100 m² in 2019.
Unsolved Challenges	- Fisheries remain in a degraded state, with all sites assessed ranked as critical for the herbivorous and commercial fish indicators. - As of 2018, 30 fish species were threatened in Jamaica. - The sector continues to face restricted access to affordable financing, inadequate infrastructure, insufficient information management and ICT systems, and limited institutional capacity. - Capture fisheries production also declined significantly between 2015 and 2022.



Score: 3	
Justification	- Jamaica is ranked 5th globally among islands for plant endemism, with over 3 000 recorded plant species. - Its terrestrial biodiversity includes approximately 3 304 species of vascular plant, 600 species of ferns, 136 species of butterflies and 106 known bird species, of which 31 are indigenous to Jamaica and are migratory.
Challenges	- Although forest cover increased from 40.0 % in 2013 to 47.9 % in 2023, approximately 94.0 % of Jamaica's forest shows signs of human disturbance, with over 20.0 % of forest reserve lands affected by human activities. - Jamaica has lost 30.0 % of its mangrove forest to coastal development. - Plant biodiversity is also under pressure, with 42 critically endangered, 55 endangered and 116 vulnerable species recorded in 2021.
Progress/ Solutions	- As of 2025, approximately 25.0 % of Jamaica's land mass is protected, up from 8.0 % in 2016. - The National Tree Planting Initiative, launched in October 2019, had distributed and planted over 3 027 593 trees by October 2024. - The initiative has removed over 59.9 tonnes of pollutants, filtered 574 300 gallons of water, and absorbed more than 17 000 tonnes of carbon dioxide since its inception.
Unsolved Challenges	- The VNR identifies resource constraints affecting enforcement, scientific monitoring and management effectiveness. - There are insufficient forest rangers, limited technical expertise, inadequate surveillance technology and chronic staffing shortfalls across the 350 geographically defined zones or National Protected Areas. - Climate change, illegal logging, hunting of protected species and encroachment continue to place pressure on terrestrial ecosystems. - The VNR also notes that the forest-cover figures were provided before Hurricane Melissa in October 2025, and assessments of its impact on forest cover were still ongoing.

Score: 3

Justification	- National Development Plan, recognising that strong institutions underpin national security, good governance, economic stability, effective service delivery and public trust. - Between 2015 and 2024, Jamaica strengthened security, justice, governance, digital transformation and fiscal accountability.
Challenges	- Jamaica continued to experience high levels of major crime, public perceptions of corruption and declining trust in institutions. - The murder rate declined from 44 per 100 000 populations in 2015 to 42.3 per 100 000 in 2024, while Category 1 crimes declined from 275 per 100 000 in 2015 to 200 per 100 000 in 2024. In 2023, only 46.0 % of Jamaicans believed that the judiciary would punish a criminal.
Progress/ Solutions	- Justice sector reforms improved court performance between 2019 and 2024. - The Supreme Court case clearance rate increased to 83.0 % in 2024, while Parish Courts consistently exceeded 100.0 %. - More than 7 500 restorative justice conferences were conducted between 2022 and 2025, with a resolution success rate of 79.8 %. In 2022, approximately J\$577 million was invested in court infrastructure.
Unsolved Challenges	- The VNR identifies the need to sustain reductions in violent crime, modernise the justice system, strengthen integrity and transparency, improve citizen oversight and deepen citizen engagement to improve trust. - Resource constraints continue to limit the reach of anti-corruption agencies and local governance structures.

Score: 3

Justification	- Multilateralism is critical for Jamaica as a SIDS. - Jamaica has established diplomatic relations with over 165 countries and engages through organisations including the UN, G77 and China, AOSIS, CARICOM and GRULAC. - The SDGs are 98.0 % aligned to Vision 2030 Jamaica, providing a basis for coordinated national and international action.
Challenges	- Jamaica faces declining traditional Official Development Assistance (ODA), climate change impacts and evolving global partnership modalities. - The VNR highlights inadequate SDG financing, estimated at US\$4.0 trillion annually for developing countries, alongside insufficient climate finance and the need for reform of the international financial architecture to better reflect SIDS vulnerabilities.
Progress/ Solutions	- Jamaica has diversified its financing and partnerships through blended finance, PPPs, South-South cooperation and multilateral engagement. - The European Union's Global Gateway Initiative expects to mobilise €300.0 billion of investments from 2021 to 2027. - Jamaica has also strengthened domestic resource mobilisation through tax administration and compliance reforms and continues to engage in international tax cooperation.

Unsolved Challenges	- Traditional ODA is declining, increasing the need for alternative financing, private-sector engagement and blended finance. - The VNR also identifies continuing needs for technology transfer, technical expertise, stronger data and statistical systems, and reform of global governance and international financial architecture. - As Jamaica recovers from Hurricane Melissa, continued multilateral support for financing, technical expertise and building back better and greener remains important.
----------------------------	---

Source: (United Nations, 2026a; United Nations, 2026b).

Major Challenges

- **Limited fiscal space:** Constrained fiscal space limits Jamaica's ability to scale up investments in infrastructure, climate resilience, social protection and data systems.
- **Financing constraints:** The VNR identifies the need for innovative financing mechanisms to accelerate SDG implementation.
- **Institutional capacity:** Weak institutional capacity, insufficient resources and fragmented coordination remain key implementation gaps.
- **External shocks:** Natural disasters, external economic volatility and the lingering effects of COVID-19 continue to affect development progress.
- **Climate vulnerability:** On 28 October 2025, Hurricane Melissa generated loss and damage of J\$1 953 billion, equivalent to 56.7 % of 2024 GDP, with 45 lives lost. Hurricane Beryl in July 2024 generated J\$56.7 billion in damage.
- **Data gaps:** A 2016 assessment identified 223 applicable SDG indicators; only 66 were produced locally, data were available for 69 more, while 88 had no data sources.
- **Uneven SDG progress:** For Jamaica, 26.0 % of targets are on track, 35.6 % show limited progress and 38.4 % are worsening.

Key Lessons Learned

- **National ownership and alignment:** Vision 2030 Jamaica remains the primary mechanism for implementing the SDGs and provides alignment between national development priorities and the 2030 Agenda.
- **Whole-of-society approach:** Stakeholder participation through multi-stakeholder mechanisms and direct engagement has supported prioritisation and action across sectors.
- **Evidence-based planning:** Strengthening data architecture, monitoring and evaluation has improved evidence-based policy and implementation.
- **Institutional coordination:** The National 2030 Agenda Oversight Committee, SDG Core Group and Thematic Working Groups support policy coherence, coordination and accountability.
- **Resilience and adaptability:** The COVID-19 experience demonstrated the importance of adaptive planning, stronger social safety nets and diversified financing.
- **Partnerships:** Public-private-community partnerships and international cooperation provide important mechanisms for implementation and resilience.

- **Integrated approaches:** The VNR demonstrates that interconnected SDG actions and coherent policies can produce stronger development outcomes than isolated interventions.

Notable Contribution

- **September 2015:** Jamaica adopted the **2030 Agenda** for Sustainable Development and continued to align it with Vision 2030 Jamaica.
- **2018:** Jamaica completed an Audit of Jamaica's Readiness to implement the SDGs, conducted by the Auditor General.
- **October 2019:** The National Tree Planting Initiative was launched, with a target of planting three million trees in three years.
- **2020:** Jamaica passed the Data Protection Act, strengthening data governance and digital trust.
- **2021–2023:** Jamaica issued catastrophe bonds for disaster-risk financing, with the arrangements covering 2021–2023 and 2024–2027.
- **January 2024:** The Statistical Institute of Jamaica modernised the Labour Force Survey using standards from the 19th, 20th and 21st International Conferences of Labour Statisticians.
- **March 2024:** EXPORTJamaica, a digital platform supporting exporters, was launched.
- **2024:** IRP-2 was approved by Cabinet, establishing a renewable portfolio standard of 50.0 % of the electricity generation mix by 2030.
- **October 2024:** The National Tree Planting Initiative had distributed and planted over 3027593 trees.
- **2025:** Jamaica strengthened the national statistical framework and SDG monitoring systems, including continued work by STATIN and PIOJ.
- **28 October 2025:** Following Hurricane Melissa, Jamaica's disaster-risk financing arrangements were triggered, providing a full payout under the catastrophe bond mechanism.
- **2026:** Jamaica presented its third VNR, assessing 10 years of SDGs implementation and priorities beyond 2030.

Recommendations

- Strengthen fiscal and development financing and expand innovative financing mechanisms to support SDG acceleration.
- Deepen the whole-of-society approach through stronger public-private-community partnerships.
- Strengthen institutional capacity and coordination across government, civil society, academia, the private sector and development partners.
- Integrate resilience into investments and strengthen preparedness for natural disasters and other external shocks.
- Strengthen national data systems to improve the availability, quality, timeliness and disaggregation of SDG data.
- Localise SDG targets and implementation at national and community levels.
- Maintain evidence-based monitoring and evaluation to guide policy, financing and implementation.



- Prioritise transformative sectors, including energy, the bioeconomy, sustainable tourism and digital transformation.
- Strengthen social dialogue and accountability to support ownership and effective implementation.
- Use the lessons from the 2018–2021 MTF period and COVID-19 experience to build more adaptive, resilient and sustainable development systems beyond 2030.

Conclusion

The VNR concludes that Jamaica has made progress across the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, but that the pace of progress remains insufficient to achieve all the SDGs by 2030. The review highlights the need for accelerated and transformative action, strengthened institutional capacity, improved data-driven decision-making, stronger partnerships and greater resilience. It reinforces Jamaica's commitment to the **2030 Agenda** while recognising the need to restore and strengthen development gains and advance a resilient, inclusive and sustainable development pathway that leaves no one behind.

Reference

United Nations (2026a): Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2026. Available at: <https://hlpf.un.org/2026>

United Nations (2026b): *Jamaica Voluntary National Reviews 2026*. High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Available at: <https://hlpf.un.org/countries/jamaica/voluntary-national-reviews-2026>

Report Team

- Professor Allam Ahmed (**Leader**)
- Professor Arshi Naim (**Senior Researcher**)
- Nada Yousry (**Graphic Design**)
- Kumar Kaurav (**Web Master**)

The SDG Tracker (SDGT) is a global research initiative, developed under the auspices of the World Association for Sustainable Development (WASD), designed to systematically analyse and score the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) submitted by United Nations member states. The SDGT aims to enhance global accountability, promote transparency, provide evidence-based insights for policymakers, and facilitate cross-country comparison and benchmarking, with all its comprehensive findings made publicly available on the dedicated SDGs Tracker Platform. For more information about this report and/or any other activities of the initiative, please visit: www.sdgstracker.org and contact us: director@sdgstracker.org.



WASD COLLABORATION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS

WASD is delighted to be working very closely with various United Nations Agencies, most specifically with the UN Joint Inspection Unit (JIU). Both JIU and WASD are inspired by the conviction that the UN **Agenda 2030** for Sustainable Development (SD) and the **17** Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide the momentum for renewed UN engagement with the public and private sectors.

In **2018**, WASD collaborated with JIU on the UN project **Strengthening policy research uptake in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, aimed at reviewing the policy research uptake in service of the **2030 Agenda** for SD. For the first time in its **52** year history, the UN (aided by WASD) officially consulted academics and researchers from all over the world on the policy research uptake in the UN.

In **2019**, WASD also worked very closely with the UN JIU to undertake a UN system-wide review of policies, programmes, and platforms to support learning and enhancing the adequacy of training policies in the UN. The report **Policies and platforms in support of learning: towards more coherence, coordination, and convergence** was launched officially on **28** October 2020 at the opening of WASD's Online Learning Conference.

These various initiatives and events with the UN JIU have encouraged WASD to launch its **Sustainable Development Goals Tracker (SDGT)**.



Sustainability Tracker

ISSN: 2978-2384 (Print) - 2978-2392 (Online)



WASD
WORLD ASSOCIATION FOR
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



@WASD_news



WASD youtube



worldassociationSD



wasd-org-uk



www.wasd.org.uk



www.wasdtv.org

United Nations Voluntary National Review (VNR) *Reports*



<https://wasdlibrary.org/publications/books/un-vnrs-reports/>