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AT MONA, JAMAICA

## **Declaration of the Youth Dialogue on Food Security**

**OAS Youth Partnership Program (YP) Jamaica**

**National Youth Dialogue on Food Security**

**in preparation for the VII Young Americas Forum of the X Summit of the Americas,**

**February 27, 2026**

**UWI, Mona**

### Preamble

The Participants of the Jamaica National Youth Dialogue on Food Security, convened on 27 February 2026 in preparation for the VII Young Americas Forum of the X Summit of the Americas,

RECALLING that food security, as defined by the World Food Summit, exists when *all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life;*

RECOGNIZING that food security is fundamental to human dignity, public health, sustainable development, and social stability;

TAKING NOTE of regional analysis indicating that even moderate disruptions to food systems may have profound consequences for economic resilience and social cohesion across the Americas;

ACKNOWLEDGING that Jamaica's food security is influenced not only by domestic agricultural production, but also by affordability, household access, nutrition, infrastructure resilience, and environmental sustainability;

CONCERNED that Jamaica faces interlinked and escalating vulnerabilities, including high dependence on food imports, inflationary pressures, persistent poverty, exposure to hurricanes and extreme weather events, and the long-term impacts of climate change;

AFFIRMING the essential role of youth participation in shaping inclusive, forward-looking solutions to national and hemispheric challenges;



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HEREBY DECLARE THE FOLLOWING:

I. On Dependence on Food Imports

1. RECOGNIZE that Jamaica's significant reliance on imported food, representing approximately 74 percent of national food commerce, exposes the country to external price volatility, supply disruptions, and climate-related shocks beyond its control;
2. ACKNOWLEDGE the importance of international trade in national food policy, while EMPHASIZING the need to reduce structural vulnerabilities through agricultural diversification, strengthened regional trade linkages, and increased domestic production;
3. SUPPORT the revitalization of small-scale, traditional, and agroecological farming systems as a means of enhancing national and household food security.

II. On Inflation and Food Affordability

4. EXPRESS GRAVE CONCERN that rising inflation has eroded household purchasing power and disproportionately undermined access to nutritious food among low-income populations;
5. NOTE WITH ALARM that food price increases have consistently outpaced wage growth, compelling many households to reduce dietary quality and quantity;
6. CALL FOR policies that stabilize food prices, protect real incomes, and ensure that all households can afford a healthy and nutritious diet.

III. On Poverty and Household Access

7. AFFIRM that persistent poverty remains a principal driver of food insecurity in Jamaica;
8. RECOGNIZE that low-income households devote a disproportionate share of their earnings to food purchases, leaving them highly vulnerable to economic and environmental shocks;
9. URGE the strengthening of social protection systems, income-generating opportunities, and targeted safety nets to ensure equitable access to sufficient and nutritious food.

IV. On Hurricanes and Extreme Weather Events

10. ACKNOWLEDGE Jamaica's acute vulnerability to hurricanes and tropical storms, which repeatedly damage agricultural production, infrastructure, and food supply chains;
11. NOTE that recent extreme weather events have resulted in substantial agricultural losses, market disruptions, and heightened food insecurity;



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12. CALL FOR increased investment in climate-resilient infrastructure, disaster preparedness, early warning systems, and post-disaster food recovery mechanisms.

#### V. On Climate Change and Long-Term Productivity

13. RECOGNIZE that climate change poses a severe and long-term threat to Jamaica's agricultural productivity through rising temperatures, altered rainfall patterns, droughts, flooding, and land degradation;
14. NOTE WITH SERIOUS CONCERN projections indicating declining crop yields and increasing water demand under current climate trends;
15. SUPPORT the adoption of climate-smart agriculture, sustainable land management, and water-efficient farming practices to safeguard future food production.

#### VI. Commitments and Call to Action

16. DECLARE that the combined challenges of import dependence, inflation, poverty, extreme weather, and climate change constitute an urgent national food security crisis;
17. COMMIT to advocating for integrated and evidence-based policies that:
  - strengthen domestic food production and reduce excessive import dependence;
  - enhance social protection and income security;
  - build resilient agricultural systems and infrastructure;
  - advance climate adaptation and sustainability in food systems;
18. EMPHASIZE that failure to address these challenges threatens public health, economic development, and social stability;
19. AFFIRM that coordinated national and hemispheric action can ensure that all people in Jamaica, at all times, have access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food.

#### VII. Final Provision

20. RESOLVE to transmit this Declaration to relevant national authorities and regional partners as a contribution of Jamaican youth to the deliberations of the VII Young Americas Forum of the X Summit of the Americas.