



**SATEMENT BY
H.E AMBASSADOR MALGORZATA WASILEWSKA
HEAD OF DELEGATION, EUROPEAN UNION TO JAMAICA
AT
THE BELL RINGING CEREMONY AT THE JAMAICA STOCK EXCHANGE ON
THE OCCASION OF
INTERNATIONALWOMEN’S DAY, MARCH 8, 2019**

- Good Morning, it is a pleasure for me to share the stage on this International Women’s Day with these powerful women, the Hon. Olivia Grange, Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, Representative for UN Women Caribbean, Ms. Alison McLean, Therese Turner-Jones, IDB Representative, Jamaica and Ms. Suzette Whyte, Chief Financial Officer, JSE.
- Our participation in this global movement of bell ringing at stock exchanges is an indication of our commitment to advancing gender parity at all levels and is intended to raise awareness about the critical role businesses and markets can play in closing the gender inequality gap.
- I could not think of a better way or a more strategic platform on which to advance this message than here at the Jamaica Stock Exchange (JSE).

- Bloomberg, the Financial Media Company, has repeatedly cited the Jamaica Stock Exchange as the world's best-performing stock market. Bloomberg describes Jamaica's stock returns as a beacon for adventurous global investors.
- I salute the JSE for its inspirational achievement as a world leader; on the recent launch of the Jamaica Social Stock Exchange; and for the bold step it has taken in partnering with the UN, EU and the IDB to send a clear message about the link between gender equality and economic growth and sustainable development.
- An important point to note is that the JSE is currently headed by a woman. Women like Marlene Street Forrest, the JSE's Managing Director and Mrs. Rita Humphries Lewin, former Chairperson of the Jamaica Stock Exchange are a source of inspiration for all of us and for me personally. They and the many women in Jamaica who have led or are currently playing a leadership role in the various sectors of society are examples of what is possible in terms of smashing the glass ceiling and attaining equal opportunities for women but also of female excellence.
- I would like to also congratulate Jamaica on the significant strides the country has made in advancing gender equality, including being a world leader with the highest proportion of female managers in the world – 59 per cent, according to ILO (2015); and in education where women continue to lead according to the Global Gender Gap 2018 Report.
- Despite these important gains in a number of key areas there are significant disparities between men and women in terms of parity. In this regard, Jamaica's position on the recently published Women, Business and the Law 2019 report is concerning.

- The report which examines how women's employment and entrepreneurship are affected by legal discrimination ranks Jamaica 41 out of 187 countries. Jamaica's score on the index is 68.13 out of 100 which is below the average and below other Caribbean countries. (St Lucia, Guyana, The Bahamas, Belize, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Grenada, and Antigua and Barbuda.) I am interested to know how the Government views and will respond to this data; for we must jealously guard the gains made over the years to avoid slippages.
- Equality between women and men is one of the European Union's fundamental values. Working alongside our partners we are supporting several initiatives that defend women's rights, and eliminate barriers to their equal participation in all aspects of social, economic and political life.
- This bell ringing exercise is a demonstration of our (and our partners') commitment to advancing gender equality and I look forward to the other initiatives that the JSE will be engaged in to promote gender equality, and influence women's empowerment. In particular, how it will support women's financial education and inclusion in investment opportunities for wealth creation for themselves and their families.
- Much more must be done to empower and facilitate women's inclusion and in so doing ensure achievement of SDG5. This is why in partnership with UN Women and ILO; we are engaged in the Win-Win: Gender Equality means Good Business Programme. Win-Win aims to strengthen women's leadership and economic empowerment in the private sector. It is within this context that this bell ringing ceremony is taking place this morning.
- In September 2017, the EU launched a major new initiative to be implemented by the UN: the 'Spotlight Initiative'. With unprecedented funding of EUR 500

million, we want to start a global movement to end all forms of violence against women and girls all over the world. Selection of beneficiary countries in Latin America and the Caribbean region is now underway and of course, I am hoping that Jamaica will be among the beneficiaries.

- Either way, the European Union will not stop fighting for gender equality, for we are committed to ensuring equality for women and girls around the world.

Thank You