



Government of Jamaica

Voluntary National Review on the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals

Thematic Report

Local Level Alignment with the SDGs and
Recommendations for Strengthening
Localization

Thematic Report

Local Level Alignment with the SDGs and Recommendations for Strengthening Localization



Published by the Planning Institute of Jamaica
16 Oxford Road
Kingston 5
Jamaica W I

Telephone: (876) 960-9339
Fax: (876) 906-5011
Email: info@pioj.gov.jm
Website: www.pioj.gov.jm

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Title: Thematic report : local level alignment with the SDGs and
recommendations for strengthening localization : Jamaica Voluntary
National Review (NVR) Report / Government of Jamaica.

Description: Kingston, Jamaica : Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2022. |
Includes bibliographical references.

Identifier: ISBN 9789768103987 (pbk).

Subjects: LCSH: Sustainable development – Jamaica – Government
policy. | Economic development – Jamaica.

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Published June 2022



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Executive Summary

This thematic report assesses local level alignment with the SDGs and identifies recommendations for strengthening localization. The report sought to examine the extent of awareness of the SDGs amongst local authorities, identifies the key stakeholders in localization and the mechanisms that exist for coordination that translates national strategies at the local level and whether there is an enabling environment for local authorities to be involved in SDG planning and implementation. It further discusses the strategies to promote greater local ownership, innovation and support for SDGs localization.

Alignment of local plans with the SDGs and Vision 2030 Jamaica - National Development Plan (NDP) is critical to translating national development to the local level. Localization therefore considers to what extent do local sustainable development plans reflect alignment with the SDGs and the NDP in their strategies. In this context, assessing implementation, performance, and capacity requires examining the status of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), the main lessons learned from Jamaica's experience with the localization of the SDGs, best practices, and the major barriers to advancing localization and alignment of local planning with national goals.

The report therefore identifies gaps to be addressed and recommendations on how alignment can be improved and localization strengthened. It was informed by review of documentation, Interviews with key stakeholders and participant observation. The main findings were:

- 1.1. Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) has overall policy, administrative coordination and oversight responsibility for local sustainable development planning through the local government authorities (Municipal Corporations). The Local government authorities play a pivotal role at the level of individual parishes.
- 1.2. Other key stakeholders in the localization process include the Social Development Commission (SDC), the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), Parish Development Committees (PDCs) Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and local community groups (e.g. neighbourhood watch).
- 1.3. Local sustainable development plans (LSDPs) as well as Strategic Business Plans are aligned with Vision 2030 Jamaica—National Development Plan and SDGs implementation. The LSDPs, which are coordinated with the Strategic Business Plans (SBPs) guided by the SBP of the central Ministry, are developed around parish-level goals, objectives and strategies.
- 1.4. Parish-level activities are aligned to National Goals and a wide range of SDGs. Local authorities, through their respective plans and programmes address key SDGs, notably , Goals 1, 3, 6, 8, 9 and 11.
- 1.5. The activities of the Association of Local Government Authorities (ALGAJ), an organization representing local authorities, include support to the local authorities in the localization of the SDGs, for example, in the development of a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) Framework: One

of the outputs includes the development of 46 indicators aligned with *Vision 2030 Jamaica* to enhance monitoring at the local level.¹

- 1.6. **Achievements include** Completion of LSDPs aligned with National goals and SDGs by five (5) Local Government Authorities. A consultation on the localization of the SDGs was held in 2019 with technical support from the United Nations and the University of the West Indies. A European Union-funded project has been supporting the alignment of local sustainable development plans.
- 1.7. **Best practices for localization:** The Inter-Agency Network is a good example of a multi-level, multi-agency mechanism to support SDG implementation at the local level. Some local authorities perform at a high level in terms of governance, planning and implementation. These could serve as good role models in peer-to-peer learning.
- 1.8. **Issues and challenges include** the differences amongst local authorities in terms of capacities and SDGs activity. Resource constraints - financial and technical- are also evident, leading to challenges in implementation. Data availability, especially disaggregated data, to facilitate effective monitoring of the SDGs at the local level remains a challenge. More sensitization of communities is needed for full buy-in into the SDGs implementation process.
- 1.9. As local authorities interface with communities in the process of addressing day-to-day issues such as local roads, water supplies, sanitation, environmental quality and safety, there is a strong perception that greater fiscal and financial or administrative autonomy would contribute to greater efficiency and effectiveness in delivering services, which directly and indirectly contribute to outcomes and goals of sustainable development. An ongoing process of reforms has sought to address the constraints faced by local authorities, with mixed results.²
- 1.10. Despite some improvement in access of local government authorities to revenues, there is still a perception at the local level that increased fiscal and financial autonomy could contribute to increased resources and greater efficiencies in resource use.
- 1.11. **Key barriers to localization** include limited resources of local authorities, insufficient awareness and buy-in of communities which limits the effectiveness and sustainability of localization efforts.

2. Main Conclusions

¹ A reporting template was developed for local authorities to measure progress toward the SDGs and Vision 2030 Jamaica goals. Over 200 staff members of local government authorities have been trained. ALGAJ: Report-Measuring the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Vision 2030 Jamaica – National Development Plan (NDP) Goals at the Local Level. Association of Local Government Authorities of Jamaica (ALGAJ) /Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF)/ European Union (EU) “Local Government’s Role as a Partner in Development” Project Phase II “Localising the SDGs” Training Handbook.

² For example the local government reform process has been ongoing since the 1990s. Recent reforms such as the *Local Governance Act* (2016) have sought to improve the effectiveness of local government authorities.

- 2.1. Localization in the Jamaican context implies the involvement of local authorities – the Municipal Corporations, under the direction of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development - in the planning, implementation and monitoring of SDGs at the local (parish) level.
- 2.2. The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) plays the key policy-making and coordinating role in local sustainable development planning, while the Municipal Corporations with support from ALGAJ work closely in multi-level partnerships with central government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), Parish Development Committees, Civil Society and Community Based Organizations, in promoting and implementing SDGs at the parish level.
- 2.3. Local authorities and ALGAJ display a high level of awareness of the National Development Goals and SDGs reflected in efforts to align Local Sustainable Development Plans (LSDPs) with the NDP and the SDGs.
- 2.4. The relationship between the MLGRD and the Municipal Corporations is complex, in that the latter have legal autonomy as local government authorities, while at the same time are administratively within the portfolio of a central government ministry. This creates the potential for challenges in implementation which need to be managed to achieve efficiency. For example, resource constraints faced by local authorities in the light of the government’s fiscal constraints and policies may limit effectiveness in delivering needed services. The ministry is succeeding in maintaining a cooperative relationship. Additionally, continued reform of local government structures and practices should be seen as a developmental priority.
- 2.5. Local government authorities are an important bridge between central government and communities and are well placed to promote awareness and acceptance of SDGs among the population and their effective implementation.
- 2.6. To advance the localization of SDGs and improve alignment with national goals, it is important to develop an enabling environment to facilitate the involvement of local authorities in the planning, implementation and monitoring of SDGs. Relevant strategic objectives include:
 - 2.6.1. Increasing autonomy and financial resources of the local government authorities. This implies a greater commitment to decentralization and local government reform.
 - 2.6.2. Increasing awareness and buy-in at the local level among communities of the SDGs and national development goals. More effective communication strategies are needed.
 - 2.6.3. Increasing capacity for data collection and management to increase the effectiveness of contribution to monitoring and evaluation of SDGs and national goals at the local level.

3. Key Recommendations

Awareness and Advocacy

- 3.1. Local authorities should work with stakeholders at relevant levels to implement communications strategies which include: Increased engagement of citizens and communities to promote

ownership of the Agenda and SDGs, and their participation in the achievement of SDGs at the local level.

- 3.2. Steps should be taken to improve public education.
- 3.3. Local authorities should play an increased advocacy role in ensuring that local needs, priorities and expectations are reflected in national sustainable development strategies so that citizens at the local level may feel more included, and a more “bottom-up” planning process is supported.

Implementation

- 3.4. The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development should increase support to Municipal Corporations in recognizing the 2030 Agenda as a framework for action and setting up mechanisms that enable citizen participation and institutional accountability including technical support and coordination of Strategic Plans and Local Sustainable Development Plans with Strategic Business plans of central ministry.
- 3.5. Local government reforms such as broadened responsibilities and increased financial autonomy that contribute to a more enabling environment for the localization of SDGs should be supported as part of an enabling institutional framework for strengthening and making more effective localization of national goals and SDGs.
- 3.6. Local authorities in parishes where the governance structures and planning systems are less advanced (e.g. parishes with incomplete LSDPs) should be supported and strengthened through training and information exchange to ensure a uniform standard island-wide.
- 3.7. Multi-level governance mechanisms such as the Inter-Agency Network should be strengthened and expanded.
- 3.8. Needs assessments should be conducted by local authorities in all parishes and existing local plans and programmes reviewed to ensure full alignment with the SDGs and *Vision 2030 Jamaica*. At the same time, national level indicators should be disaggregated to ensure that the needs and priorities of communities are adequately considered.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- 3.9. Ensure the localized SDGs indicators and targets are operationalized and mechanisms for collecting, analyzing and disseminating required data to increase contribution to performance management and reporting on SDGs, including the VNR process are strengthened.
- 3.10. Provide capacity-building training and information sharing amongst local authorities to improve monitoring and reporting skills and capabilities.

Introduction

Background

When assessing localization as an aspect of SDG implementation, it is important to consider the context of Small Island Developing States (SIDs) as in most cases size and governance systems dictate that local authorities are subordinate to and extensions of the national system. The municipal authorities are agencies of the central government. In Jamaica's case, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development has responsibility for the Municipal Corporations for each parish. This is not the case in other jurisdictions, which may have larger geographical areas and political systems, and local authorities often have significant autonomy. Localization of the SDGs may be more explicit or direct; for example, there may be indicators, targets, data collection and management and performance reporting at the local and regional levels that are supplementary to, but distinct from the national level.

For Jamaica, localization of the SDGs means Localization of Vision 2030 Jamaica and the SDGs. It refers to the process of transferring and translating the integrated National Development Plan (NDP) and SDGs into planning, programming, and local cultures that impact the lives of Jamaicans within their everyday spaces such as homes, communities, schools, and places of work and worship. Specifically, this includes the translation of policy imperatives through the strategy framework of the NDP into sectoral, local, and other plans geared towards the delivery of transformational public and private goods and services for improving people's lives. Localization also involves the inclusion of the citizenry as change agents, and empowering and enabling them to equitably access and capitalize on the benefits of development towards achieving their fullest potential and the quality of life desired. The institutionalization of Vision 2030 Jamaica and the SDGs within local frameworks for creating meaning, "sense-making" and managing change is critical to their ownership and integration into planning and programming. Within this context, localization is a central tenet of the implementation framework for the NDP and requires investments in building stakeholder capacity for ownership, participation, and alignment of their values and plans.

Methodology

This thematic report presents an assessment of the alignment of local development planning with the SDGs and recommendations for strengthening localization. It was prepared as part of Jamaica's Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report 2022 process.

The report was informed by review of documentation including past VNR and progress report on the SDGs, Reports of the United Nations on localizing the SDGs and local project reports on SDG localization. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with relevant personnel from the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ); the Sustainable Development Goals Secretariat; Officials of the Association of Local Government Authorities of Jamaica (ALGAJ) and Municipal Corporations. Engagement of the Inter-Agency Network provided opportunity to gather data on how existing local government structures are supporting SDG implementation at the Parish level. A community engagement series conducted as part of the VNR enabled consultation with community development committees on their role in implementing the SDGs

at the local level and the extent to which community plans and actions have been aligned with SDG implementation.

Localization of SDGs in Jamaica

Meaning and scope

At the global level, there is a heightened focus on localization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and SDG 11: “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”. However, the entire SDGs framework is relevant to local development and so the thrust is to have that reflected in both the planning framework at the local level—which means that local development plans should be aligned with the SDGs and the Vision 2030-Jamaica National Development Plan.

Development planning around localization is not limited to planning that takes place at the local level of parish and communities. It involves the translation of macro-level policies into policies geared towards the particular needs of actors, institutions, and spaces at the meso and micro levels. Also, local development planning does not speak only to geography and spatial concerns. It addresses the range of development needs of citizens based on knowledge and understanding of the development situation and context, culture and capacity, systems and institutions that create the development profile for the locale. Local development planning is geared towards addressing the unique needs of a locale in a way that can be integrated and internalized within the local culture towards achieving equitable development outcomes across the various locales in a country. Localization represents the integration of differentiated planning and crafting of development results towards the achievement of shared national goals. In accordance with the national vision, all parishes, communities, homes, and other institutions should be places “...of choice to live, work, raise families and do business”. Accordingly, all tenets of the NDP and SDGs are being localized in Jamaica.

The Localization Strategy for Vision 2030 Jamaica and the SDGs is centred on the 7 Guiding Principles of Vision 2030 Jamaica and the aligned SDG principle of “leaving no one behind”. The strategy is implemented as part of the programme for coordination of the implementation of Vision 2030 Jamaica. It is currently being reviewed and revised in response to lessons learned, and includes the following:

- Advance a framework for sustainable and inclusive planning that targets the development needs of different locales and groups through “mass customized” planning as well as managing for development results that includes measurements of development disaggregated by relevant groups and also locale (parish, community)
- Build the capacity of stakeholders and create an enabling environment for aligning policy and planning geared towards local development needs with Vision 2030 Jamaica and the SDGs.
- Develop a communications and stakeholder engagement strategy framework and a programme for localization of Vision 2030 Jamaica and the Sustainable Development Goals that inclusively caters to the communication and participation needs of stakeholders through a universal design approach.

- Create a framework for trust building and change management built on accountability, transparency, and partnership.

Some key elements of Jamaica's localization programme have included:

- Engaging policy makers and planners for local development and other key stakeholders in the national development process towards promoting coherence and relevance between national and local levels
- Engaging a range of stakeholders in the development and implementation of Vision 2030 Jamaica through each Medium-Term Socio-Economic Policy Framework (MTF) – the main mechanism for implementation of Vision 2030 Jamaica and the SDGs. This includes advancing an inclusive process of engaging actors in planning and programming for local development (parish, communities) – such as policy makers, technocrats/planners etc. from ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs), and elected local government representatives. Also, representatives of children, youth, the private sector, civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations (CSOs, NGOs), academia, international development partners and the community of persons with disabilities, among others, have been engaged.
- Promoting broad-based participation in policy development, and engaging local development actors and interests throughout the associated results-based management cycle is key towards generating ownership and trust.
- The Policy development process is stakeholder-driven. The first phase of policy development and approval is geared towards achieving “Green Paper” approval informed by stakeholder consultation. The approval of a Policy as “White Paper” usually requires broad based cross-sectoral national and local consultations and key stakeholder buy-in. There is focus on ensuring that government policy is aligned with Vision 2030 Jamaica and the SDGs as well as translating policy imperatives into planning and programming through the MTF. Hence there is representation of localized policy input and interests in the implementation of Vision 2030 Jamaica and the SDGs.
- Promoting the alignment of Local Sustainable Development Plans (LSDPs) and other planning for the sub-national level with Vision 2030 Jamaica and the SDGs
- Engaging a range of stakeholders in the National Oversight Committee (NOC) for the SDGs, Vision 2030 Jamaica Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) and associated groups, including proxies such as the National Social Protection Committee and aligned National Poverty Reduction Coordination Committee (NPRCC) that support the implementation and monitoring of Vision 2030 Jamaica and the SDGs and have demonstrated institutional focus on localization. These groupings include representatives from private sector, academia, and non-governmental organizations, among others, at the national and local levels.
- Utilizing a range of social media sites to engage stakeholders with shortened and simplified versions of material on the NDP, alignment with SDGs, and other areas as well as giving a voice to key stakeholders through engaging them in competitions and features, such as the weekly “Youth Voices” feature.

- Cultivating and nurturing partnerships towards having comprehensive coverage of the Jamaican people at home and abroad in messaging about Vision 2030 Jamaica and the SDGs as well as their participation in implementing the national and global agendas.
- Utilizing all island engagements and sensitization on Vision 2030 Jamaica and the SDGs, particularly under the “Parish Talk Initiative” that includes visits to parishes to engage stakeholders in capacity building and knowledge and information sharing
- Developing a Local Development Dashboard which presents local (parish) disaggregation of national outcome indicators

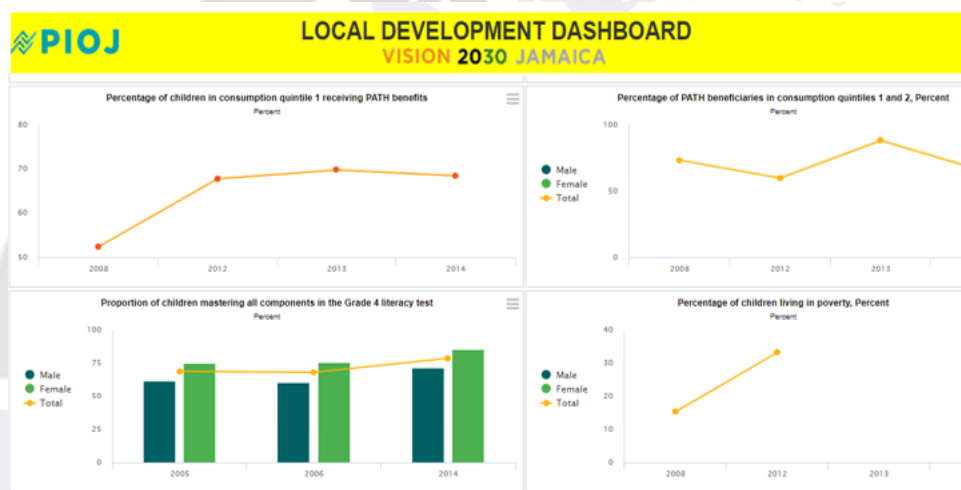


FIGURE 1: LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DASHBOARD OF VISION 2030 JAMAICA

The Local Governance Framework

The localization of the SDGs is supported by the overarching governance and institutional framework for Vision 2030 Jamaica and the SDGs. The central government ministry that has responsibility for local government is the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD). The MLGRD’s national-level strategic planning is guided by Vision 2030 Jamaica—National Development Plan and the SDGs, which in turn, provide a policy and planning framework for the local government authorities - the Municipal Corporations. The planning process is also guided by alignment with the Medium Term Socio-Economic Policy Framework (MTF). The local authorities through their Strategic Business Plans mandated by law (Local Governance Finance and Financial Management 2016) implement programmes and report into the Vision 2030 Jamaica planning and reporting.

The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) has overall policy administrative coordinating and oversight responsibility for local sustainable development planning through the local government authorities (Municipal Corporations). The Local government authorities play a pivotal role at the level of individual parishes.

The Municipal Corporations are supported in their planning activities by their representative association, ALGAJ, which plays a key role in the strengthening technical capacity for parish-level planning and monitoring, especially for the development and implementation of the Local Sustainable Development Plans (LSDPs).

Other key stakeholders of the Municipal Corporations in the localization process include:

- Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ)
- Social Development Commission (SDC)
- Rural Water Supply
- National Solid Waste Management Authority (NSWMA)
- Board of Supervision
- Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM)
- Jamaica Fire Brigade
- Parish Development Committees (PDCs)
- Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)
- Local community groups (e.g. neighbourhood watch)
- International partners (e.g. UN, EU) may provide technical support or project funding.

The Local Governance Framework allows for participation from CSOs, private sector organizations and other community stakeholders in governance, planning and implementation of local plans and projects that advance national development in alignment with the SDGs. The local government authorities all work closely with the parish development committees (PDCs) which are umbrella organizations for community based organizations and institutions. Local community groups (e.g. neighbourhood watches) meet regularly to discuss issues and articulate these issues to the PDCs, which usually have quarterly meetings. In this regard, the SDC plays an important role as the Government of Jamaica's (GOJ) agency that supports and facilitates community participation. The SDC's ability to mobilize community-based groups to participate in the overall governance process, particularly in consultations, contributes to community ownership of local-level plans and actions that advance *Vision 2030 Jamaica* and the SDGs.

Alignment of Local Plans with SDGs

The Local Governance Act (2016) provides the legislative framework for actions and activities at the local level which are seamlessly aligned to the SDGs. For instance, the importance of Local sustainable development is included in Section 21 (b) of the Act which provides for "promoting, spearheading and coordinating local sustainable development." The localization of the SDGs is important to the commitment and ethos of stakeholders in achieving the Vision 2030 Jamaica Goals and the Sustainable

Development Goals. The local authorities cover a broad range of issues under the SDG rubric through the LSDPs.

Five Municipal Corporations have prepared LSDPs to-date, all referencing the four goals of Vision 2030 Jamaica – National Development Plan. Most incorporated specific SDGs and relevant targets, including actions on SDG 13 on climate change, protection of the natural environment (SDGs 14, and 15), gender equality (SDG 5), and human settlements (SDG 11), among others. The five parishes voluntarily included among the thematic areas of focus for parish development and community action, health, agriculture and food security, education, and environmental protection, making the plans highly relevant for national SDG implementation.









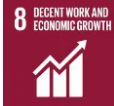

Examples of relevant projects implemented include:















- **Resources and Disaster Risk Reduction in Mocho** - Goal 13: Climate Action
- **Spotlight Initiative** - Goal 5. Gender equality
- **Strengthening Human Resilience in Northern Clarendon and West Kingston** (Goal 11. Sustainable cities and communities)
- **Rejuvenating Communities Part 1** (Goal 11. Sustainable cities and communities, Goal 12. Responsible consumption and production)















Alignments of LSDP with Vision 2030 Jamaica and SDGs is provided in Table 1.



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Parish	Key Results Areas	Alignment with SDGs
Trelawny	<p>Preserve the quality and quantity of the natural environment and protect the environmentally sensitive ecosystems and protected species.</p>	 
	<p>Develop, implement and maintain the social and cultural systems of the communities where the well-being, livelihood and welfare of the residents are enhanced. Protect, conserve and enhance the appearance, character and historic integrity of the built environment. Improve the functioning of the built environment to create a sustainable and attractive environment for the residents of the Parish.</p>	
	<p>Develop and sustain economic growth capabilities as well as promote economic opportunities that improve the quality of life of residents.</p>	 
St Elizabeth	<p>Natural Environment- ensure growth and development do not conflict or compromise the state of the natural environment</p>	 
	<p>Disaster Mitigation and Management- improve disaster mitigation measures supporting climate-resilient communities and reduction of disasters in communities Social Environment- provide liveable communities through the improvement of conditions Built Environment- improves and provides reliable, accessible and efficient infrastructure</p>	
	<p>Economic Growth- promotes sustainable economic growth, reduces unemployment, encourages diversity in economic opportunities and investments</p>	 

Parish	Key Results Areas	Alignment with SDGs
	Land Use- ensures land use development for future expansion is aligned with environmentally sustainable practices to achieve balanced development	  
	Governance- increase community involvement and public participation	
St Catherine	Food Security	
	Health	
	Education and Training	
	Water Supply and Surface Water Drainage	
	Local Economic Development	 
	Housing Community Facilities and Recreation Transport and Pedestrian Movement Waste Management Disaster Mitigation Culture and Historic Preservation	
	Natural Environment	 
	Governance Security and Safety	

Parish	Key Results Areas	Alignment with SDGs
Manchester	The Natural Environment: Cool, Clean, Green	 
	Creating Strong and Vibrant Communities	
	Growing & Diversifying the Economy	 
	Responsible and Creative Use of Space	
Clarendon	Environmental Action	    
	Social Well-Being	
	Economic Prosperity	 

Achievements

The government and local authorities have successfully undertaken relevant initiatives in furtherance of the 2030 Agenda including:

- An all-island consultation on the localization of the SDGs with thirteen (13) local authorities was held in 2019, with technical support from the United Nations. The contribution of PIOJ’s “Parish Talk” initiative in sensitizing local stakeholders to the Vision 2030 Jamaica National Development Goals as well as SDGs.
- Following consultations, 46 indicators were developed in line with the SDGs and Vision 2030 Jamaica –National Development Plan (UNDP). Over 200 local government authorities have been trained. This was part of “Local Government’s Role as a Partner in Development”, an EU-funded project supporting the alignment of local sustainable development plans.
- Establishment of a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).
- A reporting template was developed for local authorities to measure progress towards the SDGs and goals of Vision 2030 Jamaica— National Development Plan.
- Reviews of Strategic Plans and LSDPs of local authorities to ascertain alignment with the SDGs and Vision 2030 Jamaica—National Development Plan
- Development of a communications roadmap that should guide engagement with local community actors.
- Many parishes have developed Local Sustainable Development Plans (LSDP) which are linked to the SDGs.
- Several key partnerships have been forged to implement the LSDPs and local plans for the SDGs, including:
 - Inter-Agency Networks support interagency collaboration and implementation. The ministries have oversight of the agencies with responsibility and portfolio for the entire country and they operate within parishes as well. This provides an opportunity for those agencies to act together on the local issues.
 - The Social Development Commission (SDC) manages community participation within the parishes to achieve national priorities.
 - Partnerships with international development partners, for example, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) make available technical and financial support for localization.

Feature: Localising SDGs and Integrated Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change

Integrating Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation through Local Climate Adaptive Living (LoCAL) Facility

Sustainable Development Goal 13 provides for urgent actions to be taken to combat the impact of climate change. The MLGRD and the local authorities have been among Jamaica's lead advocates for action to address climate change. The Ministry has been giving the necessary support to the Climate Change Division within the Ministry of Economic, Growth and Job Creation (MEGJC) to integrate climate change adaptation into local government planning and budgeting systems under the Local Climate Adaptive Living (LoCAL) facility. LoCAL is an internationally recognized country-based mechanism that provides climate finance to local authorities. It also aims to promote green-climate resilient communities and local economies. Efforts are being made to secure funding for local climate change adaptation through this facility which is designed and hosted by the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF).

USAID/MLGRD Partnership – Energy Resilience Assessment Project

Sustainable Development Goal 7 and 9 provides for access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy. Through the partnership with the American Government through the USAID, our Municipal Corporations will get an opportunity to build their resilience to natural disasters. This will be done through an Energy Resilience Assessment of the island's critical infrastructure which is essential for effective relief and recovery operation. These critical infrastructures include emergency shelters, police stations, fire stations, hospitals, and emergency operation centers to ensure continuity of critical services, protect vulnerable population, and enhance capacity to provide and maintain basic services within communities during a disaster.

Parish Disaster Resilience Score and Making Cities Resilience 2030 (MCR2030)

Sustainable Development Goal 11 encourages country/parties to build sustainable cities and communities by making them inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable for humans to live. The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development has demonstrated its commitment to building disaster resilience at the local government level whereby all 14 Municipal Corporations have completed the assessment of their disaster resilience around the UNDRR Ten (10) Essentials for Making Cities Resilient. By this, all Local authorities have signed on to the UNDRR Making Cities Resilient 2030 Initiatives. Jamaica is the first country in the world to have all its local authorities committed to strengthening disaster resilience by joining the MCR2030 which is being led by the UNDRR. This was timely, as Jamaica hosted the 7th Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the Caribbean, 2021. Signing on MCR2030 Initiatives shows the commitment to accelerate development of local disaster risk reduction, integration of disaster risk reduction with climate change adaptation and sustainable development and the implementation of strategies to reduce our risk.

Localization of SDG 15 (UNCCD & SOILCARE Phase 1)

The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development is the Focal Point entity for the United Nation Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and through its efforts, the Municipal Corporations have been the main drivers of this process at the local level. Jamaica will benefit from the UNCCD SOILCARE Project. The project will be implemented in the parish of St. Elizabeth and overseen by the St. Elizabeth Municipal Corporation. The project represents one such transformative project for Land Degradation Neutrality in Jamaica. The project soil data including maps will be updated and an economic livelihood project will be implemented in Holland Estate in the parish.

7th Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the Caribbean (RP21)

Jamaica hosted the 7th Regional Platform, being the first Caribbean country to host such a prestigious conference. This has clearly demonstrated Jamaica's commitment to the SDGs in building a sustainable and resilient nation. The hosting of the conference reflected the commitment to the SDGs and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction agreement to which Jamaica is a signatory. While implementing and measuring all the targets for the Sendai framework, Jamaica concentrated heavily on Global target E 'Substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020. Through the support of the MLGRD and its agencies, including the ODPEM and Local Authorities, the strategies and plans completed, included:

- National Framework for Disaster Risk Management
- National Disaster Response Coordination Plan (NDRCP)
- Jamaica's Comprehensive DRM Policy
- Multi – Year DRR Plan 2020 – 2030
- Parish Disaster Plans representing the 14 Municipal Corporations islandwide.

Jamaica was recognized by the UNDRR as the first country in the history of the Regional Platform to have a youth conference preceding the launch and youth were also invited to participate in high level meetings. By giving focus to increasing the awareness of youth and incorporating gender equality in the planning and execution of the conference, Jamaica demonstrated contribution to SDGs 4 and 5.

The Disaster Risk Management Act, 2015 empowers local authorities to be responsible for the functions of managing and giving effect to matters within their local jurisdiction. Accordingly, the Act was utilised for the management of the COVID Pandemic and saw local authorities, consistent with Goal #11, being key actors in enforcement and compliance activities for the management of the pandemic.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The local authorities have received significant technical support to manage performance in terms of the 2030 Agenda and national goals at the local level— a critical component of a successful localization.³ Here, as in other areas, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) is expected to play a key role as part of providing an enabling environment for the localization of SDGs.

Under the European Union-funded, “Local Government’s Role as a Partner in Development” Project Phase II –Localising the SDGs” the local authorities have sought to develop capacity for monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs and national goals at the local level. The training materials were developed to provide information for local government officers including:

- Background information on the SDGs and Vision 2030 Jamaica—National Development Plan indicators
- Data collection plan
- Description of local indicators and their collection and analysis methodology

As the global indicators are not all applicable or available at the local level, a set of 46 indicators were selected based on criteria of relevance for local authorities, level of impact of the local authority and availability of data. These indicators are focussed on the work of local authorities on a parish basis. The 46 indicators are divided into the following categories:

- Social Protection
- Human Resources
- Local Economic Development
- Municipal Works and Planning
- Mitigation and Preparedness

Lessons Learned

- Stakeholders at the local level see the importance of the SDGs and national development planning when exposed to information.

³ For example, an all-island consultation on the localization of the SDGs local authorities was held in 2019, with technical support from the United Nations and the University of the West Indies. Indicators were developed for the implementation of SDGs and Vision 2030 Jamaica –National Development Plan. Over 200 local government authorities have been trained as part of an EU-funded project supporting the alignment of local sustainable development plans.

- Owing to the focus of MCs on local level development, there are conceptual challenges in aligning their development priorities with national development planning priorities, that are general and may seem disconnected.
 - Hence, there is need for evidence- and demand- driven engagement and capacity building that is sensitive to cultural nuances and unique development needs.
 - Stakeholders require instruction and guidance in developing Local Sustainable Development Plans (LSDPs) and other regional, parish and community plans that are aligned with the principles, results and strategy frameworks, and overarching Theory of Change (ToC) for Vision 2030 Jamaica and the SDGs.
 - Stakeholders have expressed demand for targeted workshops and resource/training material presented in simple, relatable language with illustrations reflective of local culture and context.
 - There is also demand for greater availability of quality data on the parishes and communities to support alignment of their development planning and programming with Vision 2030 Jamaica and the SDGs.
- Localization of policy and planning requires:
 - Formulating policy, and national and sector plans that are informed by local evidence and considerations, and are designed for local adaptations
 - Formulating local development plans that are informed by local as well as country, regional and global evidence to promote coherence and integration.
 - Developing Local Sustainable Development Plans (LSDPs) and other regional, parish and community plans that are aligned with the principles, results and strategy frameworks and overarching Theory of Change of Vision 2030 Jamaica and the SDGs. The importance of aligning principles should not be underestimated. The principles determine strategic and policy imperatives – who, what and where is targeted for development and when; resource allocation; and what, who, where and when is prioritized in the measurement and management of development results. Aligning the main tenets of national and local planning allows for coherence as well as the identification of good practice and lessons learned across and in locales. This should be advanced through the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the processes and results of policy translation in coherent and aligned national, sector and local plans.
- There is a broad consensus around the need for evidence-based policy making and planning at all levels

- Innovative means are required to address gaps in disaggregating global/regional/national outcome indicators to the local level as part of promoting policy coherence
 - Capacity building of stakeholders is required
- Investments in broad based sensitization and capacity building are demanded.
 - Stakeholders at the Parish Level want to be engaged within their own physical and cultural spaces.
 - For localization of Vision 2030 Jamaica and the SDGs to be owned by MCs, and the citizenry they need to be engaged in promoting their roles in the achievement of Vision 2030 Jamaica and the SDGs. For example, the MCs were energized, with several adding their own cultural branding, in recording short stakeholder ownership videos “Parish of Choice” videos as part of “Parish Talk” 2019. Also, youth participation in youth focused workshops has included fruitful and passionate dialogue; and youth have been excited to share their thoughts in the weekly “Youth Voices” feature posted on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter where they state their role in national development.
 - A clearly articulated evidence-driven communications strategy is required to ensure that communication targets the unique needs of stakeholders and demonstrate respect for differences in abilities – for example, ensuring that interpreters are available in stakeholder consultations towards promoting the inclusion of persons who are deaf or hard of hearing; narrating videos to cater to the visually impaired and blind; and catering to differences in education, age, and experiences etc. Principles such as universal design, social responsibility and inclusion are important in communications geared towards stakeholder ownership of the development process.
 - There is a need to establish mechanisms for “conversations” between national and local development processes as well as mechanisms for alignment. There must be consideration for agility and adaptation. Hence, alignment and coherence between cascading and horizontally arranged structures and institutions may be more viable than seeking to create “super” committees etc. for managing the various levels, dimensions, and complexities of development.
 - Value stakeholder consultations and the input of experts as sources of evidence. The voices of citizens are critical in the interpretation of the meanings of development policies, plans, actions, and results in the lives of Jamaicans. Also, the voices of experts help us to interpret how development processes are being translated in different subject areas, disciplines and applied fields, and the implications for development.

Good Practices

Significant progress has been made in raising awareness of the SDGs and implementing and monitoring SDGs at the local level. Best practices for localization that should be maintained and generalized include:

- Local government authorities have incorporated SDGs targets, Vision 2030 Jamaica, and other relevant frameworks into their LSDPs, thus aligning local sustainable development plans to these high-level goals and targets (See Table). Thus the first critical step to the implementation of SDGs has been made.
- The Inter-Agency Network is a good example of a multi-level, multi-agency mechanism to promote the SDGs. Some local authorities perform at a high level in terms of governance, planning and implementation; they could serve as good role models in peer-to-peer learning.
- Partnership at the local level has been working well in many parishes; sharing the experiences of more effective municipal corporations can raise performance levels across local government authorities.
- The consistent engagement has strengthened and enabled local participation and supported the alignment of their plans with the SDGs process. The central ministry—MLGRD—, as well as ALGAJ, play important and complementary roles in the development and implementation of plans.
- Technical support provided by International Development Partners (IDPs) like the United Nations (UN) and European Union (EU) has sought to increase awareness and knowledge about the SDGs amongst the local authorities.

Issues and Challenges

Key issues and challenges include:

- Lack of uniformity: Local authorities perform at different levels in terms of capacities and SDGs activity. Not all have developed up-to-date LSDPs, and parish-level governance mechanisms such as the PDCs are not equally active in all parishes. A more uniform standard of performance will enhance the process of localization of the SDGs. Capacity building is needed at the local level for SDGs planning, monitoring, and evaluation
- Inadequate funding of local government activities and those of parish-level partners reflect fiscal constraints of central government and the general level of economic activity. However, innovative financial strategies for local government need to be thoroughly explored as part of creating a more enabling environment for localization.
- Technical capacity is generally limited and is related to resource constraints. Efforts are made by local authorities and central government to access additional resources (e.g. from international development partners such as the UN and the EU). However, more comprehensive strategies may be needed to provide a permanent solution.

- While there is a monitoring plan for aligned activities⁴ data availability is limited, especially disaggregated data to facilitate effective monitoring of the SDGs at the local level. Thus, monitoring and using indicators remain an implementation problem for the local government authorities. This is an area in which many local governments in developing countries, unfortunately lack adequate capacity, as mechanisms used to collect national-level data are not effectively deployed at the sub-national/parish level, due mainly to resource limitations.
- More sensitization of community persons is needed for full buy-in into the SDGs implementation process.
- To address these issues, an examination of how the enabling environment for localization can be improved by considering innovative approaches to local governance, including increased fiscal and financial autonomy for local government authorities to better meet the needs of diverse local communities should be considered as part of the way forward. A lack of autonomy can make it difficult for local officials to react to political, social, environmental, and economic changes; it may restrain local creativity and policy innovation. This is very likely to impact efficiency and effectiveness in implementing the SDGs at the local level.

Key Barriers to Localization

- Local government authorities are unique in that while they possess legal autonomy, they are also administratively directed under the portfolio of a central government ministry in the existing governance arrangement. This has consequences in terms of the resources available to local authorities, as resources allocated by the central government are often limited. Although important changes have been made as part of an ongoing local government reform process, e.g. increased access to fiscal resources such as revenues from property tax, limited fiscal and financial autonomy are seen to limit the ability of local authorities to generate revenue. This has been identified by local authorities as a potential obstacle to accelerating the pace of the localization process. Limited autonomy of local government authorities may also restrict the ability of local authorities to develop and implement innovative solutions that may be appropriate for their specific situations.
- Insufficient awareness and buy-in of local communities of the 2030 Agenda. There is insufficient communication and knowledge of the SDGs and the SDGs frameworks and how the community level can contribute towards the SDG implementation and the role they play.⁵
- There is a need to strengthen the partnership with actors at the local level including agencies that work with communities. At the coordinating level, there is work to be done to strengthen work with the local actors.

⁴ For example, the MLGRD provides data and information in the Sector Highlights section in plans sent to the Office of the Cabinet; data and information is sent to the Vision 2030 Secretariat and ESSJ etc.

⁵ This was supported by the findings of a PIOJ evaluation of the “Parish Talk” initiative.

Conclusions

- Localization in the Jamaican context means the involvement of local authorities—the Municipal Corporations and ALGAJ – and local level stakeholders in the planning, implementation and monitoring of SDGs at the local (parish) level.
- The Municipal Corporations, supported by ALGAJ, and under the direction of the MLGRD, work in multi-level partnerships with central government ministries, agencies and departments, Parish Development Committees (PDCs) and civil society and community-based organizations, to promote and implement SDGs.
- A wide range of SDGs is covered by The Local Sustainable Development Plans (LSDPs) and other initiatives of the local government authorities. These include areas that fall under the remit of the local authorities as well as those that involve collaboration with central government, civil society and communities.
- Local authorities and ALGAJ display a high level of awareness of the national development goals and the SDGs and incorporate these into their LSDPs, which are aligned with the Vision 2030 Jamaica – National Development Plan (NDP) and the SDGs.
- Local government authorities are an important bridge between central government and communities and are well placed to promote awareness and acceptance of the SDGs among the population, and their more effective implementation.
- It is important to develop an enabling environment to facilitate the involvement of local authorities in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the SDGs; this may require increased autonomy and increased financial resources being made available to the local government authorities. This implies a greater commitment to decentralization and local government reform.
- Major barriers to advancing the localization of the SDGs and improving alignment with national goals include resource constraints of local authorities and insufficient awareness and buy-in of the SDGs and national development goals at the local level. More effective communication strategies are needed. Insufficient capacity for data collection and management also reduces the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs and national goals at the local level.
- Coordination between the different levels of government to harmonize their plans and priorities has become central to supporting SDGs strategies and monitoring efforts.
- Monitoring the implementation of local plans is essential to ensuring that the holistic approach envisaged by the SDGs is reflected in local projects and investments. The prioritization of a specific set of goals and targets in local plans also requires analysis.
- Localization of the SDGs can create opportunities to improve planning processes and increase the involvement of local stakeholders in local policymaking.

- In the Jamaican context, the alignment of strategic plans of municipal authorities with the strategic plans of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) provides useful pathways for localizing SDGs, especially where local sustainable development planning has made progress. In this context, consideration should also be given to the role of communities and Civil Society Organisations in localizing SDGs through Parish Development Committees (PDCs) and Community Development Committees (CDCs) for example.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Awareness and Advocacy

Recommended actions to strengthen the localization process for the SDGs are discussed in three (3) major areas: Advocacy and Awareness, Implementation, and Monitoring and Evaluation. These are the main areas where action by local government authorities and the responsible central government ministry are needed to drive the localization process forward.

- o Local authorities should work with stakeholders at relevant levels to implement communications strategies which include: increased engagement of citizens and communities to promote their sense of ownership of the SDGs and their participation in the achievement of SDGs at the local level.
 - o Steps should be taken to improve public education; for example, some of the successful strategies that promoted health awareness in response to the COVID-19 pandemic can be applied to increasing SDGs awareness.
 - o ALGAJ can play an increased advocacy role in ensuring that local needs and priorities and expectations are reflected in national sustainable development strategies so that citizens at the local level may feel more included, and a more “bottom-up” planning process is supported.
 - o Local authorities highlighted the importance of local government reforms such as broadened responsibilities and increased financial autonomy that contribute to a more enabling environment for localization of the SDGs. These objectives should be supported as Government creates an enabling environment for localization.
- Recommendation 2: Implementation**
- 2.1 The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) should increase support to Municipal Corporations in recognizing the 2030 Agenda as a framework for action and setting up mechanisms that enable citizen participation and institutional accountability (e.g. technical support and coordination of Strategic Plans and Local Sustainable Development Plans with Strategic Business plans of the central ministry).
 - 2.2. Local authorities in parishes where the governance structures and planning systems are less advanced should be supported and strengthened by training and information exchange to ensure a uniform standard island-wide.
 - 2.3. Multi-level governance mechanisms such as the Inter-Agency Network should be strengthened and expanded.

- 2.4. Needs assessments should be conducted by local authorities in all parishes and existing local plans and programmes reviewed to ensure alignment with SDGs and national goals. At the same time, national goals and targets should be analyzed to ensure that the needs and priorities of local communities are adequately addressed.

Recommendation 3: Monitoring and Evaluation

- 3.1. Ensure that the localized SDGs indicators and targets are operationalized and mechanisms for collecting, analyzing and disseminating required data to increase contribution to performance management and reporting on SDGs, including the VNR process, strengthened.
- 3.2. Provide capacity-building training and information sharing amongst local authorities to improve monitoring and reporting skills and capabilities.



Appendix 1: Sustainable Development Goals Alignment with Local Government Initiatives

SDGs	Vision 2030 GOALS	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and Portfolio Entities Actions
Goals 1 & 2 End poverty in all its forms everywhere	<i>No. 1: Jamaicans are empowered to achieve their fullest potential</i>	Social Protection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 37 concrete houses were built for registered poor • 70 wooden Houses were constructed • 297 houses were repaired for registered poor • 552,820 meals provided 2021-2022 • Construction of the Kingston Drop-in centre to provide shelter for the homeless population
Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages	<i>No. 1: Jamaicans are empowered to achieve their fullest potential</i>	Social Protection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 additional Physiotherapists for and 3 dieticians to improve the health and care of residents of the infirmaries. • 3 Therapeutic Parks created for residents in infirmaries
Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all	<i>No. 4: Jamaica has a Healthy Natural Environment</i>	Rural and Minor Water Supply <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catchment Tank/Rainwater Harvesting Initiative- 12 Catchment Tanks and Rainwater Harvesting Systems were constructed and upgraded under this initiative • 9 water shops have been constructed
Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	<i>No. 1: Jamaicans are empowered to achieve their fullest potential</i>	Local Economic growth and Employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 66 Business project submitted valuing \$58,440,162.36 with four (4) approved valuing \$7,150,000.00 • Total employment of 1650 persons with an average employment of 4 persons to each LEI maintained • 6000 persons employed in Youth Summer Employment Programme for the 2021 period, and 27,500 for the 5 years.
Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation	<i>No. 4: Jamaica has a Healthy Natural Environment</i>	Road Construction <p>154399.5 m² of parochial roads were rehabilitated in 2021.</p> <p>The Development Approval System is being bolstered with the use of the AMANDA system, between April and December 2021 period 3615 applications were entered into the system. The local</p>

		<p>authorities continue to ensure quality structures and that they are within the guidelines of the Building Act and the LSDP.</p>
<p>Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</p>	<p><i>No 3: Jamaica's Economy is Prosperous</i></p>	<p>Fire Services</p> <p>30 new fire trucks were purchased and commissioned over the financial year</p> <p>New fire stations have been constructed, including Barnett Street, St James</p> <p>Solid Waste Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 982,241 tonnes have been collected to date • 986,408 residents sensitized on proper solid waste management <p>Local Sustainable Development Plans (LSDPs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 LSDPs were completed before 2019; Clarendon LSDP was updated in 2021. • 2 additional LSDPs (St.Thomas & Portmore) are almost at completion. • 2 Local Economic Development Projects were implemented in 2021 in St.Thomas and Clarendon, respectively; • The LSDP process is an integrated one that fosters the employment of strategies that support alignment with various SDGs: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Goal 1 (poverty alleviation): - Participatory and inclusive consultations are initiated, which involve the identification of the most vulnerable populations and the creation of projects which bolster the economy and assist in poverty alleviation consequently. 2) Goal 2 (ending hunger and promoting food security): - The Agriculture Ministry is a part of most Steering and or Technical Committees during the LSDP process. Additionally, the representatives participate in the Land Utilization Surveys which support the identification and classification of land use, ensuring the prime agricultural lands are appropriately dedicated for agricultural purposes. 3) Goal 6 (sustainable management of water and sanitation): The LSDP process entails the evaluation of water resources including an assessment of points of pollution, access to and use of potable water, discharge of wastewater and mitigating factors to ensure sustainability.

		<p>4) Goal 8 (Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth): LSDPs have components that have an economic focus, which is further localized through Local Economic Development (LED) initiatives administered by the Local Authorities. Moreover, the process includes the identification of local assets with the development of appropriate strategies to harness these resources.</p> <p>The LSDP process also involves engagement with the Ministry of Tourism for support in preparing Community Tourism Plans, as a medium for boosting local economic development. The almost complete St.Thomas LSDP includes a Tourism Plan.</p> <p>5) Goal 10 (Reducing Inequality): One main factor which assists with reducing inequality and providing equal opportunities, is participation and inclusion in the planning process. LSDPs provide this opportunity through their Community Visioning exercises, where community members identify and outline the vision for their communities.</p> <p>The promulgation of the four strategic Local Governance laws seeks to further strengthen this approach to local governance.</p> <p>6) Goal 11: As a critical part of the spatial planning framework, the LSDP process involves land use mapping and the preparation of appropriate land-use policies and strategies to direct, regulate and determine the organization of towns, cities, human settlements, businesses, communities, industries and the placement of infrastructure. The process also ensures the perseverance of our ecological, natural and economic resources to bolster local sustainability and resilience.</p> <p>As Local Authorities, the Municipal Corporations also have a legal mandate for the issuing of Planning and Building permits, and the administration of disaster risk management at the local level. In this regard, LAs guide the process of making cities and communities inclusive, safe and resilient.</p> <p>7) Goal 13 (Climate Action): The LSDP process involves hazard and vulnerability mapping and the identification of mitigative measures to counteract existing and projected risks. The Plans also focus on strategies for bolstering climate resilience and adaptation.</p>
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		The Portmore and St.Thomas LSDPs which are currently being finalized also have dedicated Disaster Management and Mitigation Sector Plans.
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Source: MLGRD



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