

Congratulatory Message

**on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention
and founding of the OPCW – 29th April 2017 (to be celebrated 26th April 2017)**

The Government of Jamaica is pleased to join the international community in commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (*Chemical Weapons Convention - CWC*) and the establishment of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (*OPCW*).

The Organisation has much to be proud of, having recorded a remarkable achievement of eliminating approximately ninety four per cent of the declared chemical weapons stockpile, in keeping with its goal to end the development, production, stockpiling, transfer and use of chemical weapons, and to eliminate existing stocks of such weapons in a bid to ensure a world safe from the threat of chemical warfare. With one hundred and ninety-two Member States, the OPCW must be commended for having successfully garnered universal support for its work over a relatively short period of time.

The award of the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize to the OPCW is testament to the success of the Organisation's efforts and the tangible contributions made towards the elimination of chemical weapons. Even in the midst of lauding these accomplishments, we are ever mindful of recent disturbing reports of the use of chemical weapons, to the detriment of mankind. This, however, reinforces the utility of the Convention and the relevance of the Organisation in global efforts to eliminate this scourge.

Having become a State Party to the CWC in 2000, the Government of Jamaica has remained committed to fulfilling its obligations under the Treaty. Our decision to host the Eighteenth Regional Meeting of National Authorities of States Parties in Latin American and the Caribbean in Montego Bay, Jamaica in June of this year is consistent with that commitment. We are also grateful to have benefitted over the years from the many programmes of technical assistance offered by the OPCW, which have facilitated our continuous efforts to achieve full national implementation of the Convention.

As we commemorate this important anniversary, the OPCW can be assured of Jamaica's continued support and cooperation in ensuring a safe and peaceful future for current and succeeding generations in accordance with the vision of the Convention. We extend heartiest congratulations to the OPCW on twenty years of outstanding contribution to safeguarding a peaceful and sustainable environment.