

COUNTRY BACKGROUND - JAMAICA

Jamaica is the third largest island in the Caribbean (after Cuba and Hispaniola), with a total area of 11,244 square kilometres (4,411 square miles). It is located approximately 90 miles south of Cuba and 100 miles west of Haiti. Sitting on the boundary of the Caribbean Plate, the island is vulnerable to earthquakes, and was struck most recently in 1993 with an earthquake measuring 5.4 on the Richter scale. The last major hurricane to hit the island was Gilbert in 1998.

Insert map of Jamaica

The country is mountainous, which covers about 80% of the island. Consequently most people live on the plains and most economic activities occur in coastal areas. The poorest in the country lie in remote rural areas and in the overcrowded squatter settlement of the capital and other urban centres.

Jamaica achieved its independence from Britain in 1962 and since then has maintained a Westminster style parliamentary government. Power has alternated between two major parties (Jamaica Labour Party and the Peoples National Party) since universal adult suffrage was achieved in 1944.

The country is divided into 14 administrative units called parishes. There are 13 parish councils (Kingston and St. Andrew are combined into a single area for local government purposes) whose power is determined by central government.

The population has remained relatively stable, growing at less than or equal to 1% during the 1990's. The population is evenly distributed between the sexes, stands at 2.6 million. The number of children in the population now stands at 1,000,000 and is projected to fall to 855,000 by 2020 when children will comprise less than 30% of the population.

Graph age structure of population

The Human Development Index (HDI) for Jamaica is close the global average and is similar to averages for other countries in the region and for countries in Eastern Europe. The HDI is based on three indicators: longevity (life expectancy at birth), tertiary enrolment ratios and standard of living (real GDP per capita). These indicators indicate successes in fulfilling the rights of children – as specified in the Convention on the Rights of the Child – to health and survival, basic education and an adequate standard of living.

Jamaica's natural environment is abundant in resources and possesses some of the most diverse flora and fauna in the world, but this fragile ecological base is under threat. Unregulated development, improper human and solid waste disposal, inappropriate use of agricultural lands, unsafe use and disposal of domestic, industrial and agricultural chemicals, air pollution, and increased demand for water are all contributing

environmental degradation. Almost 80% of Jamaica's forests are destroyed each year – a faster rate than all but one country (Lebanon, 1999 UNDP HDR) in the world.

The physical infrastructure, including roads, water supply and communications, are both the cause and the victim of economic stagnation. The telephone infrastructure has improved following privatization.

A National Plan of Action (NPA) for Children was launched in 1995. The need for a National Policy on Children was identified as a prerequisite for the implementation of the NPA. The policy was developed with inter-agency collaboration, incorporated recommendations of a Children's Parliament held in 1996, and was approved by Cabinet in 1997. A revision of the National Policy was carried out in 2000.

The NPA focuses on the survival, protection and development of children. Its goals for Jamaican children are consistent with World Summit goals. They are to:

- ✍ Decrease the infant and under-five mortality rate by one-third or to 50% and 70% for every 1,000 live births, whichever is less;
- ✍ Achieve universal access to safe drinking water;
- ✍ Achieve universal access to sanitary means of excreta disposal;
- ✍ Improve protection of children in especially difficult circumstances tackling the root cause leading to such situation

Source: Jamaican Children and Their Families. A situation Assessment and Analysis

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

TOILET FACILITIES

In 2001, 61.8% of households have access to W/C (flush toilets) - up from 51.4% in 1990

Of the 61.8% only 18.3% linked to sewer system. Absorption (soak away) pits remain the main method of sewage disposal

(2001) Approximately 36% of households still rely on pit latrines, declining from 50.8% in 1999

WATER SUPPLY

(2001) 70.9% of dwellings enjoyed access to piped drinking water up from 66.6% in 2000

Proportion relying on

Public standpipes	13.1%
Rainwater (tank)	11.6%
River/Spring/Pond	3.1%
Well/Other	1.3%

Source: Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions

NUMBER OF CASES OF DISEASES/INFECTIONS LINKED TO ENVIRONMENT

GASTROENTERITIS

Age Group	2002	2003*	Total
Under 5	13379	8801	22180
Over 5	8851	5049	13900
Total	22230	13850*	38080

*To date

Typhoid

2002- 2 cases

Source: Surveillance Unit, MOH

RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS

Year	0-5	6-14	Total
2001	5450	1742	7192
2002	5123	1784	6907
Total	10,573	3526	14,099*

***Upper Respiratory Tract, Allergy**

Source: Planning and Evaluation

DENGUE

Age Group*	Notified	Confirmed
0 -4	9	9
10-14	3	2
15-17	1	0
Total	21	17

***Adults 28 notified; 21 confirmed**

Source: Surveillance Unit, MOH

PESTICIDES POISONING

Age group	1997	1998	1999	2000	Total
0-4	36	55	41	51	183
5-9	0	4	7	7	18
10-14	1	7	3	2	13
15-19	7	8	5	7	27
20-29	6	20	12	11	49
30-39	6	13	8	7	34
40-49	4	5	3	5	17
50-59	2	1	5	2	10
60-65	2	7	4	1	14
Total	64	120	88	93	365

Source: Pesticides Control Authority

Hospitals in Central Jamaica accounted for highest percentage of pesticides poisoning. Data on pesticides poisoning is important for evaluating effectiveness of regulation and cost benefits of management and public awareness programmes.

GROUPS OF PESTICIDES CONTRIBUTING TO POISONINGS

Type of Pesticide	1997	1998	1999	2000	Total
Organophosphate and Carbamates	16	35	29	22	102
Rodenticides	17	31	19	23	90
Herbicides and Fungicides	5	13	6	8	32
Other insecticides	2	1	3	2	8
Other pesticides	1	2	1	2	6
Halogenated insecticides	0	2	0	0	2
Unspecified Pesticides	23	36	30	36	125
Total	64	120	88	93	365

Source: Pesticides Control Authority

Question 1

Government

- ✚ Regulatory inspection programmes – Assessment of environmental sanitation/environmental monitoring
 - Evaluation of water quality
 - Basic sanitation
- ✚ Healthy School Initiative – 26 schools islandwide
- ✚ Office of the Special Envoy for Children operating out of the Ministry of Health

Non-Government/Community Based Organizations

- ✚ WASH Campaign (Water, Sanitation & Hygiene for All)
- ✚ Women Outreach Resource Centre (WROC)
- ✚ Coalition of Community Participation
- ✚ Jamaica Coalition on the Rights of the Child
- ✚ Jamaica Foundation for Children
- ✚ Children First
- ✚ Society for the Upliftment of Children
- ✚ YouthNOW
- ✚ EFJ
- ✚ JET
- ✚ STEPA/PEPA etc

Could incorporate

- ✚ School curriculum
- ✚ Children's Services Division, the Child Support Unit

QUESTION 2

- ✚ Policy to discontinue use of leaded gasoline: Use of unleaded gasoline since January 2001
- ✚ Policy to establish a Ministry of Water and Housing in 1998
 - Water Sector Policy
 - ✍ Access to water and sanitation in reasonable time
 - ✍ Over 400 communities earmarked
 - ✍ Rural Water Supply Programme (Design, Manage, Construct, Maintain)
- ✚ Establishment of Pesticides Control Authority
 - Application to Register and Register pesticides
 - Licensing of manufactures and repackagers of pesticides
 - Certification of pest control operators – less pesticides in environment and food
 - Disposal of unwanted and obsolete pesticides, including containers – disposal problem
 - Inspections re. compliance
 - Training of auxiliary health workers
- ✚ Policy on vector control
 - Shift in emphasis to chemical control vis-à-vis chemical control methods
- ✚ Installation of SANILEC systems to disinfect water in rural areas (PAHO/MOH)
- ✚ Upgrading/Relocating of communities esp. unplanned developments/squatter communities under Operation PRIDE Programme
- ✚ Conversion of the Riverton Dump to Riverton Landfill
 - Cessation of open burning
 - Reduction in fires, smoke and odour nuisances
- ✚ Establishing 4 landfill sites in country compared to numerous sites of open dumping
- ✚ Research
- ✚ Draft motor vehicle and stack emission Regulations – should be law this year

QUESTION 3

- ✚ Media
 - Print
 - Electronic – talk shows
- ✚ Performing arts e.g. Drama
- ✚ Support for NGO
- ✚ Research in children's law/content
- ✚ Friends of Children

QUESTION 4

Asthma

- ✍ Relationship to environmental conditions
- ✍ Emissions control – Industries
- ✍ Data & Intervention studies

Injuries (Intervention Studies)

Poisoning

- ✍ Bleach/kerosene
- ✍ Lead
- ✍ Pesticides

Pesticides residues

- ✍ Food
- ✍ Water

GIS Mapping

- ✍ Layers
 - ✍ Soil
 - ✍ Water
 - ✍ Sewage
- ✍ Disease pattern/Age group

Typhoid/GE

- ✍ Environmental Sanitation
- ✍ Sewage Disposal

Cancer

Possibilities to engage in them

Huge possibilities
Research cell
Trained Researchers

Laboratory competence
Academia

QUESTION 5

- ✍ Strengthen existing surveillance system
- ✍ Age specific/ health GIS complete with environmental data collected
- ✍ MOH
- ✍ Other agencies

QUESTION 6

A. Yes

B.

- ✍ Awareness raising leading to behavioural change
- ✍ Children's pantomime

C.

- ✍ Special programmes – more child friendly
- ✍ Use
 - Portrayal
 - Drama
 - Animation
 - Children's television – Enforcement of Broadcast Code
 - Performing arts –**ASHE/YOUTHNOW**
 - Peer information sharing
 - Environmental Health Community Protectors

QUESTION 7

Yes!

However.....

REFERENCES

Jamaican Children and Their Families. A Situation Assessment and Analysis 1999-2000
-UNICEF Planning Institute Of Jamaica

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