

► Just Transition and NDCs in Jamaica

From the workers' perspective

Developed for the ITCILO/ILO course “Leading the Change: Workers, Employers, and Governments Driving Just Transition through Social Dialogue”

► Executive summary

This summary presents Jamaica's Just Transition case for the ITCILO/ILO course. Developed from a workers' perspective, it helps participants identify peer experiences, key challenges to address, opportunities to leverage, and practical roles to play—while reaffirming the central role of social dialogue.

Jamaica's context: The **economy** is dominated by services—tourism, logistics, and public administration—while agriculture, and manufacturing/mining of bauxite, limestone, and cement, remain key productive sectors. Tourism alone directly accounts for about a tenth of GDP and sustains large shares of employment. The country depends heavily on imported energy; in 2024, fossil fuels provided the majority (90%) of electricity and transport needs, leaving households and firms exposed to global price shocks. Debt levels have decreased as a result of management under the Fiscal Responsibility Law of 2014. Growth is reverting to a low trend and remains highly vulnerable to climate events, such as hurricanes and floods, that have caused cumulative losses exceeding US\$700 billion over the past three decades. Remittances, which reached about one-fifth of GDP in recent years, continue to cushion families and support recovery during crises.

Socially, Jamaica has a young, urban, and coastal population, with most people living within a few kilometres of the shoreline. A founding member of CARICOM, the country is politically stable but faces persistent challenges linked to crime and inequality. GDP per capita remains lower than regional peers, and the 2023 Human Development Index ranking of 111 out of 193 reflects ongoing social and educational gaps. Poverty reduction, however, has been steady, declining to single digits by 2023, attributed to macroeconomic stability, social programmes, and rising minimum wages.

Labour outcomes are relatively strong. Unemployment fell to 3.3% in 2025, and labour participation surpassed pre-pandemic levels. Yet participation gaps remain: women's rate (63%) trails men's (75%) largely due to care responsibilities and limited flexibility in the care economy. At the same time, women are more skilled on average, holding more managerial and professional positions. Youth unemployment stands above 10%, and one in four young people is not in employment, education, or training. Employment is highly concentrated in tourism, retail, agriculture, and construction. Micro and small enterprises dominate, representing nearly all registered firms and most jobs, but many operate informally. Informality accounts for more than half of total employment and is pervasive across transport, construction, agriculture, and domestic services, limiting access to protection and productivity growth. Productivity has declined compared with a decade ago, eroding competitiveness. Social protection coverage remains partial—less than one-third of the population receives any benefit—and health insurance coverage is limited. Education is nearly universal at the primary level, but learning outcomes and university enrolment remain uneven.

Environmentally, Jamaica is among the most climate-exposed Caribbean nations. Rising temperatures, coastal erosion, and stronger storms threaten jobs and livelihoods, especially in agriculture, tourism, and infrastructure. Although its emissions are minimal—just 0.02% of global totals—emissions are roughly divided among transport, energy, and industry. The country remains a net carbon sink due to forest cover and land use, but its vulnerability far outweighs its contribution.

Lessons from NDC Iterations: Jamaica's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement have evolved over a decade, building capacity and coherence. The first NDC in 2016 focused mainly on the energy sector; subsequent updates expanded coverage and ambition. By 2025, the third NDC included forestry and industry alongside energy and transport, reflecting **gradual sectoral inclusion aligned with institutional capacity**. NDCs have maintained **policy coherence** with existing and agreed national plans. More robust instruments have also accompanied this process, such as implementation plans, technology needs assessments, and the recent launch (second in the Caribbean) of a Long-Term Low-Emission and Climate-Resilient Development Strategy (LT-LEDS), which outlines a pathway to net-zero emissions. The LT-LEDS actions are expected to bring up to 26,000 new jobs and strong economic co-

benefits. **Consultation processes have also widened.** NDC 3.0 engaged public, private, and civil society actors through open calls and online consultations. However, from a workers' perspective, although engaged in the validation of NDC 3.0, participation remains limited. Union representatives note that engagement tends to be broad but superficial, with insufficient opportunities to capture specific worker insights or shape implementation measures.

Policies and Frameworks Enabling the Just Transition: Jamaica's **policy architecture** already embeds many principles of a Just Transition, even if the term itself is not always explicit. The Vision 2030 Jamaica National Development Plan serves as the overarching strategy for inclusive, sustainable growth, supported by Medium-Term Frameworks and 31 sectoral plans that integrate employment, education, and environmental goals. The current 2024–2027 framework sets measurable targets for youth training, social protection, and green-industry promotion. Complementary frameworks reinforce this direction. The LT-LEDS, the updated Climate Change Policy Framework, the National Energy Policy, and associated roadmaps for renewables and electric vehicles outline a clear shift toward cleaner technologies and workforce adaptation. A forthcoming National Employment Policy seeks to link Vision 2030 with the ILO's Decent Work pillars, integrating green and gender-responsive employment dimensions. Additional strategies on gender equality, youth development, social protection, poverty reduction, and elder inclusion exist and are further pursued to achieve sustainable development.

Institutionally, Jamaica benefits from **dedicated bodies** for climate and skills—such as its Climate Change Division and national workforce training agency—plus active international partnerships, notably the ILO's "Jamaica Just Transition" project launched in 2024. These instruments provide a strong base for embedding labour, gender, and equity considerations into national climate planning.

Roles and Actions of Workers' Organisations: Trade union engagement in climate policy is growing from a low baseline. For NDC 3.0, trade unions participated in consultations for the first time, marking progress, though they still perceive the process as limited in depth. The ILO-supported Just Transition project has been instrumental in building awareness, enhancing policy advocacy, and fostering collaboration.

Unions are increasingly translating this awareness into action. The Jamaica Confederation of Trade Unions coordinates participation in national skills and productivity bodies and channels workers' concerns to international partners. The Jamaica Association of Local Government Officers promotes preparedness and community solidarity during climate events and has introduced climate discussions into bipartite dialogue involving firefighters' working conditions. The Bustamante Industrial Trade Union advocates for green and digital transitions, runs awareness campaigns on occupational risks from heat stress and extreme weather. The Jamaica Household Workers' Union, representing more than 7,000 members, focuses on social protection and rights for domestic workers, who are highly exposed to climate shocks and often excluded from formal schemes.

Social Dialogue mechanisms: Tripartite dialogue in Jamaica has solid institutional foundations. The Labour Advisory Council remains the main forum for government, employers, and workers to coordinate on labour issues and could integrate Just Transition discussions more systematically. The Steering Committee developing the new National Employment Policy, the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Council, and the Productivity Centre board all include social-partner representation and offer spaces to align skills, productivity, and climate objectives. Other multi-stakeholder mechanisms, such as the Climate Change Advisory Board, coordinate climate governance but lack participation from unions or labour institutions.

Challenges: Jamaica's transition faces intertwined structural, institutional, and social challenges. The economic model's dependency on imported energy constrains competitiveness and exposes jobs to volatility. Productivity decline, informality, and low growth slow investment in skills and green industries. The absence of a fully institutionalised climate law—though a bill is under preparation—creates gaps in accountability, while the delayed implementation of the Occupational Safety and Health Act leaves workers

vulnerable to rising heat and disaster risks. Unions' participation in climate dialogue is still ad-hoc, and social protection systems remain incomplete, especially for informal and rural workers.

Opportunities: Yet opportunities are considerable. The country's renewable-energy goals and long-term strategy aim to decouple growth from fuel imports, expanding green sectors that can generate thousands of jobs. Training and employment initiatives under Vision 2030 and the energy and tourism sectors can create new skills pipelines for youth and women. The workforce agency's efforts to modernise technical training, together with ILO support for tripartite capacity building, position Jamaica to become a regional example of an inclusive transition. The growing awareness among unions, combined with supportive international cooperation, can transform consultation into tangible participation—ensuring that workers influence policies, negotiate adaptation measures, and benefit from the emerging green economy.

Practical Recommendations

- **Strengthen social dialogue and tripartite engagement.** Expand Just Transition discussions within existing bodies such as the Labour Advisory Council, Productivity Centre, and Climate Change Advisory Board. Establish thematic working groups on climate, skills, and OSH to integrate labour perspectives in national planning.
- **Enhance occupational safety and health.** Accelerate the proclamation of the OSH Act and ensure that climate-related hazards—such as heat, storms, and vector-borne diseases—are addressed in workplace regulations and collective agreements.
- **Build capacity and awareness.** Support members in developing expertise on green jobs and accessing social protection, while pursuing collective bargaining that includes climate adaptation. Extend training to labour inspectors and employers to promote safe, climate-resilient workplaces.
- **Close skills and data gaps.** Align technical-training curricula with renewable-energy, construction, and tourism needs, and establish systems to track employment development in green jobs.
- **Promote coherence in NDC 3.0 implementation.** Ensure national commitments explicitly include decent work, social protection, and gender dimensions, with social partners participating in monitoring and evaluation.

Jamaica's experience shows that progress toward a Just Transition is already underway. The challenge now is to deepen worker participation and ensure that the path to decarbonisation also secures decent jobs, stronger protections, and shared prosperity for all.

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► Introduction

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) emphasises the urgency of advancing a Just Transition that unites climate action with social justice, decent work, and poverty reduction. In Jamaica, this imperative is both economic and human: the country's service-based economy—anchored in tourism, logistics, and public services—faces increasing climate risks and productivity challenges but also clear opportunities to generate green and decent jobs. As a small island developing state, Jamaica must balance growth, resilience, and inclusion, ensuring that workers and their organisations are central actors in shaping the transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy.

This **case study** was prepared for the ITCILO training activity “Leading the Change: Workers, Employers, and Governments Driving Just Transition through Social Dialogue” to support peer learning among worker and employer representatives. It highlights how Jamaica's climate and development agenda—through its Vision 2030 strategy, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), Long-Term Low-Emission and Climate-Resilient Development Strategy (LT-LEDS), and other frameworks— is progressively integrating the social and employment dimensions of climate action. The case, written from a worker's perspective, aims to facilitate reflection, exchange, and dialogue among participants on how unions and workers can contribute to national climate goals while safeguarding jobs, rights, and livelihoods.

Scope and approach. The analysis provides a concise overview of Jamaica's economic, social, labour, and environmental context; distils lessons from successive NDC iterations; and maps key policies, frameworks, and institutional mechanisms that currently or can potentially support a Just Transition. It also documents emerging actions by workers' organisations, including awareness-raising, participation in consultations, integration of climate issues into bipartite discussions, and collaboration under ILO-supported initiatives.

While the transition is underway, challenges remain—ranging from limited union inclusion in climate governance to the need for stronger occupational safety and health, skills development, and social protection for vulnerable workers. The case invites trade unions and other social partners to identify entry points for engagement, align their strategies with NDC implementation, and promote fair transitions across sectors such as energy, tourism, agriculture, and construction.

What this case offers:

- A **concise snapshot** of Jamaica's Just Transition landscape and its evolution through NDCs and long-term strategies.
- A **policy and framework mapping** that highlights national strategies (e.g., climate, energy) and connects them with workers' realities.
- Examples of the **role of unions** and how they are beginning to engage in activities that support a just climate transition.
- An **overview of existing and potential social dialogue and stakeholder engagement mechanisms** that can be leveraged to advance the Just Transition by the trade unions.
- **Practical recommendations** to help workers' organisations strengthen participation, build capacity, and ensure that climate ambition translates into **decent work, fairness, and resilience for all**.

Ultimately, the aim is to help Jamaica's social partners turn high-level ambitions into doable steps—prioritising measures that raise productivity, strengthen resilience and protection, and expand decent work while reducing emissions and environmental harm. The case is not exhaustive; rather, it is a starting point for social partners to compare experiences, identify quick wins, and chart common commitments that make the Just Transition real for enterprises and workers in Jamaica and the Caribbean.

► Country and sectoral context

The goal is a just transition toward a sustainable, green, low-carbon economy grounded in decent work. Advancing along this roadmap requires understanding each country's economic, social, labour, and environmental context. This section offers a concise, non-exhaustive overview of Jamaica's context.

Economic context

Jamaica is one of the largest CARICOM economies, driven by the service sector with relevant primary and secondary activities. Jamaica represents around 15% of the total Caricom GDP.^{i,1,2} In fiscal 2024,ⁱⁱ the tertiary/service sector's share of GDP was 59.6%, followed by the secondary sector (mostly manufacturing and construction) with 17.3% and the primary sector (agriculture and mining) at 10.6%.³ Tourism is a highly relevant service sector, accounting for an estimated direct contribution to GDP of 10-11%, while total direct and indirect contributions reach close to 30% of GDP.^{3,4} Agriculture, forestry and fishing represent 9.3% of GDP in 2024, manufacturing activities 7.9% and construction 6.6%.³ Jamaica's manufacturing focuses on light activities and consumer products-oriented, such as food and beverages, with cement production and bauxite refining being relevant activities.^{5,47} The mining sector is also relevant, with 1.3%, mostly linked to bauxite and limestone production.^{3,6} The logistics and shipping industry is also emerging, given Jamaica's location and proximity to the Panama Canal, estimated at 4.4% of GDP in 2017.⁷ Government services, such as public administration and education, accounted for 13.3%.³

Jamaica's economy is highly dependent on energy imports, making it vulnerable to price and trade shocks. Jamaica imports all petroleum and natural gas, with some refined oil products being exported (around 19% of imported volume).⁹ Oil-based fuels accounted for 65.4% of the total energy supply and 29.5% of electricity generation in 2023, while natural gas represented 26.3% of the energy supply and 60.1% of electricity.⁸ In 2024, the main consumption came from transportation (33% for road/rail, 19% shipping, and 7% aviation), followed by electricity generation (27%).⁹ Jamaica is also a net importer of goods.¹¹

Besides tourism, export activities are concentrated in the business/ICT services, logistics, minerals and chemicals, and agriculture. In 2023, service-related exports accounted for 80% of total export flows, primarily from travel and tourism (65.5% of exports), while business services (e.g., business process outsourcing) and transportation (e.g., logistics and shipping) accounted for 9.6% and 4.6%, respectively. Refined petroleum products accounted for close to 7.0%, while chemicals such as aluminium oxide accounted for 5.8% and agricultural products for 5.3%, mainly from beverages. The overall trade ecosystem is considered to have low economic complexity.^{iii,10} Jamaica's main trade partners are the United States, CARICOM, other Caribbean and Central American economies, Russia (exports), Iceland (exports), other European economies, the United Kingdom, China (largely for imports), and African nations (Nigeria, Ghana).¹⁰

Jamaica has gone for decades with little to no growth, with future expectations slightly more positive. Over the last 40 years, average GDP growth in Jamaica was 1.2%, with the average growth of 20 or 10 years ago even lower.¹³ The country has been highly vulnerable to climate events, with 2024 growth estimated at (-0.8)%, mostly attributed to Hurricane Beryl and Tropical Storm Raphael, which affected agriculture, infrastructure, and tourism.¹² For 2025, the IMF estimates a growth of 2.1%, while growth in later years will be close to 1.6%.^{12,13} The Bank of Jamaica has put the 2025/26 range between 1% and 3%.¹⁰² However, these estimates were made pre-Hurricane Melissa, which severely hit the country in October 2025.

ⁱ Based on the World Bank World Development Indicators manual aggregation of GDP (current US\$) for 2023 and CARICOM Statistics for 2021. References (1) and (2).

ⁱⁱ Jamaica's Statistical Institute discloses GDP data using fiscal years, which, for fiscal 2024, go from April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024.

ⁱⁱⁱ Economic complexity is a term used by Harvard Growth Lab that measures the capabilities and knowledge that go into production of a product. For more information, visit: [Harvard Growth Lab](https://www.harvardgrowthlab.org/).

Debt has become better managed over the last decade. In 2014, Jamaica's public gross debt represented close to 138% of GDP, with 2024 levels estimated at 69%.¹³ Jamaica passed a Fiscal Responsibility Law in 2014 that targeted reducing public debt to 60% of GDP; the target has been set for FY2027/28.¹² However, as expected, the fiscal rule would likely be suspended in response to Hurricane Melissa's damages, and this target could be affected.¹⁰⁷

Inflation shows signs of stabilising within target bands. In 2022, inflation reached a more than a decade high of 10.3%, with pre-Hurricane Melissa 2025 estimates between 4% and 5%.^{12,15} The Bank of Jamaica inflation target is between 4% and 6%.¹⁵ Unlike many other CARICOM countries, as Jamaica has a floating exchange rate, it has more direct control over its monetary policies.^{iv}

Remittances represent a notable share of the economy, while foreign direct investment is at a historical low level. Received remittances accounted for around 19% of GDP from 2022 to 2024 and were particularly high during the pandemic (25.3% of GDP).¹ The levels from recent years are also above pre-pandemic levels, which were on average close to 16.5% from 2015 to 2019.¹ Nearly half of households reported receiving remittances in 2023.¹⁵ FDI in tourism is growing, but other sectors remain at historical low levels. In 2018, FDI represented around 3% of GDP, with the majority directed towards the mining sector. In 2023, FDI is close to 1.5% with tourism and ICT sectors representing most of these inflows.¹²

Social and political context

Jamaica is the third largest of all Caribbean islands, and the largest of English-speaking islands.¹⁶ It is located south of Cuba and west of Haiti, strategically positioned along key maritime and air routes in the northern Caribbean. A founding member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in 1973,² English is the official language, while Jamaican Creole (Patois) is widely spoken across the country.

Jamaica is a relatively young nation. Jamaica's population is 2.77 million according to the 2022 Census.¹⁰⁴ Most inhabitants lived within 5 km of the coast (>80%) and are concentrated in coastal cities, with the majority residing in the capital, Kingston.⁴⁷ The urban share accounted for 61% of the population.¹⁰⁴ Jamaicans are of majority African descent, given the nation's history of slavery. Multiracial Jamaicans are common, and the country has a relevant representation of East Indians and Chinese. Estimates from 2018 place the population aged at or below 14 at 27.2% and under 25 at 48%, with a median age of 26 years. In the 2011 census, those aged 65 or over were estimated at 7.6%. As of November 2025, the full results of the 2022 Census were not yet available. However, partial results show a historically low annual growth rate of 0.24% between 2011 and 2022, which, together with an estimated fertility rate of 1.3 below the replacement level, points to dynamics commonly linked to population aging and may signal a gradual rise in the median age.¹⁰⁵

Jamaica is an upper-middle-income country with a lower GDP per capita than its peers, but evidence of declining poverty rates. GDP per capita (2021 PPP^v) reached \$10,264 in 2024 (\$7,019 in current USD), below CARICOM (\$16,678) and LAC (\$19,905) PPP averages but above Jamaica's pre-pandemic level of \$5,607 in 2019. After Haiti, Jamaica (except in some years with Suriname) has the lowest GDP per capita among CARICOM nations in both current US\$ and PPP levels.¹ Poverty has been declining from an estimated 19.7% in 2012 and 16.7% in 2021 to 8.2% in 2023.¹⁸ Rural poverty has also decreased from 22.1% in 2021 to 11.5% in 2023.¹⁸ The decline in poverty has been attributed to growth in remittances, post-COVID-19 recovery, stronger macroeconomic stability, and increases in minimum wage and social protection.¹⁸ Minimum wage

^{iv} For further information on these dynamics, refer to the IMF blog "Does the Exchange Rate Regime Matter for Inflation and Growth" <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/issues2/>.

^v **PPP: Purchasing Power Parity**, an economic measure that adjusts GDP or income to reflect cost-of-living differences between countries.

has been effectively raised every year since 2021.^{19,20} On the 2023 Human Development Index (HDI), Jamaica ranked 111 of 193 economies, reflecting gaps across health, education, and living standards.⁷²

The political landscape in Jamaica is dominated by the two major parties. The social-democratic People's National Party (PNP) and the conservative Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) have been alternating in power through competitive elections since the country's independence in 1962.²¹ The Labour Party won in September 2025, with the Prime Minister occupying a rare third term in office. As of 2025, there are 35 seats for the JLP and 28 seats for the PNP, compared to the 49 and 14 seats resulting from the 2020 election, respectively.²²

Civil liberties are broadly respected, but crime remains a pressing issue. The Heritage Foundation's 2025 Index of Economic Freedom classifies Jamaica as close to "mostly free" (68.7/100), with weak scores in government integrity (49.5).²³ Labour freedom received 64.4, and Business freedom 70.1, which are part of the regulatory efficiency sub-index.²³ Violent crime levels continue to be a major concern.

Labour and human capital context

Jamaica exhibits strong labour market outcomes across key indicators. In Q3 2025, unemployment was estimated at 3.3%, a historical low in several decades.^{vi} Labour force participation was 69.1% in Q3 2025, above pre-pandemic levels of 64.7% in 2019 and of a decade ago of 62.3% in 2014.³ Labour underutilization—including unemployed, underemployed, and potential labour force^{vii}—was 6.7% in Q3 2025.³ Total labour force is close to 1.5 million people.³

There are relevant demographic and spatial disparities in labour force participation. Women's overall outcomes are weaker, with a participation rate of 63.4% in Q3 2025 compared to 75.0% for men.³ Other indicators, such as unemployment, also favour men, though the differences are less pronounced given the overall low levels. Participation rate decreases in households with children (65.4%). The proportion of men working more than 40 hours per week is also higher, 50.0% for men versus 32.9% for women.³ Women hold higher-skilled jobs, 60.2% at the technical or professional level vs 32.8% for both sexes, and women with tertiary education in the labour force are 1.85 times more than men (169.7k women versus 91.7k men) and represent 60.8% of managerial jobs.³ Rural unemployment is higher (3.7%) than in the Greater Kingston Metropolitan Area (2.5%) but similar to other urban centres (3.6%); overall, the gaps are modest. Similar, smaller gaps than in other economies exist between rural and urban centres, with even positive gaps in rural areas compared to urban.^{viii} Youth (ages 14–24) remain a pressure point, with an unemployment rate of 10.2% and a NEET rate of 25.5% in Q3 2025.³

Employment in Jamaica is diversified across sectors, but tourism influences a large share of jobs. In Q3 2025, most employment was concentrated in Wholesale & Retail Trade (including vehicle repair) (19.0%), agriculture and fishing (13.4%), real estate and other business services (10.8%), construction (9.7%), and manufacturing (6.3%). Public services (including public administration, education and health activities) accounted for 13.8% of jobs, with other estimates placing it around 20%.^{3,36} Tourism is estimated to directly employ 175,000 Jamaicans (12.1% of Q3 2025), and indirectly 354,000 (24.6%).^{3,24}

Informality remains sizable in the economy and across sectors. The ILO estimates that labour informality in Jamaica was 54.6% in 2023, with informality among men at 63.5% and 44.2% for women.²⁵ Informal employment is estimated to surpass formal jobs, especially in sectors such as Wholesale & Retail, Transportation, Construction, and domestic and personal services, and is expected in agriculture and

^{vi} Unemployment has been declining in Jamaica post-COVID-19. Considering data from 1994 to 2019, the lowest previous registered unemployment was 6.7% in 2008. Source: [ILOSTAT](#).

^{vii} Potential labour force: working-age people outside the labour force who still show attachment—either seeking work but not currently available, or available to work but not actively seeking. Time-related underemployment: employed persons working fewer hours than they want and available to increase their hours.

^{viii} In Q3 2025, participation rate was: rural (68.8%), Greater Kingston (70.7%), other urban areas (67.3%), and overall (69.1%).

fishing.^{26,36} Self-employment, with high expected informality, is estimated to account for 40% of working Jamaicans and is particularly preferred among youth.^{30,32}

Market dynamics play a larger role in wage setting than the minimum wage or collective bargaining.

The national minimum wage for 2025 is JA\$400 (US\$2.50) per hour—about JA\$69,280 (US\$432) monthly.²⁷ It has been raised yearly since 2022.^{19,20} Unionisation is moderate, with around 30% of formal workers estimated to be unionised, notably in the public sector/services.²⁹ Jamaican employers report that wage settings are moderately shaped by market benchmarks and other company factors, with the minimum wage and collective bargaining playing a smaller role. Yet, minimum wage is reported to impact wage scales moderately to significantly.²⁸

Jamaica's firm composition is dominated by small companies. MSMEs are estimated to account for 97.6% of all registered enterprises in Jamaica, with 83% falling in the micro sector.^{ix,30} Furthermore, MSMEs contribute 44% of GDP and account for 60-70% of jobs, with a majority of jobs created by one-person enterprises.^{30,31} It is considered that most are pursuing a “survival” activity and are concentrated in Wholesale & Retail (including Hotels & Restaurants) and personal services.^{30,36}

Social protection remains limited and less responsive in times of crisis. In terms of coverage, in 2022, 32.6% of the population was estimated to receive at least one social protection benefit.²⁵ Benefits, such as maternity, sickness, pensions, and employment injury, are provided through a mix of contributory and non-contributory schemes. The country has also been advancing towards universal health coverage by eliminating fees from public hospitals, yet health insurance coverage in 2019 was estimated at below 20%.^{35,42} Jamaica has had a long history of public assistance programmes. Among them, the Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH) has existed since 2002 as a conditional cash transfer program that provides financial assistance and other benefits, such as education and training support.³³ The COVID-19 pandemic and recent climate events, such as Hurricane Beryl, have shown the vulnerabilities in social protection in Jamaica, with rural and elderly people having access issues and notable gaps in disability registries.^{34,35} An expected upcoming change is the establishment of unemployment insurance benefits, which has been approved by the Cabinet.⁷⁹

Labour productivity in Jamaica has decreased from levels of a decade ago. From 2014 to 2022, productivity (output per hour worked) was consistently negative, with a period of current growth from 2023 to 2025 estimated a 1.5% on average and indicative of post-pandemic recovery. By comparison, CARICOM and wider Caribbean averages are now slightly above their levels of a decade ago, while other upper-middle-income countries have seen steady increases—placing Jamaica among the region's weaker performers.²⁵ Total Factor Productivity (TFP) estimates have also shown historically negative growth for the past three decades.³⁷

Jamaica's education system includes K-12, junior college, university, vocational training, and continuing education. Primary education in Jamaica is almost universal, but significant learning disparities persist.⁴² By age 18, students complete an average of 11.4 years of schooling, yet these translate to only about 7.1 years of actual learning—below regional averages. Academic performance has also declined: in 2021, just 38% of secondary students passed mathematics exams, compared to 47% in 2018. Challenges such as low motivation, exposure to violence, and, for girls, teenage pregnancy particularly hinder education outcomes for youth from low-income and rural communities, reinforcing existing inequalities.³⁸

Environmental context

Jamaica is a small island developing state. The Caribbean Sea surrounds the island landmass, which covers about 10,990 km². Its terrain combines coastal plains with interior mountains and hills, supporting a range of natural resources that sustain agriculture, forestry, and tourism. However, this geography also

^{ix} Reported proportions are based on 2015 estimates by the Tax Administration of Jamaica disclosed in the MSME policy. See reference 30.

heightens exposure to climate hazards, particularly for coastal communities and sectors reliant on natural ecosystems for livelihoods.¹⁶

Jamaica is highly vulnerable to intensifying climate risks. The country is already experiencing a decline in overall rainfall and longer dry spells, especially in eastern and western parishes, while central areas record increased rainfall. Climate models project that by the end of the century, average temperatures could rise by 0.8°C to 3.1°C, accompanied by up to a 30% reduction in rainfall in some regions.¹⁶ Sea levels are expected to continue rising, and while hurricanes may become less frequent, their intensity is projected to increase—posing growing risks to infrastructure, agriculture, water resources, and coastal livelihoods.¹⁶ Between 1990 and 2020, Jamaica experienced an estimated loss of US\$705 billion in damages from extreme weather events (16 major hurricanes and several floods).⁴⁷ It is estimated that future damage from hurricanes will average 1% of asset value per year, with higher exposure in the Greater Kingston Metropolitan Area. Furthermore, the cost of not adapting to the rise in sea levels is estimated to be significantly higher than the cost of adaptation and other alternatives.^{x,39} These dynamics translate into several main and rising risks for the country:

- **Hurricanes:** Recent events illustrate how climate shocks generate significant economic impacts during the event and well beyond the initial physical damages. Hurricane Beryl in 2024 caused around US\$101 million in losses, mainly in transport and electricity, yet national accounts showed declines across agriculture, mining, manufacturing, construction, transport, and utilities in the months that followed.^{106,108} More recently, Hurricane Melissa in October 2025 caused an estimated US\$7 to 10 billion in damages, roughly 30% of GDP, with 192,000 buildings damaged and the country's key tourism and agriculture sectors severely affected. This marks the largest climate-related economic impact in the country's history. The national climate-disaster fund can cover only about US\$500 million, highlighting a critical financing gap for the country's recovery efforts.^{107,108}
- **Urban concentration and flood risks:** Jamaica's extensive coastal urban footprint significantly heightens its localized flood risk. With dense urban areas in Kingston and along the northern and eastern coasts, the country faces multiple entry points for cyclone storm surge and intensified wave energy. This wave amplification is partly driven by the loss and degradation of coral reefs, which normally act as natural barriers that absorb wave force. As reefs decline and sea levels rise, stronger waves reach the shore, increasing the vulnerability of ports, seawalls, and narrow waterfronts, which are economically critical and now more exposed to even moderate coastal hazards.^{108,109}
- **Sargassum:** Sargassum in Jamaica is now managed as a "new normal," although no consolidated national cost estimate exists. Across the wider Caribbean, clean-up costs reached about US\$120 million in 2018. In Jamaica, the National Environment and Planning Agency advisories treat sargassum as a recurrent issue and combine periodic beach clean-ups, gas monitoring, and a Tourism Enhancement Fund support to community groups.¹¹⁰ The government made an initial allocation of about J\$5 million for removal in 2015.¹¹¹

Jamaica is a global low emitter and mid-range for large Caribbean islands, with per capita emissions declining. Jamaica represents 0.02% of the worldwide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.⁴⁰ GHG per capita emissions have also declined from 3.79 t CO₂eq in 1990 to 2.79 in 2023, although they are higher than in 2022.⁴¹ In 2023, transportation was the largest emitter, followed by energy/electricity generation and industrial processes such as cement.¹⁶ Depending on the year considered, the order of these sectors changes, but each is responsible for 25-30% of emissions.⁴⁷ Waste is estimated at 6% and the AFOLU sector at 7%. However, this sector is a carbon sink, with still some unaccounted capture.^{16,41,47}

^x Estimated costs vary widely by scenario: no adaptation (reactive relocation, no protection) ≈ US\$222 billion; full protection (seawalls/barriers) ≈ US\$68 billion; planned retreat (gradual relocation of assets/population) ≈ US\$3 billion by 2100. These figures are indicative and should not be taken at face value; they depend on many uncertain assumptions. See reference

► Lessons from NDCs iterations^{xi}

Jamaica launched its intended Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in 2015, formalised as NDC 1.0 in 2016. NDCs are national climate action plans under the Paris Agreement, setting out commitments to reduce emissions and to mitigate and adapt to climate impacts. They are expected to be updated every five years to reflect higher ambition, a schedule Jamaica has followed by releasing an updated NDC in 2020 and a new NDC 3.0 in 2025.

Jamaica submitted an updated NDC in September 2025, one of the first in the Caribbean. Other submissions from the region as of October 2025, in order of submission, include Saint Lucia, Belize, Barbados, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and the Bahamas.⁶²

Over a decade of work, Jamaica's NDC iterations have built progressively, bringing stronger commitments and maintaining policy coherence. This section highlights these experiences as lessons for social partners as they engage further in NDC development and implementation.

Gradual sectoral inclusion aligned with available capacity

Jamaica has been gradually including sectors in its NDC as it strengthens its technical expertise and capacity. In NDC 1.0, only the energy sector (including transportation) was included with explicit mitigation actions, with targets such as 20% of renewable energy in the primary energy mix by 2030.⁷⁸ NDC 2.0 added for the first time the forestry and land use, an important addition to include carbon sinks considering that forestry accounts for close to half of the island's total land use (47.9%)¹⁶ In NDC 3.0 industry-cement subsector was included in mitigation actions.¹⁶ Bringing the sectors included in Jamaica's NDC mitigation targets to be Energy (sector-wide, including transportation and electricity), IPPU (cement sub-sector) and AFOLU (forestry sub-sector).

This gradual inclusion showcases that stakeholders have been aware and cautious of what they can accurately measure, track, and implement. In all of its NDCs, Jamaica has been transparent about data limitations to include other sectors (e.g., Agriculture, other industries, waste). These actions do not mean these sectors are not considered in various plans and policies; rather, they are not explicitly added as mitigation targets in the NDCs.

Policy coherence and added robustness

Since NDC 1.0, Jamaica has been using the mechanism more to communicate the requested information of NDC submissions and less as a holistic and comprehensive report, as other countries choose to do. This practice works if the NDCs link to relevant documents and policies that allow further understanding of climate action and targets in the country; a practice that occurs in Jamaica's NDCs. From NDC 1.0, the government has cited Jamaica's Vision 2030 (launched in 2009) as the main guiding long-term strategy for sustainable and inclusive growth, along with other key instruments such as the Climate Change Policy Framework (CCPF) (launched in 2015) and the National Energy Plan 2009-2030. These policies further elaborate on key actions, such as adaptation and resilience in various sectors (e.g., 16 sectors in the CCPF) and provide more explicit descriptions of intended projects and pursued outcomes (For more information, see the Policies and frameworks section). This practice demonstrates the **policy coherence** that exists, as the referenced elements even precede the Paris Agreement. As stated in NDC 2.0, "A key feature of Jamaica's approach to determining its NDC is that it is based on policies, initiatives, and commitments that the country has already made."⁸⁰

^{xi} The lessons learned are based on consultation of the NDCs, interview with JCTU, and review of sources such as the NDC Partnership, the LT-LEDS, Biennial Update Report 2017, the Third National Communications, Gender and Climate Change Strategy and other in-section cited sources.

In NDC 3.0, this practice has continued. For example, it is stated that NDC is pursuing a Just Transition and aligns itself with the ILO's Decent Work Four Pillars (Promoting jobs and enterprise, guaranteeing rights at work, extending social protection and promoting social dialogue, with gender as a cross-cutting theme). The NDC also references alignment with Jamaica's Gender and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (GCCSAP) 2022-2025.

At the same time, Jamaica has been developing complementary instruments that enhance the robustness, feasibility, and clarity of its NDC commitments.

- The **NDC Implementation Plan**, launched in 2021 and based on the documents and policies existing at the date, maps the implementation and costs of 16 commitments. These commitments come from the NDC, as well as policies and plans such as the Integrated Resource Plan, a Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) for the water sector, the Third National Communication, the National Tree Planting Initiative, and projects in energy efficiency and low-carbon public transport fleet, among others.⁸¹ NDC implementation plans help in taking stock of progress, identifying specific actions to be implemented, aligning NDC with relevant policies, assessing capacities, engaging with stakeholders, and serving principally as programme management tools.⁸² They can be a key tool for social partners to use in monitoring NDC and climate action progress, and identifying priority actions that can be linked to job creation.
- **Technology Action Plans (TAP)** translate the technology priorities identified through Technology Needs Assessments into concrete, implementable projects and policy actions—helping countries overcome financial, technical, and institutional barriers and attract international support for climate technology deployment (e.g., Green Climate Fund or the Technology Mechanism). In 2021, Jamaica completed a TAP for Adaptation and Mitigation Technologies covering areas such as agriculture, water, coastal resources, and energy. Some of the prioritised technologies include drip irrigation, rainwater harvesting, wetland and coral reef restorations, biogas and composting, and solar systems. Workers' organisations could leverage the TAPs to identify prioritised technological needs and associated skills.
- The **Long-term low-emission development strategies (LT-LEDS)** are national planning instruments under the Paris Agreement by which countries set out a decades-long pathway toward deep decarbonisation and resilience — typically targeting mid-century goals, sectoral transitions, and economy-wide transformations. Jamaica expressly cites its LT-LEDS in NDC 3.0 as foundational to aligning near-term ambition with long-term vision. According to Jamaica's published strategy, the country aims to achieve net-zero emissions by 2060 or earlier, reduce emissions by about 73% below 2020 levels by 2050, and integrate a Just Transition and the pillars of decent work.⁴⁷ An analysis by the 2050 Pathways Platform has estimated that the LT-LEDS will generate 26,000 new jobs and USD \$13.9 billion in net benefits (USD \$ 6 billion is needed for mitigation and adaptation actions).^{47,84}

A more consultative process, but less inclusive of tripartite stakeholders

Through its different NDCs, the consultation process has become more inclusive and extended. While NDC 1.0 relied on Jamaica's Vision 2030 consultations as validation, NDC 2.0 more explicitly involved public bodies, civil society, and private stakeholders of various emission-intensive sectors over a period of 12 months.^{78,80} NDC 3.0 affirms that it consulted more than forty representatives from public entities, the private sector, youth groups, civil society, and international partners.¹⁶

The Jamaica Confederation of Trade Unions (JCTU) affirms having participated in an online presentation of the NDC, which was also open to feedback. However, it was highlighted that the level of involvement feels more superficial and less conducive to gathering direct insights from unions, given the multitude of stakeholders being engaged in this call.²⁹ Unions have also not been present in key policy developments, while other private sector partners have been involved. A key example is the development of Jamaica's Long-

Term Low-Emission and Climate-Resilient Development Strategy (LT-LEDS), which included the Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica (PSOJ) but not union or Ministry of Labour representatives.⁴⁷

Table 1 presents targets and actions that can support a Just Transition for workers. These are sourced from Jamaica's NDC 3.0 and related instruments such as the LT-LEDS and the NDC implementation plan.

► **Table 1. Relevant targets and actions from Jamaica's NDC 3.0 towards a Just Transition**

Sector/Area	Action connected to Just Transition
Cross-sectoral / Labour Market	• Commit to a just transition, ensuring fairness and equity for workers affected by the low-carbon shift. • Conduct stakeholder engagement and social dialogue to capture worker needs. • Promote decent employment, skills upgrading, and enhanced social protection for displaced or transitioning workers. • Aligns Just Transition framework with ILO's four pillars (employment, social protection, rights, social dialogue). • Implement measures and commitments related to green jobs. • Enable the private sector in supporting the creation of green jobs, skills-training programmes for the workforce, and mentorship schemes for youth.
Education & Capacity Building	• Strengthen education, training, and public awareness. • Sector-specific programmes will be offered to train the relevant workforces in new technologies, and to sensitise them to alternative and integrated livelihoods • Promote climate education in schools. • Promote acquiring or developing new or updated skills. • Encourage gender-responsive training and inclusion in climate decision-making.
Energy & Transport	• Recognises that the transition to a low-carbon economy will also have an impact on the labour force in the country, particularly those working in fossil fuel-dependent industries. States will work to create opportunities for them to transition. • Promote training for renewable energy technologies and efficiency. • Train personnel on equipment safety and in the operation and maintenance of low-carbon infrastructure.
Agriculture & FOLU	• The NDC emphasises the importance of improving agricultural output, generating employment, increasing productivity, sustainably managing forest resources, and implementing adaptation strategies. • Support training and knowledge transfer for farmers on sustainable practices (e.g., farmer-field schools, climate-smart practices). • Aim to enhance livelihood security and food sector resilience. • Promote sustainable livelihoods for forest-dependent communities by enhancing their capacity to participate in sustainable forest management and benefit from forest resources.
Tourism	• Encourage sustainable tourism planning and consider the workforce capable of implementing these practices.
Fisheries / Coastal Management	• Regulate, monitor, and enforce a reduction in overfishing and illegal fishing practices. • Increase the economic benefits from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries.
Health & Social Protection	• Ensure that workers have access to social protections, such as health care and retirement benefits. • Strengthen health system capacity to respond to climate-related risks. • Protect vulnerable communities and improve social resilience. • Effective social protection for all against poverty and other forms of vulnerability. • The government can consider establishing a social protection scheme to provide income support for workers who lose their jobs due to the transition. The scheme can also provide support for communities that are dependent on industries affected by the transition
Governance / Social Dialogue	• An LT-LEDS Committee with representation from ministries, the private sector, and other stakeholders have been established. Its mandate and composition can be changed to include other tripartite partners. • Establish mechanisms for stakeholder coordination, participation and information sharing among ministries, agencies, and non-state actors. • Promote participatory decision-making at national and community levels. • Ensure gender and social inclusion in climate governance.

Sources: Based on authors' interpretation of the NDC 3.0 and accompanying documents. Presented actions are not exhaustive.

► Policies and frameworks in support of a Just Transition

A just transition requires robust policies that transform economic models while ensuring inclusivity, decent work, and economic sustainability.

Jamaica has identified priority actions for transformation in its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to meet mitigation and adaptation goals. It is advancing laws and policies that, although not always explicitly referencing the Just Transition, incorporate essential actions linking the protection of workers and the pursuit of inclusive and decent work with climate action.

This section outlines the main legal and policy frameworks that can support the Just Transition and have repercussions on workers. The policies, regulations, and public initiatives cited are not exhaustive but are included due to their close relevance to the Just Transition and the NDCs.

Laws and norms

Laws are a key instrument to promote the health and safety of workers and people in general. In Jamaica, several laws protect people's right to a healthy and safe environment in their communities or workplaces.

- The **Jamaican Constitution 2011 Amendment** included the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, which states that Jamaicans have a right to “enjoy a healthy and productive environment free from the threat of injury or damage from environmental abuse and degradation of the ecological heritage.” This right is used for advocacy and climate legal action in the country.
- The **Natural Resources Conservation Authority (Air Quality) Regulations** regulate industrial emissions harmful to human health, including greenhouse gases. Require major facilities to obtain air pollutant discharge licences, submit annual emission reports, and pay discharge fees—waived for burning renewable fuels (e.g., waste). Non-compliance can lead to fines, suspension, or closure orders. From a workers’ perspective, the law supports safer air and workplace environments by limiting industrial pollution and mandating public reporting.
- The **Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act** is a foundational pillar for the protection of workers. It was launched in 2017 to replace the outdated Factories Act of 1943. The legislation remains in parliament and has not yet been officially proclaimed.^{29,55}
- The **Disabilities Act of 2014** became effective in 2022 and provides increased legal protection and recognition of the rights of persons with disabilities. For example, the rights to education & training, employment, adequate healthcare, and access to facilities and infrastructure.^{44,67} A Disabilities Rights Tribunal is also to be established.⁶⁷
- The **National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA)** is responsible for environmental protection and management, and as such has direct effect over environmental protection of individuals and monitoring of harmful practices by businesses and their employees. Jamaica also has a **Climate Change Division (CCD)** responsible for leading, supporting, and coordinating policies and actions towards a resilient climate transition.^{xii}
- Other similar laws that regulate industries and practices exist, such as the **Fisheries Act, Forest Act, Wildlife Protection Act, Hazardous Substances Act**, and the **National Solid Waste Management Act**, among others. These laws regulate permissible practices and conditions, which can directly influence the working conditions of workers.

^{xii} A Climate Change Branch has also been established within the Ministry of Economic and Job Creation. However, the authors could not confirm if this is an additional body or a rebranding/mobilisation of the Climate Change Division.

Jamaica also has the **Human Employment and Resources Training (HEART) Act** that established a government agency to provide technical and vocational education and training (TVET), as well as a TVET council. The Act calls for key aspects such as employment and opportunities promotion, financial assistance, reduction of skill gaps, cooperation with other organisations and bodies, creation of certificates and vocational training. All key activities for a Just Transition of workers.

Policies, plans and frameworks

Jamaica has advanced a range of policies, plans, and frameworks to address climate risks and support its transition, many of which address workers' needs and bring decent job considerations.

The **Vision 2030 Jamaica – National Development Plan (NDP)** is the country's first long-term strategic development plan covering the years 2009-2030. Its main purpose is towards achieving sustainable and inclusive development. It is composed of 4 goals and 15 outcomes, integrates the Sustainable Development Goals into its implementation, and is supported by sectoral plans. The four goals are: 1) Jamaicans are empowered to achieve their fullest potential; 2) The Jamaican society is secure, cohesive, and just; 3) Jamaica's economy is prosperous; and 4) Jamaica has a healthy natural environment. These goals turn into outcomes that directly address workers' well-being and labour promotion activities, such as quality education and training, effective social protection, security and safety, effective governance, transformational culture, technology-enabled society, enabling business environment, internationally competitive industries, sustainable urban and rural development, and hazard risk reduction and climate adaptation. Vision 2030 is operationalised via medium-term plans (one every 3 years), sectoral plans (31 sectoral plans developed), and evidence-based monitoring and evaluation.^{42,43}



Jamaica, the place of choice to live, work, raise families and do business.

► Vision statement of Vision 2030 Jamaica

The **Medium-Term Socio-Economic Policy Framework (MTF)** serve as the main implementation mechanism of Vision 2030 Jamaica. The Framework spans three years, with the first being 2009-2012 and the current 2024-2027, for a total of seven expected MTFs.⁴⁴ The MTFs are comprehensive documents that present progress from previous iterations, clear priority actions to be pursued for each Vision 2030 goal and outcome for the period, and SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis with a risk matrix for implementation. For the 2024-2027 MTF some **relevant actions to workers and unions** include: improving labour market data and information systems access and exchange, maintaining viability of social insurance and pension coverage, increase awareness of social benefits, poverty reduction, enabling labour environment for collective bargaining and protection of workers (unionised and non-unionised), strengthening OSH mechanisms, aligning labour market framework with the future of work and the country's development agenda, implementing national policy for gender equality, implementing a national policy and action plan on international migration and a diaspora policy, mainstreaming the National Youth Policy and youth data, improving the health services ecosystem, providing adequate maternal and child health care and services, improving education, training, and care services (e.g., universal access to early childhood education, enrolment at different educational levels, equity in access to learning, establish a professional teaching workforce, continue support of students through PATH, revise training sector policies, transform TVET towards STEM education, implement a human capital development strategy), supporting MSMEs and entrepreneurship and innovation, implement sustainable actions in key industries and sectors (ICT, transportation, energy, agriculture, manufacturing, mining and quarrying, construction, cultural and creative industries, tourism), improving productivity, developing disaster risk management plans, implementing green economy strategies and long-term strategies for low carbon transition (including the

promoting of green jobs and industries), among others. Some actions have numeric targets for FY2026/27, such as 8,000 youth per year with access to development services, including entrepreneurship and job readiness training, at least 13,992 job seekers referred to a vacancy, 4 industry studies on workforce adaptation and flexibility, and a 15% increase in business adaptation workplace productivity strategies/best practices.⁴⁴

Various **Sectoral Plans** accompany Vision 2030 Jamaica and the MTFs. The plans were primarily developed with the 2009 launch of Vision 2030 and the first MTF, which means they might not accurately reflect the current context. Nevertheless, they serve to put a sectoral lens on Vision 2030, helping to understand the challenges and opportunities of that time and how relevant they remain today. There is also the goal of updating them within the 2024-2027 MTF.⁴⁴ Of the 31 sectoral plans available, many connect to workers' needs and interests. For example, sector/industry plans exist in Agriculture, Tourism, Energy, Mining, Construction, Transport, Manufacturing, creative industries, and ICT. There are specific plans for education, training, gender, labour market & productivity, social welfare, and social security, among many others.⁴⁵

Jamaica, along with Belize, are the only CARICOM member to have submitted a **Long-Term Low-Emission and Climate-Resilient Development Strategy (LT-LEDS)**.⁴⁶ The LT-LEDS outlines mitigation potential and adaptation strategies through 2050 across sectors and scenarios, with projected emission reductions of 73% below 2020 levels by 2050 and achieving net-zero by 2060. For mitigation, it includes electricity, transport, building, industry, AFOLU, and waste sectors. For adaptation, the following are mentioned: tourism, human settlements, critical infrastructure, food security and agriculture, coastal areas, population and health, biodiversity, and culture and heritage preservation. It also elaborates on loss and damage considerations, including worker productivity losses from higher temperatures. The Strategy explicitly aims to "achieve sustainable, just, and equitable outcomes" and to be gender-sensitive and responsive. It includes a dedicated section that links the LT-LEDS and Just Transition, discussing how to integrate into the strategy pillars such as social dialogue (e.g., use tripartite forums to facilitate green just transition discussions), decent work and employment, skills development, and social protection (e.g., mentions income support for workers who lose their jobs due to the transition).⁴⁷ An analysis by the 2050 Pathways Platform has estimated that the LT-LEDs will generate USD \$13.9 billion in net benefits and 26,000 new jobs.⁸⁴

The **Updated Climate Change Policy Framework (CCPF)**, first adopted in 2015 and updated in 2021, outlines governance arrangements, goals, objectives, principles, and strategies to respond effectively to the impacts and challenges of climate change. The Framework's three goals are 1) Strengthening of Jamaica's adaptive capacity and resilience to reduce its vulnerability to climate change; 2) Pursuit of low carbon development and enhancement of access to and mobilisation of climate finance; and 3) Promotion of public education and awareness raising, research and technology transfer towards ambitious climate action. Its principles include a multisectoral approach to climate change and employing a consultative and collaborative approach. It explicitly discusses how climate change is affecting workers' safety and productivity, especially for those with open-air occupations and calls for actions (e.g., changes in crew schedules and more targeted initiatives around OSH).⁴⁸

Energy: The **National Energy Policy (NEP) 2009 – 2030** shows Jamaica's intention to transition towards a sustainable and low-carbon economy via energy conservation, efficiency, and renewable generation. The policy frames the energy transition not only as a rationale for environmental, economic, and energy security but also as an opportunity for creating green jobs.⁴⁹ Other policies accompanied or complemented the NEP, offering additional job creation opportunities such as the **National Renewable Energy Policy (NEP) 2009 – 2030**, implementing action to increase renewable energy sources and generation, and the **National Biofuels Policy 2010-2030**, which focused on bioethanol production from sugarcane and bagasse.⁵⁰ These policies are still in effect, with the NEP currently being updated.⁴⁷

A more recent instrument, approved in 2020, is **the Integrated Resource Plan: A 20 Year Roadmap to Sustain and Enable Jamaica's Electricity Future**. This roadmap presents different scenarios for increasing

renewable energy (goal of 50% by 2030), enhancing grid reliability, and lowering costs with an estimated investment of US\$7.3 billion in the electricity sector by 2037.^{50,51} All are actions that have a direct positive impact on jobs, households, and business energy savings. Moreover, in 2022, an **Electric Vehicle Policy** was established. This policy aims to set the ecosystem for electromobility in Jamaica, such as increasing private and public electric fleets, implementing incentives, establishing EV charging infrastructure, and raising public awareness. The policy recognises the need for a skilled workforce and certification programmes in EV repair and maintenance services, and for the entire supply chain, including battery disposal and re-use. Specifically, five Skill Centres will be established for these activities.⁵¹

Jamaica has also embarked on developing a **National Employment Policy (NEP)**. The policy framework seeks to align Jamaica's Vision 2030 and the ILO's Decent Work Agenda pillars, addressing themes such as job creation, rights at work, social protection, and social dialogue. It also aims to improve employability, labour market inclusion, tackle inequalities affecting vulnerable groups, strengthen governance and labour administration, and align labour migration considerations. The NEP has established its Steering Committee and will go to different phases: inception (establishing Committee, developing work plan and build capacity); diagnosis (gender-responses assessments and sectoral analysis in tourism and renewable energy, just transition and renewable energy studies, and stakeholder consultations); formulation (drafting policy document and submitting for initial Cabinet's approval); and validation (public consultation and final approval). The NEP is expected to be done by the end of 2026.⁷⁷

Other relevant policies and plans include:

- The **Gender and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (GCCSAP) 2022-2025**, which recognises key issues for a gender-responsive climate action, including gender differences in needs and capacities (e.g., unpaid care burden limits opportunities and male dominance in some priority climate sectors such as agriculture and energy), in participation and influence in climate-related decision making (e.g., women have higher tertiary education level but are underrepresented in disciplines related to climate action such environmental engineering and agriculture, women are less likely to hold leadership positions), and in access to benefits from climate action (e.g., pay gaps and access to benefits and opportunities).⁵² Workers' Organisation can assist in guiding a gender-responsive transition by moving from roles associated with men and opening training opportunities.
- The **National Youth Policy 2017 - 2030's** purpose is to bring a framework for youth development and to address existing gaps in programmes, policy, and legislation. It includes a decent job lens. Several of its priorities have direct relevance to a Just Transition, such as creating more education and career training opportunities to prepare youth for the world of work and reducing youth unemployment via skill development. While the policy does not have an explicit climate lens, it can be leveraged to offer opportunities to youth during the transition to a low-carbon economy.
- The Jamaica **Social Protection Strategy**, launched in 2014, seeks to ensure a minimum standard of living and protection for all Jamaicans, and prioritisation of vulnerable groups, including low-income and highly exposed workers.^{44,64} It includes the impact of climate change in its considerations, as well as the need for risk assessment and response mechanisms.⁶⁴ A 2024 improvement has been strengthening digital solutions for the delivery of cash assistance in response to shocks/disasters.⁶⁵
- A **National Policy for Senior Citizens** launched in 2021 is also relevant as elaborates the Government commitment to ensuring that older workers and retirees remain active participants in society, with improved income security, social protection, and safe, healthy working and living conditions.
- The **National Policy on Poverty and the Poverty Reduction Programme (NPP/NPRP)** established in 2017 aims to achieve the policy goals of eradicating extreme food poverty and reducing national poverty to less than 10% by 2030 (2023 levels are reported below 10%).¹⁸ The Policy highlights the

► Just Transition and NDCs in Jamaica

Agriculture & Fishing and Wholesale & Retail as having most of the employed poor. It proposes actions such as promoting the protection of workers, ensuring minimum conditions of work, and participating in social security schemes.⁶⁸

- The **Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME) and Entrepreneurship Policy** was updated in 2018 and has a vision of sustainable and inclusive growth. While the timeline of activities has passed, they were envisioned before the COVID-19 pandemic, and no further updates exist. Relevant actions from this policy can still be leveraged as they directly link to Just Transition and can have repercussions in jobs, such as increasing business formalisation, reducing energy bills through energy efficiency practices, improving labour productivity, increasing the number of MSMEs using environmental best practices, and encouraging the creation of social enterprises as job creators.³⁰ Jamaica has an elevated share of the informal sector (>50%) and self-employment (~40%).^{25,30} Workers' Organisations in various countries play an active role in reducing informality, promoting entrepreneurship, and improving the conditions of the self-employed as strategies to raise the overall conditions of labour. These strategies have become more pressing as the platform economy has muddled the lines between self-employment and employment.

► Box 1: Livelihood Protection Policy

The Livelihood Protection Policy (LPP) is a parametric climate risk insurance developed under the Climate Risk Adaptation and Insurance in the Caribbean (CRAIC) project to help households and small farmers recover quickly after extreme weather events. Piloted in Jamaica, Grenada, and Saint Lucia in 2013–2014 and relaunched in 2024 across five countries (adding Belize and Trinidad and Tobago), it offers payouts to policyholders when rainfall or wind thresholds are triggered by storms or floods.

For Jamaican workers—especially in climate-exposed sectors like agriculture, fisheries, and tourism—the LPP provides rapid cash transfers to replace income or repair losses after disasters, reducing reliance on debt or public relief. The coverage is structured in tiers with payouts depending on event intensity.

[MCCI LPP Brochure](#) and [Jamaica Observer](#) (09 July 2025).

International commitments and support

Jamaica is a signatory or participant in various international agreements that directly address workers' needs and protection. Some of these include:

- The **Paris Agreement**, in its preamble, states that the parties will be “taking into account the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities.”
- **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction** (2015–2030): Promotes worker safety and preparedness of those responding, but also calls attention to the role of business and related associations in fostering business disaster risk management and the training of employees in such aspects. Jamaica has a **Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management (CDRM) Policy 2020–2040**, which is aligned to this framework and recognises the disproportionate effects of disasters on certain groups, including fishers, farmers, market vendors, and tourism workers.
- The **Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) – a Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity** recognises the need for upskilling and reskilling of the workforce for a just, inclusive, and resilient transition and for developing creative and innovative employment solutions that include informal workers and provide resilience to the workforce. Signatory governments must also include legal mechanisms (and enable access to them) to address environmental harm.
- The **Escazú Agreement**, which Jamaica has signed but not yet ratified, can serve to make climate policies more inclusive of workers' organisation inputs. An operational pillar of the agreement is public participation in decision-making of vulnerable groups, which Jamaica already recognises some workers and occupations as vulnerable.⁵⁷

► Just Transition and NDCs in Jamaica

- The **International Labour Organisation (ILO)** includes conventions and guidelines that directly address workers' needs and bring a Just Transition lens. For example, the [ILO Guidelines for a Just Transition \(2015\)](#) and the [Resolution concerning a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all \(2023\)](#). Jamaica has not yet adopted key conventions that can be leveraged to address these themes, such as the [ILO Convention No. 155 – Occupational Safety and Health \(1981\)](#), the [ILO Convention No. 187 – Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health \(2006\)](#), and the [ILO Convention No. 102 – Social Security \(Minimum Standards\) \(2012\)](#) and its [Recommendation No. 202](#). Jamaica has adopted the [ILO Convention No. 144 – Tripartite Consultation](#), which can serve as a key social dialogue space for the Just Transition, and the [ILO Convention No. 122 – Employment Policies](#), which can be linked to promoting green and decent jobs. Furthermore, the 2022 addition of occupational safety and health as part of the [ILO's Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work](#) brings opportunities for including climate dimensions more firmly into collective bargaining.

The **ILO** is also directly supporting the Just Transition in Jamaica with the **Project - Jamaica Just Transition: embedding climate justice in regional policy frameworks, which** was launched in 2024 and pursues three main outcomes:⁷¹ embedding Just Transition principles in national development policies (including the NDCs); revitalizing or creating new tripartite social dialogue to engage in the Just Transition and NDCs; and developing climate-responsive social protection systems to safeguard livelihoods during transition and recovery.

Workers' insights on policy development

- **Climate legislation** in Jamaica relates to Just Transition, but it is less explicitly mentioned. Moving forward, these actions should be more comprehensive and directly connected to Just Transition.
- Jamaica looks at **international best practices and protocols** for guidance, and this is starting to bring more Just Transition considerations.
- The **Energy Policies** have weight, and stakeholders are aware of their aims and actions, but from a workers' perspective, it does not sufficiently cover employment components.
- In **general**, Jamaican policies have good aims and detailed actions, but there is a lack of explicit consideration towards workers' rights and needs, and a lack of inclusion of workers' organisations in the consultations of climate-related policies and actions.

Interview with a representative of the Jamaica Confederation of Trade Unions (JCTU).²⁹

► Role and actions of Workers' Organisations

The ILO Resolution concerning a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all identifies tripartite engagement as a principal mechanism. It states that employers' and workers' organisations should: a) effectively **engage in social dialogue** in all its forms to ensure the sharing of benefits and advance just transition and decent work at enterprise, sectoral, and national levels; b) **develop the capacity of their members** to analyse and respond to the impacts of environmental and climate change; c) design and **implement their own initiatives** in support for a just transition, including sector-specific initiatives, and contribute to balanced policymaking; d) contribute as key partners to training and reskilling activities; and e) develop and implement sustainable transition plans at the enterprise and sectoral levels through bipartite social dialogue.³⁶

This section outlines how Workers' Organisations in Jamaica are contributing to these efforts. It provides diverse, though not exhaustive, examples of Union activities that advance a Just Transition.

Climate consultations. Union involvement in climate policy and actions consultations in Jamaica is increasing relatively to the previous status quo of little to no engagement. For the NDC 3.0 launched in 2025, the Jamaica Confederation of Trade Unions (JCTU) affirms having participated in an online presentation of the NDC, which was also open to feedback. However, it was highlighted that the level of involvement feels more superficial and less conducive to gathering direct insights from unions, given the multitude of stakeholders being engaged in this call.²⁹ Unions have also not been present in key policy developments, while other social partners have been involved. A key example is the development of Jamaica's Long-Term Low-Emission and Climate-Resilient Development Strategy (LT-LEDS), developed in 2023 and submitted in 2025. The strategy development included a multistakeholder committee in which the Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica (PSOJ) participated. Union representatives and the Minister of Labour were not listed.⁴⁷ It is relevant to note that the consultation process gave several open spaces for participation, as well as the opportunity to complete a feedback form.⁴⁷

Just Transition. Unions in Jamaica are feeling more familiar and involved with the concept and actions for a Just Transition. Part of this progress has been attributed to the ILO 2-year (2025-2026) project "Jamaica Just Transition: embedding climate justice in regional policy frameworks."²⁹ The project outcomes directly seek to strengthen tripartite social dialogue around Just Transition and climate actions.⁷¹ The project has increased enthusiasm, awareness, and interest of trade unions on the links between Just Transition and climate action, and built capacity around policy advocacy and building policy coherence. It has also showcased and validated practical tools, including a green economic growth model, with green jobs scenarios (see Box 2).²⁹ Around 11 union representatives and JCTU have participated in activities related to the project.²⁹

Furthermore, a narrative report on "**Fostering a Just Transition in Jamaica – Collaborative approaches to sustainable development**" is available that resulted from a Just Transition multi-stakeholder dialogue in October 2024.³² The report summarises key insights from panellists on Jamaica's current development plans, regional perspectives on Just Transition, the results from Jamaica Gender Assessment, insight on several relevant topics (e.g., social protection, green jobs, skill building challenges) and recommendations to advance the Just Transition in Jamaica.³² The forum counted with the participation of tripartite partners (from unions, the Jamaica Confederation of Trade Unions and the Jamaica Household Workers' Union), ILO, UNDP and CARICOM representatives, and members of institutions such as HEART/NSA Trust, University of West Indies, Planning Institute of Jamaica, Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities, National Environment and Planning Agency, and the Jamaica Climate Change Youth Council;³² organizations that have been highlighted as relevant stakeholders for unions to engage with in this case study.



Unions, we are seeing how, in learning about Just Transition, we can apply it to demand policy coherence and have more influence towards the needs of workers. Union leaders are also realising that JT applies to many sectors and are proud that it is a concept that first came from workers.

► Shamir Brown, Vice-President JCTU

► **Box 2: A green economic growth model for Jamaica: Scenarios for fostering green growth**

To support achieving Vision 2030, a study, with the support of ILO and UNDP, modelled two development pathways—a business-as-usual (BAU) trajectory based on fossil fuels and a green growth scenario that prioritises renewable energy, climate resilience, and skills for green jobs. The analysis found that transitioning to a green economy would deliver higher GDP growth ($\approx 1\%$ above BAU) and stronger social outcomes, driven by investments in green skills training (J\$3 billion), green technologies capital expenditures (J\$12 billion), and transport electrification (J\$14 billion).

The model projects 7,500 net new jobs, with most gains in service-sector occupations such as tourism, retail, real estate, and business services—sectors where women and youth are concentrated. The shift away from imported fossil fuels reduces energy costs and strengthens the trade balance, while increased disposable income from household savings boosts domestic demand. Overall, the study demonstrates that a green, climate-resilient growth strategy can simultaneously advance employment, equity, and sustainability in Jamaica's transition to a low-carbon economy.

Source: ILO & UNDP. 2025. [A green economic growth model for Jamaica: Scenarios for fostering green growth](#).

Own initiatives. Jamaica's unions have engaged members to raise awareness and support social dialogue on the Just Transition. Direct actions remain limited, with some advancements on bipartite dialogue that are inclusive of climate considerations.

The **Jamaica Confederation of Trade Unions (JCTU)** serves as the umbrella body for unions in the country. It plays a direct role in **representing** workers in tripartite spaces such as the TVET Council, the Labour Advisory Board, and the board of the Productivity Centre (see section on Social dialogue mechanisms). Through its membership in the TVET Council, it is advancing conversation on **reskilling** and asking member about their needs.²⁹ It is also the focal point for **international collaboration**, such as the ILO 2-year Just Transition project.

The **Jamaica Association of Local Government Officers (JALGO)** represents workers employed in public sector areas, such as local government, education, and health. JALGO also believes that its representation extends not only to its members but also to their families and the wider society as beneficiaries. The union is engaging in awareness-raising, research, capacity building, and bipartite dialogue to address changing climate conditions.^{29,76}

- **Awareness raising:** The union publishes messages and guidelines to its members and the public in relation to climate events. These communications are structured around workplace preparedness (e.g., awareness of emergency protocols and ensuring employers have preparedness plans; informing workers they can report unsafe conditions to union representatives); personal and family preparedness (e.g., contents of emergency kits, strategies to secure homes, official communication channels and evacuation plans); community solidarity (e.g., supporting fellow

members, volunteering for relief efforts, documenting damages for insurance or assistance claims); and calls for employer accountability (e.g., following national advisories promptly, suspending non-essential work during climate events, supporting workers after disasters, and respecting OSH and worker dignity).

- **Research:** JALGO has published short, informative pieces on climate change and public services. It identifies climate risks (e.g., sea-level rise, extreme weather events, food and water insecurity) and how public services are key during climate events but also stressed (e.g., health system: heat stress and waterborne diseases increase and mental and physical tolls; education: schools serve as shelters and places for climate education on environmental issues; emergency services: effective early warning systems and planned and coordinated responses are needed; social protection: public safety nets such as unemployment insurance, housing support and food aid are crucial). It has also put a call to action to invest in green infrastructure and climate-smart public systems, train and retrain workers, pursue decent work, ensure the protection of vulnerable groups, and promote community-based disaster risk management.
- **Capacity-building:** JALGO has engaged in capacity building with its members, but not as extensively as they would prefer. Some initiatives have included online sessions on climate change and its impact on workers, the need for transitioning from fossil fuels, and, in 2025, a seminar for members supported by a local university on how workers can work in changing temperatures.²⁹ JALGO expects that with the capacity building they are receiving from the ILO 2-year programme, they can conduct training on Just Transition and decent work.²⁹
- **Bipartite dialogue:** JALGO represents workers in the Jamaica Fire Brigade. An initiative they have undertaken focuses on advocacy and bipartite dialogue around climate-related risks faced by firefighters. The approach has centred on opening a structured conversation with the government about how increasing temperatures and more frequent wildfires affect safety and working conditions. This dialogue has already led to one concrete improvement: the replacement of inadequate protective equipment for wildfire events. Firefighters previously used gear designed for colder climates and mainly for building fires; they now have access to lighter equipment that offers equivalent heat protection and is more suitable for outdoor and bush-fire conditions.²⁹ Structured bipartite dialogue is a key step towards including more systemic and robust mechanisms such as climate clauses in collective bargaining agreements (for some examples, see Box 3).

The Bustamante Industrial Trade Union (BITU)⁷²

- **Representation:** The BITU is one of the oldest trade unions in the Caribbean. Representatives of this union have held key positions in bodies such as the board of the HEART/NSA Trust and the Economic Growth Council when it was active.
- **Advocacy and awareness raising:** BITU has been active in raising awareness and advocating for a Just Transition, both in climate and digital. In a public statement in 2024, BITU said, “Our goal is to secure a just transition for all workers, leading them into a fairer and more sustainable green future world of work. That is why development, upskilling and consultation in the digital transformation will be a key feature in our collective labour agreements.” The President-General of BITU is also a Senator in the Jamaican Senate, bringing a political unionism perspective to its advocacy work.
- BITU has also engaged in an active **climate change awareness campaign** through its social media platforms. These campaigns list clear challenges faced by workers in Jamaica, such as poor ventilation, climate-inappropriate uniforms, power outages, mental stress from severe weather events, heat stress and dehydration, fatigue, flooding affecting transport and schedules, reduced productivity, long-term health risks, and an increase in workplace accidents. It also offers solutions, including shorter shifts during peak heat, earlier start times, heat indexes and measurements, shaded rest areas, access to water, reasonable scheduling, stronger employer responsibility, safer working conditions, and switching uniforms to breathable fabrics, designs, and lighter colours.

The **Jamaica Household Workers' Union (JHWU)** includes 7,280 members across 13 chapters. The union has been investing in developing its own **capacities** to engage effectively in social dialogue around the Just Transition. It has actively participated in the ILO 2-year Just Transition project (e.g., risk to domestic workers from climate events) and in capacity building activities on industrial relations and fundamental principles and rights at work.^{32,74} The JHWU has also collected information that reveals (from a survey of 200 domestic workers) that over half were not aware of any laws that protect domestic workers in Jamaica, and nearly 90% believe the government does not adequately inform them of their rights. It also presented that JHWU members are more likely to contribute to Jamaica's social security scheme, have a written employment contract, and be aware of the rights and social protection benefits.⁷³ Jamaica is one of 40 countries that have ratified ILO Convention No. 189 – Domestic Workers.⁷⁵ Domestic workers are highly informally employed (81% globally), often unprotected and left out of labour and social security laws or care policies, and often the first to lose work during emergencies and the last to receive support.⁷⁵

► **Box 3: Collective bargaining advancing the Just Transition – global examples.**

Chile: the 2022 collective agreement of the Santiago Metro Train Company establishes a bipartite committee made up of equal representatives from management and the Federation of Metro Unions to oversee the social and employment impacts of automation across Santiago's expanding low-carbon rail network. The committee is defined as a space for democratic participation, allowing workers to voice concerns and contribute to decisions related to technological and operational change. It is tasked with developing measures for compensation, retraining, and skills development, as well as promoting work-life balance and ensuring gender representation in its deliberations. The inclusion of these clauses, initiated by the union and supported by the employer, demonstrates how social dialogue can guide technological adaptations that support a green just transition.

Ghana: the General Agricultural Workers' Union (GAWU) has integrated Just Transition clauses into several enterprise-level agreements in the agricultural sector, including with a palm oil company seeking sustainable certification. The agreement commits management and workers to joint climate action through awareness-raising, capacity-building, and sustainable production practices. It established a sustainability manager and introduced training on environmental protection and OSH, alongside measures such as reducing fertiliser use and improving wastewater treatment. However, protections against climate-related job or income losses and productivity safeguards are not yet included.

Germany: a comprehensive collective agreement governing the coal phase-out (expected 2038) was negotiated to ensure a Just Transition for affected workers. A joint advisory commission of company and worker representatives oversees implementation. The agreement guarantees income protection through top-ups to statutory adjustment allowances, maintaining about 80% of previous net pay. It is also in addition to the company pension. It secures employment by enabling transfers to equivalent positions. Where redeployment is not possible, it offers placement in a transfer company for one year with 80% of net pay and 50% of severance entitlement (lower entitlements for workers starting after 2019). Employees who refuse transfers (approved by the joint commission) will be dismissed without severance. The agreement also safeguards youth employment by maintaining apprenticeship quotas of 5% through 2030, providing one-year contracts after training, and prioritising apprentices for permanent roles. Reskilling and retraining are carried out at the company's expense based on individual profiling.

United Kingdom: the Stockport Joint Environment and Climate Change Agreement (JECCA) establishes a cooperative framework between management, staff, and trade unions to "green" the workplace through shared responsibility and continuous dialogue. The agreement covers key areas such as energy use, recycling, resource efficiency, and transport. Actions include purchasing goods and equipment that meet high environmental and labour standards, reducing energy consumption in intensive operations, and sourcing materials sustainably. On transport, it promotes low-emission commuting options, including bicycle allowances and shared pool cars. Importantly, the JECCA formally recognises trade union environmental representatives and grants them official work time to carry out climate-related duties.

Source: ILO. 2025. [The role of collective bargaining in promoting just transitions](#). The description of six cases can be consulted | And other valuable resource on more general action is the ILO. 2024. [Trade unions actions towards climate change and a just transition](#).

► Social dialogue mechanisms and the Workers' organisation engagement on the Just Transition

Social dialogue is a fundamental mechanism for achieving a Just Transition.⁵⁸ It ensures that the perspectives of employers, workers, and other stakeholders are considered. In Jamaica, several spaces for social dialogue exist, though the degree to which they are directly or indirectly addressing the Just Transition varies or remains at the potential level.

- The **Labour Advisory Council** in Jamaica is the main forum for tripartite consultation and collaboration between the government, employers, and workers' representatives. Tripartite bodies have been highlighted in Jamaica's Long-Term Low-Emission and Climate-Resilient Development Strategy (LT-LEDS) as key spaces for facilitating discussions on the impact of the transition on workers and communities, and how to address these impacts.⁴⁷
- A **Tripartite National Employment Policy (NEP) Steering Committee** was formed in 2025 to accompany the development of the National Employment Policy, a key instrument that aligns with the decent work pillar and Jamaica Vision 2030.⁷⁷
- The **Minimum Wage Advisory Commission** is the tripartite advisory body for minimum wage setting in Jamaica.⁵⁹ Minimum wages in Jamaica have been adjusted yearly since 2021. The Commission has become a forum where minimum wage and living wage perspectives are being discussed.^{29,60} The pursuit of a living wage via minimum wage increases is also a stated priority of JLP and the current Prime Minister, and calls have been made to codify a living wage into law.⁶¹ These discussions are relevant as wage floors intersect with decent work objectives, the incidence of informality, and apply to many workers in sectors highly exposed to climate impacts (e.g., tourism, agriculture, construction). They also carry implications for productivity, enterprise viability, and long-term economic transformation.
- The **National Council on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NCTVET)** has been in operation since 1994 and includes social partner representatives (The Jamaica Confederation of Trade Unions and The Jamaica Employers' Federation), business representatives from key sectors (tourism, construction, agriculture, ICT, manufacturing, commercial, automotive, and personal services), of government (Education and Labour), and academia. It is a statutory body mandated to enhance Jamaica's workforce readiness, making it a key institution for advancing the Just Transition and meeting skills needs for the country's NDC goals.⁷⁰
- Jamaica's **Productivity Centre** is a body housed within the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, and advised by a tripartite board (the Jamaica Employers' Federation (JEF) and the Jamaica Confederation of Trade Unions (JCTU)). The Centre is mandated to develop productivity improvement policies, raise awareness about what productivity means, and provide services such as productivity audits and capacity building.⁶² Different policies in Jamaica, such as Vision 2030 Jamaica and the LT-LEDS, highlight directly the importance of productivity improvements for a sustainable transformation and the links between climate change and productivity losses. The Centre and its tripartite board can serve as a space to connect these conversations.

Other key climate and Just Transition dialogue spaces with multi-stakeholder engagement exist, but there is no evidence that unions are actively participating or included in their membership.

- The **Climate Change Advisory Board (CCAB)** was established in 2012 as a multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism to advise and support climate policies and actions, including the NDCs. The CCAB is expected to meet quarterly and includes members from public ministries, the private sector, academia, and NGOs. The Climate Change Division acts as the Secretariat of the Board.^{48,63} In 2022, the Board included 20 individuals from 14 different organisations, departments or entities.

There is no evidence that the board includes union representatives or from the Ministry of Labour.^{xiii} The Board representatives have varied throughout the years, ranging from 7 to 25 members.⁶³ The Board is also allowed to establish ad-hoc committees to pursue specific themes/actions.⁴⁸

- The **National Social Protection Committee** was created to accompany the implementation of Jamaica's Social Protection Strategy, launched in 2014. Despite the relevance, it is unclear if social partners are included in the Committee, as they do not explicitly appear in the recommended list of stakeholders presented in the Strategy. Financial sector representatives and NGOs are listed as recommended members.⁶⁴ Social partners are consulted in actions taken on social protection. For example, the feasibility of unemployment insurance has been discussed with the Jamaica Employers' Federation, the Jamaica Confederation of Trade Unions, and the Jamaica Household Workers Association).⁶⁶
- The **Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities (JCPD)** is the agency responsible for implementing programmes and policies for the inclusion of persons with disabilities. The JCPD has a Management Board that includes representation from persons with disabilities, various ministries, and the business sector, but not from workers' organisations.⁶⁷ The Disabilities Act became effective in 2022, institutionalising the board and the agency.

Workers' insights

- Worker's organisations affirm they are consulted or part of exchanges in relation to policy development and implementation in diverse areas, including energy and transportation. However, these conversations are not systemic and can be very localised to a sector or even a workplace.
- There is a challenge of union representatives actually participating, even if they are invited to. Unions are more involved in core issues such as wages and benefits, and less so with other themes like climate, unless a core labour theme is included in the discussion.

Interview with a representative of the Jamaica Confederation of Trade Unions (JCTU).

^{xiii} The exact composition of the members of the board could not be established. From the government, representatives of ministries related to Climate Change, Forestry, Environment and Planning, Health, and Local Government participate. From non-government: a CARICOM Youth Ambassador, Jamaica Conservation and Development Trust, and the Climate Studies Group, University of the West Indies – Mona have been identified as members.

► Current Just Transition Challenges and Opportunities in Jamaica

Greening the economy offers major opportunities to advance economic and social goals, but the production model diversification also brings significant challenges for businesses, workers, and the wider economy—shifting how goods and services are produced, with direct effects on jobs and livelihoods.

Because the needed structural change will not affect all workers equally, a just transition is essential: one that builds environmentally sustainable economies that are inclusive, create decent work, reduce inequality, and leave no one behind. This demands managing challenges and maximising opportunities around climate action while building the enabling conditions for change. It also requires anchoring policies in social dialogue to ensure fairness and broad buy-in.

This section outlines key **challenges** and **opportunities** that shape Jamaica's just transition toward a green, low-emission economy.

Challenges

Jamaica presents constraints to growth, which can slow the Just Transition. GDP growth in the coming years is projected below 2.0%, reflecting capacity limits and lagging behind regional peers.^{12,13} Key constraints include limited access to credit, low human capital, low economic complexity, negative productivity growth, crime, reduced FDI, infrastructure gaps, and high vulnerability to natural disasters. With growth constrained by these and other factors, the country has fewer resources to effectively drive the Just Transition and NDC implementation.

Livelihoods are dependent on external inflows and vulnerable to climate events. Jamaica's workforce is tourism-dependent, making it highly vulnerable to climate events, and it represents, in direct and indirect contributions, close to 30% of GDP and 36% of jobs.^{3,4,24} Similarly, agricultural output relies heavily on climate conditions. Besides tourism, Jamaicans rely on remittances as a source of additional income. Remittances have seen growth in recent years and remain a crucial part of the economy (~19% of GDP), with nearly half of households reported to have received remittances in 2023.^{1,15} While remittance levels have offset some of the losses in periods of crisis and disasters (e.g., increased during COVID-19), external dependency for workers and households' livelihood increases their vulnerability to external shocks and need for decent jobs. Social partners also worried that since the global dialogue on climate change is being challenged, it will affect access to funding.²⁹

The workforce makeup of Jamaica presents both needs and challenges for the Just Transition. Workers are concentrated in low-productivity sectors like tourism, retail, and agriculture.³⁸ More than half of the jobs are in the informal sector, micro-enterprises represent 83% of firms, and a majority of jobs are created by one-person enterprises, with 40% of Jamaicans being self-employed.^{25,30,38} It is notable that informality has not substantially decreased despite ongoing minimum wage adjustments and strengthening of social protection. A Just Transition is built on the premise of decent jobs, which are less attainable in the current workforce makeup of Jamaica, while also stressing the need for action.

Unions are less included and participative in climate dialogues. This report has documented several instances in which there is no evidence of union consultation on key climate policies and actions. Examples include the Long-Term Low-Emission and Climate-Resilient Development Strategy (LT-LEDS), the Renewables Energy Policy Working Group, the 2021 update of the Climate Change Policy Framework (CCPF), which was a highly participatory process,⁸⁶ or the Climate Change Advisory Board (CCAB). For NDC 3.0, a representative of JCTU participated in an online validation activity at the suggestion of an ILO representative, rather than through organized government outreach.²⁹ A JCTU representative confirms that workers are

consulted in policy development in diverse areas, including energy and transport. However, these consultations can be sectoral or even at a workplace level, indicating that the engagement with workers is less holistic and structured. At the same time, workers themselves are not actively participative, even if invited, if they do not expect core labour issues such as wages and benefits to be addressed in the dialogue.²⁹ Be for lack of inclusion or engagement, this reality is a main challenge toward a Just Transition, as social dialogue is a necessary condition.

A transition of several industries is coming, yet it is not clear if they will be “just.” Several transitions are underway in the energy and industrial sectors. In 2024, close to 90% of the total energy supply and electricity generation came from fossil fuel sources. In NDC 3.0, the target for renewables is set at 50% by 2030, which the government affirms is on track.^{16,85} The cement industry was included in the 2025 NDC 3.0, with targets to cut emissions growth in half by 2035 (from 22% expected to 11%).¹⁶ Bauxite extraction and aluminium production are other relevant activities that are emission-intensive.⁴⁷ The mining sector has been declining in general since 2008, when it represented 3.3% of GDP, to 1.3% in 2024.^{3,47} In Jamaica, LT-LEDS stated that “bauxite is a finite resource, and Jamaica’s reserves are dwindling, suggesting the industry will sunset in the near future.”⁴⁷ Currently, union representatives do not feel there are robust considerations to support workers to pursue emerging opportunities or transition out of declining industries.²⁹

Lack of institutionalised climate and labour policies. Jamaica has demonstrated commitment to climate planning through multiple overarching and sectoral policies, as well as Vision 2030, which has remained as the guiding strategy since its launch in 2009. Government bodies such as the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA) and the Climate Change Division (CCD) are operational. Yet the only law that regulates greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and relates to climate change is the Air Quality Regulations of 2002. There is no overarching climate legislation as has been set in place in other countries of the region (e.g., Colombia) or planned (e.g., Belize). Having climate legislations allow for institutionalising mandates, and increases participation and accountability. Nevertheless, the government has committed to developing such legislation and a National Adaptation Plan by 2026 in a participatory manner.⁸⁷ Furthermore, Jamaica does not have an Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) ACT, which is a foundational pillar for the protection of workers and a key area for implementing just transition actions. A bill was launched in 2017 to replace the outdated Factories Act of 1943, yet as of 2025, Parliament has not officially proclaimed the Act.^{29,55} Workers have expressed that while Jamaican policies can have good aims and detailed action, there is a lack of explicit consideration towards workers’ rights and needs.²⁹

Productive businesses and workers are key drivers of a Just Transition. Labour productivity in Jamaica and total factor productivity have presented consistent negative growth.^{25,37} The levels of output per hour worked are below those of more than a decade ago. Although some recent growth is occurring, it can be attributed to a recovery from the 2020 dip. Low productivity limits business growth, job creation, and the pursuit of needed transformations.

Informality is not compatible with decent work. Informality accounted for 54.6% of total employment in 2023, surpassing formal jobs in sectors such as retail, transportation, construction, agriculture/fishing, and domestic and personal services.^{26,36} A Just Transition must ensure the creation of decent jobs, which cannot be achieved if large segments of the workforce remain informal.

Human capital and skill gaps hold back the transition. Jamaica ranked 111th out of 193 economies in the Human Development Index in 2023, reflecting gaps across health, education, and living standards.⁷² Educational outcomes and years of effective learning are below regional averages.³⁸ There are also challenges in identifying green skill needs and in workers’ preparedness for the opportunities the transition will bring.^{29,88}

Current social protection capacities are not sufficient to support a Just Transition. Structural changes will directly affect jobs and livelihoods, especially for vulnerable groups. Businesses and workers will require stronger support and expanded coverage to cope with transition pressures and climate risks. Yet social

protection coverage in Jamaica remains limited: in 2022, only 32.6% of the population had access to at least one benefit, with 2019 estimates for health insurance at 20%.^{25,35} The COVID-19 pandemic and recent strong storms have revealed the system's vulnerabilities, such as a lack of inter-ministerial collaboration, responsiveness after disasters, and access barriers, especially for rural and elderly people.^{34,35} There are also data challenges, such as low registration of persons with disabilities.³⁴ Some important changes are expected, such as unemployment insurance benefits, which were approved by the Cabinet.⁷⁹

Just Transition and NDC familiarity [Survey insights]. A survey of tripartite partners, in which government and union representatives responded, found that all were between “heard of it and somewhat familiar” with the Just Transition concept. In terms of integration into their activities, Ministry of Labour representatives noted that a just transition is being discussed and plans exist to address it in the near future. Unions affirmed that they were integrating the concept into their activities and advocacy. A stronger familiarity and integration gap exists with the NDCs for unions. Government representatives felt familiar with the framework, while unions felt from “unfamiliar to aware of the plans but not consulted.”⁸⁸ NDC processes are often led and consulted with various public actors, and include private sector and vulnerable groups representatives. While NDC 3.0 featured a more consultative process than previously, union representatives still felt less effectively consulted.²⁹ This limited familiarity and involvement of social partners in NDC development and implementation is a critical challenge for advancing NDC goals and aligning them with the Just Transition.

Social partners were also asked about the main challenges their members face when transitioning toward a sustainable economy:^{xiv}

Survey insights – Just Transition Challenges⁸⁸

Tripartite partners in Jamaica were asked to respond to a short survey for this report on the challenges they and their members face in advancing a Just Transition:

- **EBMOs [No Jamaica Response].** No response was obtained from employers’ representatives. However, the survey obtained responses from 12 EBMOs representing 9 Caribbean nations that can be illustrative of common challenges. Access to green finance was viewed as a severe obstacle, while the stability of regulations and policies, technical expertise and skills mismatches, and infrastructure readiness were considered between moderate and severe challenges. Other obstacles—such as, insufficient access to relevant information, market demand for sustainable products, and limited government support and incentives —were rated as moderate.
- **Unions.** Challenges such as access to policymakers, weak systems for anticipating green skills needs, limited technical expertise, and access to relevant information were seen as moderate to severe barriers for workers in the Just Transition. Union representatives regarded the scarcity of reskilling programmes and cultural resistance to change (including members) as low to moderate obstacles, while regulatory clarity and stability were considered a moderate obstacle. A union representative emphasised that many workers are not trained to take advantage of the upcoming opportunities with the transition to a low-carbon economy.²⁹
- **Government (MoL).** Obstacles identified by the Ministry of Labour include the need for a stable regulatory framework to promote sustainable enterprises and decent work; embedding Just Transition provisions across national strategies and labour ministry agendas; building institutional and technical capacity at subnational levels; providing continuous opportunities for consultation and social dialogue with social partners; conducting policy impact evaluations; strengthening inter-ministerial coordination; and improving access to and availability of labour market data.

Note: A predefined list of challenges was presented. Presented challenges differed according to each tripartite partner context.

^{xiv} The transition to sustainable economy wording is used as respondents tend to be more familiar with this concept, while it still aligns with Just Transition principles.

Other challenges have been recognised in policy documents and can be directly consulted by social partners. The LT-LEDs identified technical, financial, regulatory, and capacity barriers to key sectors such as energy, transport, industry, and construction.⁴⁷ The Medium-Term Socio-Economic Policy Frameworks (MTFs) include situational analysis of Jamaica's Vision 2030 progress, identifying areas where gaps and weaknesses remain (e.g., productivity, human capital, coordination).⁴⁴ Similarly, the Updated Climate Change Policy lists key challenges such as limited financial resources, institutional capacity, planning systems, technological development/access, limited integration of environmental consideration in socio-economic policies, labour productivity, and risk management.⁴⁸

The lasting effects of Hurricane Melissa are still unknown, but will present key challenges, and, with hope, renew efforts and international aid to build a more climate-resilient Jamaica.

Opportunities

Decoupling from fossil-fuel dependence. Jamaica has been increasing its ambition on renewable energy share in electricity generation from a stated goal of 20% by 2030 in NDC 1.0 to a 50% 2030 goal in NDC 3.0 (and 65% by 2035).^{16,78} The country is currently highly dependent on fossil fuels, importing all petroleum and natural gas, which account for close to 90% of the total energy supply and electricity generation.^{8,9} Renewables shares are, as of 2024, around 10-12%^{8,85} Yet the government affirms that in 2025/26 new renewables will come online to bring the share to 17% and 27% for 2027/28.⁸⁵ This shows the commitment to an energy transition that will bring job opportunities and changes. An energy transition also helps workers and households' livelihoods, as it reduces electricity costs, which is estimated to be the largest proportion of household utility spending (~5.7% of total household consumption).^{48,89} Yet the country is also pursuing offshore oil projects, which can bring into question the feasibility of this fossil-fuel decoupling.¹⁰¹

Green job creation. The just transition will bring with it new jobs. An analysis by the 2050 Pathways Platform has estimated that Jamaica's LT-LEDs will generate 26,000 new jobs and USD \$13.9 billion in net benefits by 2050.⁸⁴ The strategy presents mitigation and adaptation actions across several sectors, including electricity, transport, building, industry, AFOLU, waste, tourism, agriculture, coastal areas, population and health, biodiversity, and culture and heritage preservation.^{xv,47} The strategy states that it will pursue decent jobs and social dialogue in its development.⁴⁷ A 2025 green economic growth model for Jamaica, done with support of the ILO and UNDP, shows that some 7,500 net new jobs can be created by 2030.⁸⁹ The growth model prioritises investments in green skills training (J\$3 billion), green technologies capital expenditures (J\$12 billion), and transport electrification (J\$14 billion). Most of the gains will be in service-sector occupations such as tourism, retail, real estate, and business services—sectors where women and youth are concentrated.⁸⁹ From the NDCs, Jamaica is committed to increasing carbon removal via its AFOLU sector;¹⁶ actions in this sector, such as tree planting initiatives and mangrove preservation, are labour-intensive and can lead to new jobs. The tourism sector is another key area for developing sustainable practices and creating decent jobs. The government has expressed confidence in the current workforce capacity to engage in these practices.⁴⁷ The country is also establishing seven new Refrigerant Recovery, Recycling and Reclamation (RRR&R) Centres across the island to respond to ozone protection commitments directly. These centres will also serve as hubs for sustainable refrigeration training and open opportunities for new markets and HVAC technician pipelines.⁹⁰ Advancements are also being made in waste management facilities.⁴⁷ In transportation, the aim is to deploy at least 2,000 electric buses by 2040. The import tariffs for EVs have also been decreased from 30% to 10%.⁴⁷ These actions open opportunities for jobs in and around the supply chain of electric vehicles.

^{xv} The study is not yet publicly available to identify the sectors that will drive job creation.

Workers' insights on key sectors for just transition²⁹

- The Energy sector in Jamaica is receiving focus from the government, but from the workers' perspective, many solar panel installers are self-employed, opening the door for informality and less social protections. The practice (of roof solar panels) is also not yet widespread. There are also inconsistencies in the stated goals of fossil-fuel reductions, as petrol stations continue to spread and opportunities for offshore oil exploration are pursued. Mining and manufacturing, especially in relation to bauxite and cement, will be sectors that need to engage in this framework. Agriculture holds promises and worries, as it might require labour mobilisation, and climate-smart technologies will displace some workers. Construction is a key sector, and we see it requires new skills for new equipment that, at times, go to migrants and not Jamaicans.

Policy opportunities to engage. Jamaica is advancing several policies that can benefit from workers' organisations' capacities and understanding. The National Employment Policy (NEP) is already engaging tripartite partners and aims to address themes such as job creation, rights at work, social protection, and social dialogue. It also seeks to improve employability, labour market inclusion, tackle inequalities affecting vulnerable groups, strengthen governance and labour administration, and align labour migration considerations.⁷⁷ The ILO project Jamaica Just Transition: embedding climate justice in regional policy frameworks was launched in 2024 and engages social partners in pursuing three main outcomes: embedding Just Transition principles in national development policies (including the NDCs); revitalizing or creating new tripartite social dialogue to engage in the Just Transition and NDCs; and developing climate-responsive social protection systems to safeguard livelihoods during transition and recovery.⁷¹ Other policies, such as the National Youth Policy 2017-2030, Social Protection Strategy, the National Policy for Senior Citizens, and the Gender and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (GCCSAP) 2022-2025, are all spaces where workers must be engaged. Social dialogue spaces to bring the voice of workers and dialogue on a Just Transition exist, such as the Labour Advisory Council, the NEP Steering Committee, the Minimum Wage Advisory Commission, the Productivity Centre, and the TVET Council.

The population is young, and labour outcomes have improved. In 2018, around 48% of Jamaicans were estimated to be under 25 years old, with a median age of 26 years, but around one quarter did not work or study.^{xvi,3} In Q3 2025, unemployment reached a historical low of 3.3%, and the participation rate is above pre-pandemic levels. Women face a participation gap (~11%) but are more likely to work in higher-skilled jobs and to have a university degree.³ Furthermore, rural and urban labour disparities are modest.³ Consistent minimum wage increases have been linked in part to better labour outcomes and poverty reduction. From 2016 to 2025, it has increased gradually to account for a 158% rise.⁹¹ This context allows and requires a Just Transition that is accessible to women, youth, and rural residents. By allowing, it means that the reality of women's higher education should be leveraged to pursue transition opportunities, and that youth not employed or in education should be prioritised. However, the potential for green jobs tends to be concentrated in sectors that are male-dominant, such as agriculture, forestry, waste management, and energy. The ILO has published "[a gender responsive approach to the Just Transition of the Jamaican workforce](#)" that can assist in navigating a gender-responsive just transition.⁹²

An engaged workforce development agency. Jamaica has the Human Employment and Resource Training / National Service Training Agency (HEART/NSA) Trust, established in 1982 by legislation. The HEART Trust provides training at the enterprise/workplace level and through 28 formal TVET institutions. The annual enrolment exceeds 110,000, and annual certifications are around 50,000. The HEART/NSA Trust is aligned with Jamaica's 2030 Vision and aims to place graduates in decent work opportunities. Its TVET institutions

^{xvi} This distribution is likely to change when Census 2022 full results are available, but the population is still likely to remain young at the median metric compared to its peers.

are offering relevant training in areas such as geospatial services, industrial electronics, renewable energy, energy efficiency, HVAC, construction, agriculture, and aquaculture.⁹⁴ The Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH) has existed since 2002 as a conditional cash transfer program that provides financial assistance and other benefits, such as education and training support. In 2019, the program had 271,496 beneficiaries, of which 52% were related to education benefits (6-18 years old), 23% to the elderly (60+), and 6% to persons with disabilities. More current estimates of beneficiaries are close to 350,000.⁹⁵ These existing mechanisms offer opportunities to support the Just Transition by building skill-ready workforce and providing assistance for those in need.

Data willingness. The government of Jamaica possesses or has launched several initiatives that show its commitment to data-driven decision-making and monitoring. Some of these tools do not always offer timely or updated data. However, they still demonstrate efforts toward strengthening the country's data system, which is necessary for the implementation of a Just Transition and assist social partners in monitoring it. Some examples include the [JamData Dashboard](#), which serves as the data tool for Jamaica's 2030 Vision 15 outcomes. These outcomes include social protection, education, sustainable development, natural resource management, and adaptation to climate change, among others. The [Statistical Institute of Jamaica](#) has included a "Decent Work Indicators" subsection in its Labour Force statistics portal, presenting key data in a single window. It includes measures of occupational segregation by gender, skill levels, spatial location, and employment status, as well as measures of paid annual leave, unemployment, weekly hours worked, and vulnerable employment. A [Jamaica Systematic Risk Assessment Tool](#) has been developed and used in the past to identify climate risk hotspots, map hazard exposures, and estimate the impact of severe climate events on public infrastructure.⁹⁶

Policy coherence. Since 2009, Jamaica's Vision 2030 has been a guiding document for the country. The NDCs have been built under the premise of leveraging existing policies. The country has advanced important policies that connect climate action and a Just Transition such as the Medium-Term Socio-Economic Policy Framework 2024-2027, the Long-Term Low-Emission and Climate-Resilient Development Strategy (LT-LEDS), the Updated Climate Change Policy Framework (CCPF), the Integrated Resource Plan, the Gender and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (GCCSAP) 2022-2025, and NDC 3.0 (see policies and frameworks section). The government has also affirmed that 11 pieces of legislation related to climate resilience and a green investment strategy will be in place by or before 2026.⁹³ These actions open further opportunities for engagement and advancing the Just Transition.

Union engagement. Unions are advancing Jamaica's Just Transition, despite less explicit inclusion in climate consultations. Engagement has grown (e.g., JCTU input during NDC 3.0's presentation/feedback process) and capacity is rising through the ILO's 2025–2026 project, which strengthens tripartite dialogue and equips unions with policy tools and green-jobs scenarios. Multi-stakeholder dialogues and union initiatives (advocacy, awareness raising, training, and bipartite concessions for firefighters) show practical momentum.

► Recommendations to support the Just Transition and NDC 3.0 in Jamaica

A just transition can turn climate ambition into decent work, social justice, and prosperity—ensuring no worker, enterprise, or community is left behind. To advance on this pathway, this section presents recommendations to social partners, particularly trade unions, in advancing Just Transition and NDC implementation. These recommendations are developed based on the Jamaican context explored in previous sections and on the policy areas highlighted in the ILO's 2023 Resolution concerning a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all.⁹⁷

► Social dialogue and tripartite engagement

1. Climate dialogue must be inclusive of union and labour perspectives. This report finds that unions and the Ministry of Labour are less directly engaged in climate dialogue, while the private sector is more actively engaged. Actions must be taken to bring social dialogue to climate discussions to connect with a Just Transition.

a. Engage in relevant policy development and implementation. Jamaica's LT-LED calls for tripartite involvement in the pursuit of the Just Transition and Decent Job Agenda pillars. The government has committed to developing a climate change legislation in a participatory manner, as it has included this action as part of its Open Government Action Plan with the Open Government Partnership.⁸⁷ Other policy spaces include the National Youth Policy 2017-2030, Social Protection Strategy, the National Policy for Senior Citizens, and the Gender and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (GCCSAP) 2022-2025. Unions must be aware and demand engagement with these policies, and is doing so bringing Just Transition discussions (e.g., paths to new jobs and transition, reskilling). [Jamaica's Vision 2030 is approaching its final years, while NDC 3.0 targets go until 2035.](#) Furthermore, calls have been made to update the sectoral plans that accompany the vision and were developed closer to its 2009 launch (31 sectoral plans exist).⁴⁴ This context provides a key opportunity for tripartite partners to engage. Barbados' example of Mission Barbados, a social tripartite compact pursuing sustainable and inclusive development, could be leveraged as a practice to follow.

b. Revamp and engage in existing spaces for dialogue. A tripartite lens is missing from the climate dialogue in Jamaica. Several spaces can be leveraged without directly changing their membership, as they allow for the creation of working and thematic groups. The Climate Change Advisory Board (CCAB) could be engaged in this manner, or tripartite involvement in the CCAB could be more directly demanded to be defined in the new climate change law. Unions in other countries, such as Kenya, have accomplished this.⁹⁷ [Jamaica has signed \(but not ratified\) the Escazú Regional Agreement, which includes public participation of vulnerable groups in climate decision-making as a pillar.](#) Jamaica already recognises some workers and occupations as vulnerable.⁵⁷

c. Make the Just Transition more explicit. While previous recommended steps bring the voice of the unions to the table, there must be an explicit focus on Just Transition. Climate dialogue requires a multi-stakeholder engagement, but this does not prevent the establishment of working groups or periodic meetings specifically on the Just Transition. [For example, Jamaica's 2030 Vision allows for the creation of thematic working groups to pursue specific actions.](#) Existing tripartite bodies must also more explicitly include Just Transition, such as the Labour Advisory Council, the Tripartite National Employment Policy (NEP) Steering Committee, Minimum Wage Advisory Commission, the TVET Council, and the board of the Productivity Centre.

2. Start bipartite engagements. [Collective bargaining](#) is a core tool of social dialogue, and environmental dimensions are increasingly being integrated. Relevant topics include OSH risks from extreme weather, adapting work schedules and spaces, training for green technologies, other training and reskilling, consultation provisions, adequate protective equipment, and early-warning systems.⁹⁹ [The ILO published in 2025 a report on "The role of collective bargaining in promoting just transitions" with six case studies from various sectors and countries that can be consulted.](#)⁹⁹ And Jamaica's unions have already taken initial steps towards this aspect, starting bipartite dialogue on climate-related working conditions and securing adequate equipment for firefighters.²⁹ [Labour–](#)

productivity should also be part of the dialogue. While Jamaica has seen recent productivity recovery, negative growth has been the norm. A green productivity lens can create shared benefits for employers and workers—through lower energy and material use, avoided externalities, circularity gains, and green product sales, which can be linked to worker incentives schemes. It also provides opportunities to develop new skills that are in increasing demand. [These are conversations that can be advanced through both bipartite and tripartite dialogue.](#)

- 3. Cultivate young leaders' interest and secure leadership renewal.** Jamaica has a relatively young population, making it important to create spaces that build the capacity and interest of young leaders within social partner organisations. [A useful model comes from Argentina, where the Multisectoral Under-40 Table serves as a voluntary dialogue space for young representatives of environmental, civil, trade union, employers', and social organisations. It engages future leaders in debates on climate and the future of work while bringing a youth perspective to these discussions. Jamaica also has an existing Climate Change Youth Council since 2017 and is affiliated with the Jamaica Climate Change Advisory Board. The Youth Council in 2025 openly called for applicants to its Executive Committee – an opportunity to explore if social partners' representatives are not already involved. Youth involvement is also an explicit goal pursued by Jamaica's NDC 3.0.¹⁶](#)
- 4. Develop capacities for policy engagement and monitoring.** Social partners in Jamaica need stronger capacities to influence and monitor policies so their members' voices are reflected in the Just Transition and NDC implementation. [Given resource constraints, practices from peers worldwide can serve as models: engaging member volunteers to review policies, running short opinion surveys, preparing concise data-driven policy briefs, creating social dialogue calendars and KPIs, and leveraging evidence from regional networks \(CARICOM, SICA\), international networks \(IOE, ITUC\), and organisations such as the ILO. The Jamaica Household Workers Association's 2023 survey of working conditions for domestic workers highlights the importance of these activities in showing existing gaps and progress from unionising.⁷³ Active engagement of social partners and improved coordination among ministries are vital, which can be facilitated by more effective convening, transparent mechanisms, clear responsibilities, and the provision of practical tools for monitoring and engagement. The government has implemented several data tools and dashboards that are connected to climate action and sustainable development \(e.g., JamData, Decent Work indicators\). These tools can be leveraged as key instruments for evidence-based social dialogue, while also encouraging more frequent updates to these portals. Social partners must also bring their own voices to these tools, not only by proposing or critically examining quantitative indicators that reflect the realities of their memberships, but also by bringing qualitative insights and membership knowledge.](#)

► **Support policies and mechanisms**

- 1. Skill shortages and mismatches remain a priority.** Social partners broadly agree that skills gaps are a major constraint on economic growth, productivity, and transition efforts (diversification, the green and blue economies, and ICT). [Technical and Vocational Education and Training \(TVET\) is viewed as central to addressing these challenges. Jamaica's HEART/NSA Trust and the TVET Council are key spaces to meet upskilling and reskilling needs for the transition towards low-carbon economies and achieving decent jobs. The HEART/NSA trust has committed in its annual plans to pursue decent job placements \(e.g., a goal of 7,300 in 2023\). The Learning and Investment Transformation \(LIFT\) Programme, launched in 2023, is also supporting job placements of 2,500 youth over a 5-year period. The ILO's expertise in training and skills systems \(e.g., CARICOM's Regional TVET Strategy or the ILO's 2023 Quality Apprenticeships Recommendation\) could be further leveraged to strengthen national TVET programmes and plans. However, social partners emphasise a persistent lack of detailed information on specific skills needs and gaps.^{29,88} Jamaica has many opportunities for job creation as a result of its transition to a greener economy. Skill needs assessment should be conducted in sectors such as tourism, AFOLU, transportation, and energy, as they are prioritised in NDC and LT-LEDs actions or are vital economic activities. Unions must also engage with the upcoming refrigeration recycling centres to see if they can serve as a decent job pipeline. Improved and timelier data on skills mismatches and green jobs are needed to design evidence-based actions. The ILO's green economic growth model for Jamaica was presented and validated by tripartite partners and can serve to orient skill needs assessment to reach this growth \(e.g., sustainable resource and business management, green-tech, eco-tourism, climate-smart and sustainable agriculture, renewable energies and electromobility\).⁸⁹ For employment services, the HEART/NSA Trust manages a jobs portal and](#)

launched in 2022 a skilled workers app to facilitate quicker matches on high-demand occupations (e.g., HVAC, mason, graphics designers). These existing tools could be further expanded or focus on green jobs (e.g., renewable energy, sustainable agriculture). Institutionalization of employment services could also be strengthened, as Jamaica has not ratified the ILO Employment Service Convention, 1948 (No. 88)—which requires free, nationwide public employment services. [The HEART/NSA Trust already fulfils these functions, but ratifying the Convention bring further support and oversight. The Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 \(No. 181\), which provides a framework for agency operations and protection of workers using such services, could also be explored to expand the market of job matching services.](#)

- 2. Advance key legislative gaps to support the transition and NDC implementation.** Jamaica still lacks essential frameworks such as a national climate change law, carbon market regulation, comprehensive OSH legislation, and a circular economy framework. Development of these legislations must balance compliance requirements with incentives, ensuring they do not create excessive administrative burdens—particularly for MSMEs. Thresholds and requirements should reflect sectoral and firm-size realities to avoid excluding and overburdening smaller businesses and the self-employed. [Jamaica is committed to better managing its waste and exploring energy-from-waste solutions. Public-private partnerships are also being discussed for nationwide collection, transfer, and disposal \(waste services were estimated in 2017 to cover 70% of the island, and 27.8% was burned by households\).⁴⁷ As the waste sector globally often relies on informal practices, it is essential that, as these goals move forward, social partners ensure that decent work and Just Transition principles are pursued in tandem with the sector's transformation. Unions can play a direct role in assisting collectors to form cooperatives or unionise.](#) ILO Conventions that have been ratified must be explored as support mechanisms (e.g., ILO Convention No. 144 – Tripartite Consultation, ILO Convention No. 144 – Tripartite Consultation), while pursuing others not yet ratified (e.g., No. 102 – Social Security (Minimum Standards) (2012) and its Recommendation No. 202, ILO Convention No. 155 – Occupational Safety and Health (1981)). Furthermore, the 2022 addition of occupational safety and health as part of the ILO's Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work brings opportunities for including climate dimensions more firmly into collective bargaining.
- 3. Strengthen social protection to enable the Just Transition.** Social protection coverage is limited, and more than half of workers are in the informal economy. The Just Transition recognises that not all workers will have the same transition. To leave no one behind, social protection is central for workers who face job restructuring and for communities negatively impacted. Stronger linkages are needed between labour-market policies and protection schemes—for example, unemployment insurance, activation programmes, fair severance pay initiatives, and reintegration support for women after maternity. [Unemployment insurance has already been approved by the Cabinet and reflects lessons learned from the COVID-19 Pandemic. The support and cash assistance given via PATH can also be explored as a future mechanism that is linked to the just transition of workers and low-income households.](#)
- 4. Support Jamaica's women, youth, elders, and rural residents.** Women, youth, and vulnerable groups face weaker labour outcomes and uneven access to education, finance, business support, social protection, and infrastructure. Furthermore, the creation of green jobs does not necessarily address systemic inequalities.⁹² Tackling these gaps is a policy priority under the ILO Just Transition framework. Promising approaches include formalisation programmes for workers and enterprises, creation of cooperative-led green jobs in agriculture and waste sectors, and care-economy policies that respond to the fact that domestic and family duties remain a main cited barrier for women's labour participation. While community consultation is becoming more of a norm in Jamaica, there is no formal regulation guaranteeing the participation of vulnerable groups or citizens in general, which limits the ability to inclusively shape transition policies that directly affect them. [These realities could change if the Escazú Agreement is ratified or a climate change legislation is approved. Jamaica has also taken important steps, putting in place policies, such as the Gender and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, the Social Protection Strategy, the National Policy for Senior Citizens, the National Policy on Poverty and the Poverty Reduction Programme and having spaces such as the Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities, the National Social Protection Committee, Jamaica Climate Change Council, and the National Council for Senior Citizens. The ILO has published "a gender responsive approach to the Just Transition of the Jamaican workforce" that can assist in navigating a gender-responsive just transition.⁹² Unions must be aware of these spaces and policies and advise](#)

► Just Transition and NDCs in Jamaica

these councils in considering the importance of decent work and social benefits in transitioning out of poverty, living a decent retirement, fighting inequalities, and accessing opportunities.

- 5. Multiple transitions, not always just.** Jamaica is undergoing parallel transitions in energy, production, and digitalisation, but these do not always integrate a just lens. Firms—particularly MSMEs—prioritise upgrading processes and adopting new technologies, while national strategies emphasise attracting investment to diversify the energy mix and expand ICT, with partial attention to skills. This framing often relegates the Just Transition to a secondary role. Yet the Just Transition is not sequential; it must be planned and carried out simultaneously. [The rapid rise of business process outsourcing \(BPO\) and platform work, along with accompanying remote work or no “workplace,” illustrates how quickly new industries can reshape the labour market.](#)

► NDC 3.0 recommendations

Jamaica was ahead of many other Caribbean nations in fulfilling its obligation to submit an NDC 3.0. It has also in 2025 officially submitted a Long-Term Low-Emission and Climate-Resilient Development Strategy (LT-LEDS). As implementation of ongoing and new targets proceeds, the following recommendations aim to help social partners engage more effectively, bringing their members’ perspectives into the NDC process and strengthening its Just Transition lens. While some earlier recommendations connect indirectly to the NDC, the points below are more explicit:

- 1. Institutionalise engagement in implementation.** Engagement should not stop at the development stage. Mechanisms are needed to consult and inform partners during NDC implementation. Thematic working groups could be established, and—as previously recommended—the CCAB should be revamped to include tripartite voices. Social partners also need to take a more active role in monitoring and demanding implementation. These practices would strengthen dialogue, coordination, monitoring, accountability, and the overall effectiveness of the NDCs.
- 2. Address barriers to union engagement and tripartite inclusion.** There is evidence that union participation in the NDC 3.0 consultations was less coordinated. Future consultation and implementation processes should more deliberately include tripartite partners to ensure balanced perspectives and seek to strengthen inter-ministerial collaboration.
- 3. Bring the labour lens into the NDC.** NDC 3.0 and LT-LEDS advance several relevant actions for workers (see Table 1 for a list of NDC-relevant actions towards workers) and explicitly include the Just Transition and the Decent Work Agenda. Yet, there is no explicit inclusion or targets on OSH concerning environmental risks, explicit job losses/gains considerations, or transition planning. Since NDCs are living documents updated every five years, there is room to expand this focus. [For NDC 2.0, 75 NDCs included Just Transition considerations and around 51% of the Americas. For the 2025 update, many countries are expected to include Just Transition aspects—offering learning opportunities for Jamaica. For the 2025 update, countries such as Barbados and Suriname are referencing the Just Transition in their NDCs. For the previous round of NDC, countries such as Antigua and Barbuda, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Honduras, and others mentioned Just Transition in their NDCs.¹⁰³ Social partners can freely access all these resources via the \[UNFCCC platform\]\(#\), as a source of inspiration. Areas that workers’ organizations can seek to include and have say are: enterprise policies, skills development, occupation safety and health, social protection, active labour market policies, rights, and social dialogue and tripartism. Two ILO resources that can serve trade unions in integrating these policies into the NDCs are: 1\) \[Integrating just transition in NDCs A practice brief\]\(#\) and 2\) \[Mapping Just Transition in NDCs: An overview\]\(#\). Direct support on Just Transition can also be requested from ILO-ACTRAV.](#)

► Trade unions, recommended activities and initiatives

As part of the ILO Just Transition 2023 Resolution, social partners are expected to build members’ capacities, implement initiatives, support training and reskilling, and advance a sustainable transition through bipartite dialogue.⁹⁷ Options for Jamaican trade unions include:

- 1. Research and monitoring.** Conduct member surveys or informational sessions to understand access gaps in skilling or awareness of the implications of a Just Transition. [As cultural resistance for members is listed as a common challenge by unions, these activities can help understand misconceptions and beliefs.](#) Leverage existing dashboards and build advocacy and research that is evidence-based, and bring to the table new measures to be tracked (e.g., OSH incidents related to

heat or extreme weather, green job trainings completed and placements, participation of youth and women in emerging green jobs opportunities, collective agreements with green clauses).

- 2. Advisory and support services.** Provide environmental-oriented support and services (e.g., environmental safety audits, risk assessments, pollution and hazard-related grievance mechanisms, layoff risks consultations).
- 3. Capacity building.** Unions already provide training and can further integrate Just Transition themes into existing programs. [Jamaican unions have provided capacity building around the impact of climate change on workers and how to work in changing temperatures.](#) Unions can play a more direct role in co-designing TVET courses and building pipelines with public and private employers. Or by offering educational material like guidebooks on climate-related topics, including occupational accidents and diseases, common risks, and workers' rights to safety and health.
- 4. Awareness raising.** Awareness activities are perhaps the most frequent activity by unions in Jamaica. [For example, on climate risks and preparedness during storms, on the need to transition away from fossil fuels, the importance of reskilling and upskilling, and on the challenges climate change brings or are face by workers \(e.g., poor ventilation, climate-inappropriate uniforms, power outages, mental stress from severe weather events, heat stress and dehydration, fatigue, flooding affecting transport and schedules, reduced productivity, long-term health risks, and an increase in workplace accidents\).](#) These activities could be further focused on transmitting what Just Transition is and what existing policies are in place to support it.
- 5. Bilateral social dialogue and enterprise-level engagement.** Many of the advancements at this level on Just Transition have been driven by unions in the Global South.^{98,99} Recent ILO publications ([The role of collective bargaining in promoting just transitions](#)) and their description in Box 3 (Roles and actions section) provide more in-depth examples on how collective bargaining is being used as a key mechanism to advance a Just Transition. [Jamaica is already showing advancements in including climate considerations in bipartite dialogue.](#) They are also offering practical and fair solutions for employers (e.g., shorter shifts during peak heat, earlier start times, heat indexes and measurements, shaded rest areas, access to water, reasonable scheduling, stronger employer responsibility, safer working conditions, and switching uniforms to breathable fabrics, designs, and lighter colours).

► Conclusion

Jamaica's Just Transition journey demonstrates that climate ambition and social justice can advance together, but highlights the need for workers to be meaningfully included and engaged. The country's sustained climate commitments—reflected in successive NDCs, its Long-Term Low-Emission and Climate-Resilient Development Strategy, and Vision 2030 Jamaica—show an increasing alignment between environmental goals, decent work, just transition, and national development priorities. As climate risks intensify, this alignment must now translate into concrete measures that protect livelihoods, strengthen social protection, and create fair opportunities in the new green economy.

From a workers' and unions' perspective, the Just Transition offers a chance to make climate action more inclusive and equitable. Green transformation should not only create new jobs but also improve the quality, safety, and sustainability of existing ones. Sectors such as tourism, construction, agriculture, manufacturing, and transport—where many Jamaicans work—will face both disruption and renewal. Ensuring that workers have access to training, social dialogue, and protection during these shifts will determine whether the transition becomes a pathway to empowerment or exclusion.

Trade unions have begun to step forward, engaging in climate-related bipartite dialogue and participating in national policy spaces. These initiatives must now scale up and be more systematic. Greater union involvement in planning, implementation, and monitoring of climate policies would help identify workplace risks, design fair adaptation measures, and ensure that gains from the transition are shared. Expanding knowledge and technical capacity within unions will be essential to negotiate effectively on issues such as occupational safety, reskilling, and energy efficiency.

The government's steps to institutionalise a Just Transition framework—through the forthcoming climate employment policy and NDC 3.0 —presents a window of opportunity. A more systematic inclusion of labour partners in the Climate Change Advisory Board and related mechanisms would ensure coherence across climate, employment, and social protection agendas.

Looking ahead, collective action is crucial. Tripartite partners should transform social dialogue into a driver of green and decent work. Unions, in particular, can play a decisive role in shaping a transition that leaves no worker behind—by strengthening solidarity, supporting skills for the future, and championing fairness in the face of change. Jamaica's experience reminds us that a Just Transition is not only about reducing emissions but also about raising voices: ensuring that workers help design, not just endure, the transformation ahead.

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